



# The Bukovina Society of the Americas NEWSLETTER

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

March 2003

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## SOCIETY NEWS

The board extends its sincere thanks to everyone who responded to our annual dues notice and request for donations for the web site fund. Your support is greatly appreciated.

#### New members of the Lifetime Club

Darlene E. Kauk (Regina, SK)  
Cheryl Runyan (Wichita, KS)  
Brian Schoenthaler (Calgary, AB)  
John Douglas Singer (New Haven, CT)  
Dr. Sophie A. Welisch (Congers, NY)

We have received a good response from our request for presenters at the Bukovinafest 2003. Program plans are now under review and will be published in the June 2003 *Newsletter*. Mark the dates of September 19-21.

## BUKOVINA PEOPLE AND EVENTS

- Our webmaster, Werner Zoglauer, received notice that our web site was named "Site of the Day" for December 9, 2002 by *Family Tree Magazine*, <[www.familytreemagazine.com](http://www.familytreemagazine.com)>, because "it will be a wonderful online resource for our readers." More than 100,000 people visit the *Family Tree Magazine* web site each month with their weekly e-mail newsletter, which also highlights the *Bukovina Society*, going out to more than 30,000 subscribers. The award logo may be seen on our site: a good reason to check in again. Werner asks members of the Society and others with Bukovinian interests to send us family histories, memoirs and old photographs for possible inclusion in a new feature on our web site. These may be mailed directly to Society headquarters at our postal address, e-mail address, or to Werner at [zoglauer@attbi.com](mailto:zoglauer@attbi.com)>
- On April 4-6 the Ellis County Historical Society will present German Heritage Days in Hays, KS with financial assistance of the Hays Convention and Visitors Bureau. Numerous other local business and cultural organizations will also participate in this new event. Some thirty programs, presentations, and tours will celebrate various aspects of the German heritage with emphasis on customs, language, music and food. Two of the Society's Board members are scheduled to make presentations. A brochure and other local historical information may be obtained from the Bureau at 1301 Pine Street, Hays, KS 67601 or by calling 1-800-569-4505.
- International Board member Van Massier has been elected state president of the German-Texan Heritage Society (GTHS). With approximately 1100 members, the GTHS is headquartered in the former German Free School, one of the oldest buildings in Austin. Its current focus is to double the Society's membership within the next two years. Van is also involved with the Texas German Society (TGS), presently serving as its vice president. The TGS, with approximately 1000 members, is headquartered at the Witte-Schmidt House, an 1860s-era two-story framework structure located a few miles south of Brenham. Between his tasks with these two groups, Van still tries to get a little ranching

done and deals with the visitors and protestors who come to the Bush Ranch! Being a neighbor of the President of the United States can get interesting at times, especially when the latter invites high-level dignitaries to his home. On a recent visit of the Chinese premier Van and his family awakened to find two state trooper cars backed up in their driveway, plus a sheriff's car, a secret service car as well as two other vehicles on the roadside. Their task was to keep gawkers and protestors at a distance from the Bush compound. Such is the price of living in close proximity to the President!

- For the past two years Van Massirer and Mary have been driving to a little rural Lutheran church about forty-five miles west of their home to attend a German Christmas service. Except for an occasional translation in English, the service was entirely in German. According to Van, "there is nothing terribly unusual about that, but what makes the service unique are the three Christmas trees. Members of the congregation drive about 150 miles south to get the special kinds of trees that are used. Two of them are relatively small, but the largest one almost reaches the very high ceiling. The crowning touch in all of this is that the some 3,000 lights on the trees are synchronized to the music. I've never seen anything quite like it, and all of this is done by a congregation consisting of probably not more than 100 members. The service concluded with a light meal."



A group of Romanian children gather at Easter in front of one of the historical painted monasteries in the Bukovina district near the Humor region.

## MY PATH TO GENEALOGY

by Michael Augustin (Leonberg, Germany)

Based on my experience, genealogy is a field to which you can better relate in the second half of your life. In many cases a special event, such as the death of the last member of a generation, will trigger a sudden increase of interest in your roots. In my case, however, it was the fact that in 1996 I by chance obtained a copy of the shareware family tree software *Genius*. Out of sheer curiosity I started to enter some names and the data which I had available for spouse, children, father, mother, aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, etc. I was immediately fascinated by this new toy and started to use it to study and document my more distant kindred and my relationship to them. The information I gleaned was mainly through interviews.

The next step was still rather harmless: I acquired some books about genealogy. The only thing I remember about this phase of my pursuits is that I put them aside rather quickly; nonetheless, I at least learned that I had to go to the *Standesamt* (registry office). Since my father was born in southern Bukovina, which today is in Romania, I did not even dare to hope ever being able to obtain information from this area. It was, after all, in an eastern European country using a language I did not understand and geographically located more than 1000 miles from my home in Germany. So I decided to give it a try with the family of my father-in-law, Walter Müller from Waiblingen near Stuttgart. He is a dyed-in-the-wool Swabian and his family seemed to have lived in the area for ages, which indeed proved to be the case.

Surprisingly enough, I got access to all the information about his family for the last 100 years without any difficulties. From there the two nice ladies in the registry office referred me to the local Protestant church. Here they recommended that I go to the Bishops' Archives in Stuttgart, since they would have the records of several parishes. My first visit there in January of 1997 proved to be my "point of no return" as far as genealogy was concerned. I was hooked! With all the microfilms of the church books of the entire diocese on hand, it was relatively easy even for me as a rookie to trace my father-in-law's family back to the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and this in only two sessions, each lasting for as long as the archives remained open. I had definitely tasted blood!

Encouraged by this success I decided to find out more about my own ancestry, i.e., my father's family. At that time I already knew about the *Haus der Heimat* (House of the Home Country) in downtown Stuttgart/Germany, which contains an excellent library as well as branch offices of many of the regional German expellee organizations. But to

my chagrin I learned that the Bukovina-related materials had been transferred to the Bukovina Institute in Augsburg over a decade ago.

In response to my inquiry, the Bukovina Institute referred me to the *Forschungsstelle für Genealogie im ehemaligen Herzogtum Bukowina* (Research Center for Genealogy in the Former Duchy of Bukovina) in Riegelsberg near Saarbrücken/Germany. Director of this institution is Dr. Claudius von Teutul, a descendant of Bukovina nobility and an authority on Bukovina genealogy. He has photocopies of most of the available Bukovina church records and a database of approximately 45,000 names. I do not know what has become of Dr. Teutul. To my best knowledge he no longer responds to e-mails requesting genealogical assistance, since he simply has been overwhelmed by inquiries. However, at that time he did reply and sent me not only my complete line of ancestors back to Johann Augustin (1770-1839) but also much data on his numerous progeny. In 1803 Johann emigrated with his wife and three children from the Bohemian Forest to Bukovina and is the patriarch of all the Bukovina Augustins as well as one of the founding fathers of the village of Fürstenthal. In no time at all my database expanded from a few hundred entries to about 1,500 names. This was almost too easy: a huge bit of luck, but not the end of my quest.

At that time I also started researching historical background and perusing old and contemporary maps. Browsing through relevant libraries and reading all kinds of published works, I soon discovered the close links between the Bohemian Forest and Bukovina and also the areas in the world to which my relatives from the Bohemian Forest and Bukovina had emigrated, namely the United States, Canada and Brazil. This caused me to expand my scope of inquiry to include these countries as well. I also started to use the internet for my research, beginning with Dr. Teutul's web site and then moving on to the web site of the Bukovina Society of the Americas in Ellis, Kansas ([www.bukovinasociety.org](http://www.bukovinasociety.org)). The information I found there was very valuable, but even more so was the 'Contact List of Bukovina Genealogists' with the names of subscribers who had posted surnames they were researching. I chose the ten with the greatest likelihood of relationship and sent them an e-mail telling them about myself and the forebears I had found to date. And to be sure, I got a half-dozen responses, some more relevant than others.

My most important contact was the one I made with my fifth cousin, Werner Zoglauer from Naperville, Illinois. He has proven to be an enthusiastic genealogist and a good friend. Werner was born in German-occupied Poland after his parents, like almost all the Germans from Bukovina, had left their homeland in 1940 to be resettled in Germany. As a boy he lived in Germany, very close to where I am currently residing, before his family emigrated to the United States in

1955. Werner gave me not only a copy of his database with over 8,000 names, based mainly on Edward "Al" Lang's *Bukovina Families: 200 Years* (1993), but also a complete set of copies of the Fürstenthal church records from other archives from Germany's former eastern territories now kept in the *Deutsche Zentralstelle für Genealogie* (German Central Office for Genealogy) in Leipzig/Germany. These documents have also been microfilmed by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Salt Lake City, Utah and are available at all their libraries. These were the primary sources for my own database, which includes over 15,000 entries at this time, over 3,300 of them being direct descendants of Johann Augustin. In addition, Werner brought me into contact with the Bukovina Society in Ellis and with many other genealogists and relatives in the United States, some of whom have become good friends. Among them is Juanita Augustine, the wife of Frank Augustine, my fourth cousin once removed. Juanita, who works at the Catholic Church in Ellis, not only gave me information about the Bukovina Germans in Ellis County but also gave me data on the Augustines in Canada provided by Mavis Armstrong of Regina, Saskatchewan. That my employer has sent me to the States on business almost every other month for the last five years has certainly facilitated my research tasks abroad.

Another important source early in my genealogical pursuits was the monograph, *Fürstenthal: eine deutschböhmische Gemeinde in der Bukowina* (Fürstenthal: A German-Bohemian Community in Bukovina), published by Josef Wild in 1981 and translated into English by Sophie A. Welisch in 1993. Unfortunately, one of the essays designates *Sommersdorf* and *Stoikern* in the Bohemian Forest as the origin of Fürstenthal's founding fathers, which proved to be incorrect. I spent over one year trying to locate these two villages before realizing the error.

But during the quest I made contact with another very interesting and most helpful person: Günther Burkon from Neuesting near Munich/Germany. Mr. Burkon, a teacher by profession, is also an historian and genealogist of families from the Bohemian Forest and author of numerous books. He pointed out some villages around Neuern/Nyrsko in the Czech Republic on the Bavarian border where the name "Augustin" had been prevalent over the last several hundred years. Since "Augustin" is also in his line of descent, he could readily extract almost 500 individuals with that surname, the earliest born in Bavaria in 1645. And all this from file cards! Mr. Burkon noted that many of the names of the other founding families of Fürstenthal could also be found in this area. Since to my knowledge there is no locality with a greater concentration of Augustins, I must conclude that my family originated from this area in the Bohemian Forest. Verifying this link remains my future mission.

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# DEUTSCH-BÖHMISCHES KOCHBUCH

by Dr. Valentin Reitmajer (Oberding, Germany)

*Below is the introduction from Dr. Valentin Reitmajer's cookbook representative of the cuisine of the German-Bohemians who in 1838 left their native Bohemian Forest and founded the village of Poiana Micului (Buchenhain) in southern Bukovina. The book contains over sixty recipes, a glossary which translates the German-Bohemian expressions into High German, a table of contents, nine photographs and a map. It may be obtained for \$14 (U.S. currency) directly from the author at: Am Mitterfeld 3,85445 Oberding, Germany. See the Society's web site for five select recipes (trans. into English) from this book. Reitmajer, Valentin. *Deutsch-Böhmisches Kochbuch: Original biologisch-dynamische Rezepte aus der Küche meiner deutsch-böhmischen Urgroßmutter*. [German-Bohemian Cook Book: Original Biologic-Dynamic Recipes from the Kitchen of My German-Bohemian Great-Grandmother]. (Oberding, Germany: Reimo Verlag, 1997), 87 pp.*

## INTRODUCTION

translated by Dr. Sophie A. Welisch

### History of the German-Bohemian Cuisine

The history of the following recipes, transmitted for almost two centuries from generation to generation by word of mouth, can truly be designated as an adventure story. My great-grandmother, from a little village in the Bohemian Forest not far from Bayerisch Eisenstein, was born in 1832 into a family of German lumbermen, which had presumably originated in the Upper Palatinate (Oberpfalz). Since her parents saw no future in the Bohemian Forest and assuredly were not blessed with material goods, they gratefully responded to the offer of the Austrian royal family, which at that time ruled over Bohemia, to immigrate to BUKOVINA, in today's Romania [*sic*].

At that time and until 1918 Bukovina was the easternmost crown land of the vast multinational Danubian monarchy of Austria-Hungary [*sic*]. And it was there that the Emperor promised land and livelihood to the German-Bohemians willing to immigrate. So my great-grandmother's parents, together with thirty-seven other families, packed up and with their meager possessions traveled by foot over 1000 kilometers from Böhmisches Krumau (today: Èesky Krumlov), through Galicia to the longed-for new homeland.

On their foot march, especially difficult for the children—my great-grandmother was exactly six years old—the settlers were accompanied and protected by an imperial escort. After traveling for months under difficult conditions, they arrived in Bukovina; their disappointment was pro-

found, in that they were expected to settle on land consisting only of virgin forests! The Emperor had made a promise but not kept his word. Since there was no possibility of returning, my great-grandmother's parents, along with the other settlers, rolled up their sleeves and cleared the forest, constructed makeshift huts (later replaced by proper wooden structures as in the Bohemian Forest), and carried on small-scale agriculture. They also did almost everything else as they had done it in Bohemia, which included building, singing, speaking and naturally also cooking.

In the course of time there arose a veritable German-Bohemian village, which they called Poiana Micului, in German Buchenhain—with church and school. And within a century the thirty-eight founding families had expanded into a village community of about 2000 people [*sic*].

But in all those years the Bohemian homeland was never forgotten and in the evening around the fireplace, when the women and girls sat at the spinning wheel and the men whittled wooden shoes and other objects, much was related about it. From their fathers the boys learned about agriculture and forestry, while the girls learned cooking and housework from their mothers, as they had taken it over from their parents. Thus, it was only natural that the daughters, including my great-grandmother, grandmother and mother, followed the manner of cooking of their mothers, which they in turn transmitted to their daughters without a recipe ever having been recorded.

As in language and other traditions, the German-Bohemians carefully guarded their traditions although or perhaps because in Bukovina they lived in a multinational environment, surrounded by Romanians, Russians, Czechs, Hungarians, Huzules, and Jews, who likewise maintained their customs. But everything considered, all the ethnic groups—basically a model for today's Europe—lived peacefully with and among one another. Indeed, one group sometimes adopted an idea from another, as is to a certain extent reflected in the recipes. After about 100 years everything came to an end. During the Second World War, in the winter of 1940, the villagers, half willingly, half forcibly by the National Socialists within the framework of operation "Resettlement South Bukovina"—better known by the slogan "Home to the Reich"—were evacuated to Germany.

After a brief stint in a camp in Austrian Styria, they were eventually resettled for a short time in [German-occupied] Poland as so-called "frontline farmers." Toward the end of the war they fled westward with horse and wagon to avoid the approaching Russian front; after a period of privation, most found a new homeland in Lower Bavaria but also in other areas of Germany.

Their village had ceased to exist, since it had been torched by the German army in advance of the approaching Russians. In time rebuilt by Romanians, Poiana Micului no longer has the appearance and layout of earlier days.

Today most of the 1940 evacuees are old or have already died. Their manner of speaking, singing, but especially of

cooking lapsed into obscurity with the death of the last surviving Buchenhain inhabitants, since their children have adapted to the contemporary German environment and are generally so assimilated that the cuisine of their forebears is foreign to them.

I, too, traveled along this path until not too long ago when I realized how tragic it would be if an entire culinary tradition should be completely forgotten – and how contemporary this cuisine actually is at a time when one is overwhelmed by over-refined foods on the one hand but especially by unnatural, unhealthy and packaged industrial produce on the other. Many people, especially those who are nutrition-conscious, today again want to sustain themselves with biologically sound foods. And specifically for this purpose the following recipes from the German-Bohemian cuisine will offer varied ideas and suggestions. I have attempted to discern how my forebears, the German-Bohemians in my great-grandmother's time, cooked and ate. In part I already know this from my childhood, when my mother was still alive and did the cooking. For the details I can thank Mrs. Bertha EIGNER of Julbach/Inn, who at age seventy-five years still cooks as at home in Poiana Micului and revealed to me many secrets of her culinary art.

### **The Peculiarities of the German-Bohemian Cuisine** —without artistic flourish

That this manner of eating is already two hundred years old I have already noted. Nonetheless, it is interesting and not without significance to reflect how people preserved foods and managed without a refrigerator, without a ice chest, without a supermarket around the corner, and without all sorts of artificial substances (harmful things!), yet with simple means enjoyed a variety of meals. At that time there was no butcher shop in the village of Poiana Micului, no bakery, no grocery or beverage stores and also no fruit or vegetable dealers.

Every family was self sufficient, without knowledge of artificial fertilizers or preservatives to say nothing of using them. And the next town was about thirty kilometers away, which on foot or by horse constituted a considerable distance.  
—simple but tasteful and healthy

Since most of the inhabitants of Buchenhain were poor rather than rich and had many children – eight to ten as a rule – one was forced to cook simple and often Spartan-like meals. That this was not at the expense of flavor, nature, and above all health is seen by the recipes, which offer tasteful and varied dishes. Naturally all foods were biologically sound, since almost without exception they were prepared at home and without artificial admixtures. Today one would describe this as biologic-dynamic food production.

—creative and original

“German-Bohemian cuisine! Oh, Bohemian cuisine!” some would say who hear this. I'm already familiar with “*Knedlicky*,” [dumplings], “*Bowiddatschgerl*” [prune pockets], “*Schweinebraten mit Sauerkraut*” [roast pork with

sauerkraut] accompanied by music (*Musi*). Far off the mark! The cuisine presented here has *nothing* or very little to do with this. It is neither that which one characterizes as typically German nor that which one considers typically Bohemian. It is something creative-original; it is simply “German-Bohemian cuisine”!

### **German-Bohemian Cuisine of the Finest Sort**

Naturally on workdays, because of sheer necessity, meals were lean, but that is not to say that the menu was not tasteful and varied. On holidays and feast days, e.g., Christmas, Easter, Church festivals, or weddings and baptisms, everything available in house and yard came to the fore. Yield to the temptation of your “German-Bohemian feast! For openers the menus traditionally offered beef soup with homemade wide noodles (“*Fleischsubbn mid gschniede Nuhln*”) followed by the main course of the obligatory roasted meat (“*Brodns Fleisch*”) and/or roasted ducks, chickens, geese (“*Andn-, Gockl- Gansbrodn*”), with potato pancakes or potato cake (“*Dotschala*”/“*Dotschn*”) or potato noodles (“*Dreapflgnehl*”).

The salads, depending on the time of year, included cucumber salad (“*Umurken*”), tomato salad (“*Domadnsolod*”), green salad (“*Greana Solod*”), coleslaw (“*Graudsolod*”) pickled cucumbers, beets, beans (“*Gseiada Umurken, Riabala, Scheula*”), or radish salad (“*Radesolod*”).

Desserts included cooked dried plums (“*Driggade Zwäschbn*,” *Dörrzwetschgen*), dried apples (“*Epflschbaldln*,” *Dörrapfelscheiben*), baked apples (“*Brodne Epfl*,” *Bratäpfel*), or in the summer a dish of berries and yogurt (“*Bialagansch*,” *Beeren-Joghurt-Speise*).

In addition there were baked goods fried in lard (“*Scheula*,” *Schmalzgebäck*); poppy seed strudel (“*Mohnschdruhl*,” *Mohnstrudel*) was a special delicacy.

A hearty whiskey topped off the meal to which wine or beer were added on special feast days, or otherwise cider.

But a very important component of such a festive meal was stuffed cabbage (“*Galuschde*,” *Krautwickel*) and pickled jellied meat (“*Gschdonas*,” *Köchelsülze*) available between meals for the entire day of the feast.

Late in the afternoon – the meals lasted for hours— coffee was served, which was imbibed only on such occasions and on Sundays. With it the housewives set on the table the above-mentioned baked goods. But the so-called braided yeast cake (“*Waggal*,” *Hefezopf*) with fresh butter was a very special delicacy. Do you already have an appetite? Try it yourself and prepare a festive meal that will make your table sag!

### **German-Bohemian Cuisine as Interesting Alternative**

Many of today's people, especially those interested in culinary matters, have tired of the much touted “New Cuisine” or also the numerous meat dishes and are seeking proper, original and at the same time healthy changes and alternatives. Especially these individuals, but also all other readers will have sheer delight in the following recipes, often also meatless dishes, which confound us because of

their simplicity and naturalness as well as by their flavor, originality and nutritional quality.

The German-Bohemian dialect, by which the dishes and preparations are identified, links the recipes to the history of village life, thus making them truly original and creative. Written without diacritical marks, this dialect, akin to Upper Palatine and Austrian is always noted. For purposes of clarity the terms are also cited in High German.

Anyone who cannot grow his own biologic foods and maintain his farm animals in proper manner must look for food to the ever-increasing number of biologic-dynamic salesmen and animal breeders. Sometimes it can be a bit tiresome to produce one thing or another, but you will see that it pays!

Try it! Good appetite!

Dr. Valentin Reitmajer

by that occasion, Ignatz Schödelbauer decided to write a book in order to preserve the experiences and historic traditions of the Bukovinians. This book was intended as a gift to their families and a means of maintaining and nurturing their origins. However, during World War II there occurred a persecution of our Bukovinian people and also contempt for them because of their German origin. The use of German in public places was forbidden. Settlers were humiliated and criticized by the Brazilian nationalists. Ignatz Schödelbauer died in 1946, just after the end of World War II, with his book still unpublished. Even after the war the Bukovinians faced discrimination because they were simple people, living without luxury and ostentation. As a result, theirs was a traumatic experience, causing them to abandon their ethnic traditions. With the passing of time the feeling of humiliation and shame became even stronger. To be called a “Bukovinian” was an insult and occasionally provoked a fight.

In the 1950s, when I was an adolescent, my aunt, Ida Schödelbauer gave me my grandfather’s original manuscripts, representing fifty years of research. Using these documents as the basis of my studies, I was able to publish a book of some 700 pages, entitled *Os Bucovinos do Brasil. . . e a História de Rio Negro*

(*The Bukovinians of Brazil . . . and the History of Rio Negro*) in which I detail the complete history of the Brazilian Bukovinians. In April of this year I made two public presentations of my book followed by an appearance at the University of Contestado in Mafra to address an assembled group of students, professors and civil leaders.

To backtrack a bit: the year 1987, marking the centennial of the Bukovinian immigration to Brazil, witnessed another jubilee celebration. On that occasion, in a public square, I recounted the history of our people in short segments. Then I published about 200 short articles about our ancestors’ poignant history, for local Rio Negro and Mafra newspapers. In 1991 we began a project intended to uplift our humiliated people by exposing them to their origins, their traditions and their customs. They needed to forget their shame and develop pride in their Bukovinian heritage as well as to honor their ancestors’ memory.

With a group of Bukovinians, among them Dr. Fernando Reitmeyer, we celebrated our first Bukovina Week in Rio Negro and Mafra. Its success led many of our people enthusiastically to embrace with joy the new era that then began. The event triggered other activities, including the formation of the Bukovinian Choral Group. This was followed by a group dedicated to folk dancing, which, at my suggestion, calls itself “*Boarischer Wind*” (Bavarian Wind), referring to the earliest origins of our people. At present this group is under the direction of José Adalberto Semmer and his wife. Many Bukovinians of Rio Negro and Mafra enthusiastically welcomed our efforts. The festivities, including the choral and dance groups as well as the newspaper articles, did much to further the concept of an association to carry out all

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## THE BUKOVINA-GERMAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION (ABC) OF RIO NEGRO/MAFRA

by Dr. Aryton Gonçalves Celestino (Curitiba, Brazil)

*In the second of his speeches at the July 2002 FEEFHS conference Professor Celestino describes the activities of the Associação Alemã Bucovina de Cultura—ABC, the cultural organization dedicated to the preservation and the Bukovinian cultural heritage in Rio Negro and Mafra. His presentation was enhanced by copious slides of the Association’s activities as well as of artifacts and landscapes illustrating past and contemporary lifestyles of the Bukovinians in southern Brazil.*

My sincere thanks to the International Genealogical Conference and to the Saskatchewan Genealogical Society and its representatives, Mrs. Marge Thomas and Mrs. Laura Hanowski for their warm welcome and extraordinary efforts in making my participation at this conference possible.

Thank you, Mrs. Marge Thomas! Thank you, Mrs. Laura Hanowski! My thanks also to Mrs. Irmgard Hein Ellingson, who had encouraged me to participate in this conference.

Before telling you about our Association, I would like to give you an historic overview in order that you might better grasp the significance of the Bukovina-German Cultural Association (ABC) to the Bukovina community of Rio Negro, Mafra, and other towns in Brazil.

In 1887 and 1888 the first groups of Bukovina-German and Bukovina-Polish settlers departed for Brazil. Fifty years later, in 1937, under the leadership of my grandfather, Ignatz Schödelbauer, their descendants celebrated the golden jubilee of their immigration to Brazil. The ten days of festivities followed, which included expositions of agricultural products and livestock, religious services, dances, ethnic foods, displays of photographs, and so forth. Inspired

these activities. This organization, representing the entire Bukovinian community, still needed a board of directors and by-laws drawn up in accordance with Brazilian custom and law.

In early 1992 I personally drafted the by-laws of the Bukovina-German Cultural Association—ABC, as well as its constitution, objectives, and projected activities. Via radio and newspapers we invited all interested descendants and friends of Bukovinians to attend a meeting on February 22, 1992 at the *Sociedade de Agricultura “União”* (Agricultural “Union” Society) in Rio Negro, our people’s traditional meeting place, to discuss and approve the by-laws of our association.

About fifty persons attended who, after hearing the purpose of the meeting and its by-laws, unanimously approved and proceeded to elect its first board: President: Ayrton Gonçalves Celestino; Vice-President: Henrique Schafhauser; Secretary: Waldine Ruthes; Treasurer: Cirineu Wolf; Social Director: José Adalberto Semmer. Elected to serve on the Deliberation and Inspection Council were: Carlos Walter Kolb, Lídio Reddin, Ricardo Schelbauer, Raul Schelbauer, Lourival Schelbauer, Francisco Reichhardt and Estanislau Seidl Henning.

With an organization and a board of directors, the Association began planning and organizing events for the Bukovinians of Rio Negro.

I remained president of the Association until 1997, when for reasons of health, I stepped down. Mr. João Jacó Fuchs assumed the presidency and remains in that office to this day. The other board members include: Vice-President: Lourival Schelbauer, 1<sup>st</sup> Secretary: Maria Helena Fuchs da Rosa, 2<sup>nd</sup> Secretary: Audenir Artur Valério, 1<sup>st</sup> Treasurer: Mário Reichhardt, 2<sup>nd</sup> Treasurer: Benedito Reimão de Mello, Director of Property: José Adalberto Semmer, Deliberation and Inspection Council: Agostinho Fuchs, Francisco Kraschinski, Alberto Reichhardt, Cláudia Maria França, Rafael Schafaschek, Marcos Hable, João Batista Schelbauer and Sebastião Z. de Rosa Filho; Alternates: Herberto Fuchs and Geraldo Schelbauer; Honorary President: Ayrton Gonçalves Celestino.

Our Association then adopted and registered its by-laws, which had been drafted in accordance with Brazilian state and federal law.

We then began a campaign to acquire as a donation the property and building of the old Passa Três school, an historic building which once served as the headquarters of the school society and in which the settlers’ children received instruction in the early years and through the 1950s. According to town ordinance #693/1992 of Rio Negro, the building was declared an historic monument that was to be preserved and not modified or demolished. In 1993, in accordance with Rio Negro ordinance #754/93, the school building was donated to the Association for restora-

tion and for the installation of the Bukovina community’s museum to contain photographs and artifacts of the early settlers. The building will also house the library and will serve as the center of Bukovina culture and the official headquarters of the Association. Unfortunately, from lack of funds, the restoration is not yet completed. We hope, however, to do it next year.

Since 1992 the Association has annually sponsored a “Bucovina Fest.” On these occasions we have dances, parades through the streets of Rio Negro and Mafra, meals of ethnic foods with other Bukovina families, thanksgiving masses in memory of our ancestors, choral and dance groups, displays of photographs and artifacts from the immigrant generation, speeches, and conferences. In 2001 we had visitors from the United States and Germany, who participated in all events and made presentations at the University of Contestado in Mafra, State of Santa Catarina. Among them were: Werner Zoglauer, who spoke on behalf of Oren Windholz, President of the Bukovina Society of the Americas, Dr. Sophie A. Welisch; Irmgard Hein Ellingson, who was not present but had forwarded her speech; Maria Lang Becker; and Dr. Ortfried Kotzian, representing the Bukovina Institute in Germany. The speeches were well attended. Aside from the above individuals, Steve Parke, Michael Augustin, Edward Becker and Maria Louise Kotzian also traveled to Brazil to participate in the Association’s activities.

At each Bucovina Fest a queen and her attendants are elected. These young girls represent our people’s youth and beauty. Among the families who have competed for the distinction of having one of their own named queen we usually find young ladies from the families of Fuchs, Reichhardt, Schafaschek, Schafhauser and Schödelbauer. A good time is had by all as the guests participate in dances to traditional music and enjoy the ethnic foods and beverages. Whenever possible, we invite the consuls of Romania, Germany and Austria to our Bucovina Fests. Because of his steadfast participation and support in our activities, Vasile Macovei was bestowed an honorary membership in our Association when he was Romania’s consul general in Brazil. In addition, the town of Rio Negro also awarded him the title of honorary member. Mr. Macovei has since become ambassador of Romania in Uruguay.

This year, on the occasion of the presentation of my book, “*Os Bucovinos do Brasil*,” I had the honor of having Mr. Ion Floroiu, Ambassador of Romania in Brazil, in the audience.

At my urging, a Bukovinian descendant in Rio Negro will be appointed honorary consul of Romania in the State of Paraná. We hope that this connection will lead to an expansion of cultural activity for our Association and of the Bukovinian community of Rio Negro and Mafra.

In recent years we have sponsored several expositions,

which have included photographs of our ancestors and of Bukovina, artifacts used by the settlers, items representing Bukovina culture, works of art by Romanian artists from Bukovina and from our region, Romanian tapestries, and typical Romanian folk costumes. Yearly, on the occasion of the feast day of St. Nicholas on December 6, we celebrate Bukovina Christmas with mass followed by a lunch based on Bukovinian cuisine and a goodly supply of beer. This is a time of family celebration. The children receive many gifts and candies from St. Nick, who appears in his traditional attire. Folk groups perform at the festivities. These are cheerful times during which everyone enjoys a fraternity that increases every year.

At the 1995 Bukovina Christmas we had a dedication of the Bukovina cross in Bukovina Square at the entrance to Rio Negro. This took place in agreement with the town council of Rio Negro. The cross was designed by the Romanian artist, Radu Bercea, according to our guidelines and inspired by my 1994 visit to Bukovina. The Rio Negro cross is a replica of one I saw at the monastery of Klosterhumora.

In the next years we plan to build an archway to Rio Negro that will be in the Bukovina-Romanian style, designed by the renowned sculptor, Radu Bercea, of Gura Humorului in Bukovina.

I cannot omit mentioning the good results we have realized through the Association's sponsorship of German language classes for those interested in learning German.

Because of the Association's many activities, the municipal government of Rio Negro, by its ordinance #743/1993, has named the Association a "public service organization." With this status the Association enjoys all the benefits provided by law.

I hope my description of our Association's activities has given you an idea its importance to the Bukovinian community of Rio Negro and Mafra. We are certain that our work has contributed much to rehabilitating the self-respect of our Bukovinians and has infused them with courage to face life as well as to develop pride in their origins and gain a knowledge of their history and traditions. The rejection of their heritage is now in the past. We have taken a long step in the recovery of our dignity and self-worth.

I wish to take this opportunity to invite you all to attend our 13<sup>th</sup> annual Bucovina Fest in Rio Negro scheduled to be held from July 4-6. All are welcome. Let's celebrate together in Brazil.



### **REVEREND EMIL WELISCH REMEMBERED**

by Dr. Sophie A. Welisch (Congers, NY)

As Markus Heiden, formerly of Pojana Mikuli (Buchenain), tells us: "the profession of priest was very popular among our compatriots" in Bukovina.<sup>1</sup> In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the average villager in Austria's easternmost crown land averaged four years of formal education, the priest held a unique position in the community. His knowledge and advice were respected and the villagers looked to him for leadership. In his formal and informal capacities the priest served as councilor, confessor, teacher, and transmitter of time-honored Church customs and traditions.

In order to encourage vocations from among the villagers, the Church in Bukovina sponsored the university education of a select number of young men who appeared as likely candidates for the priestly vocation. Their theological training was usually undertaken at the University of Lemberg (Lwow/Lviv) in Galicia, which in 1871 had adopted Polish as the language of instruction.

One such candidate for the priesthood was Emil Welisch, born in 1884, the grandson of the colonist Sebastian Wellisch,<sup>2</sup> a co-founder of the village of Bori in southern Bukovina. In Seewiesen in the Bohemian Forest Sebastian had worked as a serving man at the Poschingerhof (Poschinger estate). This essay is an attempt to delineate the highlights in the life and times of Emil Welisch, a man who selflessly dedicated himself to the service of others.

After opting for the priesthood, Emil Welisch first



attended the Armenian-Catholic preparatory school run by Prelate Kasproicz. Upon completion of his studies at this institution, he was accepted by the school of theology at the University of Lemberg, which culminated in his ordination in 1909. As was the custom of the day, Emil returned to his hometown Church of the Holy Trinity in Gurahumora to celebrate his first mass. One can only imagine the family's pride when their son, the priest, stood before the altar and delivered his homily. The first years of his professional activities took Emil to Sereth and Radautz, followed in 1911 by an assignment in Bukovina's capital of Czernowitz, where he was appointed as *Pfarrkooperator* (assistant pastor). During the World War I Russian occupation of northern Bukovina he became chief parish administrator; in this capacity he was able to intervene effectively on behalf of the population on numerous occasions.

The end of the war witnessed a struggle between Ukrainians and Romanians over the sovereignty of Bukovina. Since Romania had entered the war on the side of the Allies, its delegates were seated at the Paris peace talks where their case for territorial expansion fell on sympathetic ears. On the home front Bukovina's German minority on September 8, 1918 established the German Council (*Deutscher Volksrat*) to safeguard their interests in the Romanian national state. Emil Welisch, representing the Catholic clergy, served on its executive committee.<sup>3</sup>

In the interwar period we find Emil Welisch, with the title of Professor of Religion, teaching at the Boys' School (*Knabenschule*) on Siebenbürgerstrasse in Czernowitz. In addition to his teaching assignment, he was instrumental in helping to establish an orphanage in Czernowitz, called the *Josefinum*, moved to this task by the many children left orphaned by the war.<sup>4</sup>

An appeal for funds went out to all parishes and to the German cultural institutions which was then passed along orally from parishioner to parishioner. On September 26, 1919 at the German House on Herrengasse in Czernowitz, plans for a Catholic German Orphanage Association for Bukovina were finalized with Emil Welisch elected to serve on its executive committee. He continued to be affiliated with the *Josefinum*, in particular with the education of the children and with fund raising. A contribution of 10,000 Austrian crowns from the *Frankonia* fraternity is credited to his energy and enthusiasm.<sup>5</sup>

Before the transfer of the Bukovina Germans to Germany in 1940, Emil Welisch had also assumed the position of parish administrator in Hliboka (Adacata). From the private papers of his nephew, Jakob Welisch

(1931-1999), we learn that Emil returned for family visits to Gurahumora and Bori as often as time permitted. One of eleven children, he maintained a close relationship with his family, officiating at their marriages and baptisms. Several of his next-of-kin relocated to Czernowitz, where they lived until the en masse wartime transfer of the Germans.<sup>6</sup>

Little could Emil Welisch or the German population of Bukovina ever have imagined that with a stroke of a pen they would abandon hearth and home to be resettled in Germany. One hundred fifty years of pioneering work came crashing down, as over 95,000 Germans were transferred, albeit voluntarily, to Germany, to the *Ostmark* (Austria), and to Polish territories annexed by Germany in 1939. It did not take long before many became disillusioned, perhaps none more so than the clergy.

Nazi chicanery against the clergy, both Catholic and Protestant, began shortly after their arrival at their new locations in the Reich. In the transition camp of Nikolausheim in Ratibor (Racobórz), Lower Silesia, Pater Anastasius Sonntag, a member of the Trinitarian Order and former pastor in Augustendorf, faced daily degradations leading eventually to investigation and interrogation by the Gestapo. Through intervention and testimony of his former parishioners, the trumped-up charges against him were eventually dropped. Shortly before Easter 1941 Pater Anastasius settled in Vienna "a broken man."<sup>7</sup> Pater Georg Goebel, in Bukovina the Director of the *Josefinum* and Diocesan Director of the German Catholic Organization, was also imprisoned and after his release had to report weekly to the police in Breslau (Wroclau), Lower Silesia.<sup>8</sup>

Jakob Welisch notes that "in the Third Reich Professor Emil Welisch was confined to a work camp" but after a time was released. No one, not even his siblings, knew the reason for his detention. When later questioned about the duties he had to perform, he tersely replied, "to dispose of the dead," quickly followed by, "don't ask me anything more about it." After this experience he became less communicative. Emil was then assigned to a parish in Glatz (Kłodzko), Lower Silesia, where he remained until his death in 1954.<sup>9</sup> Given his negative experience in the Reich, his fluency in Polish, and his good relationship with his Polish parishioners and pupils, he did not flee to the West at the end of the war; nor did the post-war Polish administration expel him, as was the case with several million Germans in the territories assigned to Poland by the Potsdam Agreement in 1945.

But Emil's health was failing. In correspondence with

his family in the German Federal Republic, he frequently asked for medicines not available in Poland. News of his demise reached his relatives in the spring of 1954 via a letter from Margarete Lutz, Emil's housekeeper, who wrote:

I wish to inform you that the Reverend Professor had been ill since last fall, starting with phlebitis and severe cardiac failure, which he had neglected. This made it too late for a healing. Before Christmas the Reverend Professor lay at home for three weeks; while he seemed to be getting better, in January he nonetheless had to be hospitalized where everything possible was done for him. After four weeks he was discharged without improvement. His condition deteriorated at home.

The Reverend Professor suffered very patiently, so that we can learn from his example. He was very well prepared for death. After he received the blessed sacrament, he repeatedly said that his thoughts were now always in the higher realms. And quietly, without the throes of death, he passed away. During the day as well as at night Catholic sisters attended him and looked after his needs. We feel great sorrow, since he was a kind man, whom everyone loved. This explains the great participation at his funeral. He was interred at a site he himself had chosen. The wake lasted five days during which individuals as well as

processions came to his coffin and prayed. Requiem masses were said in all churches and chapels. The church where he was eulogized was beautifully decorated with palms, flowers and candelabra. At the funeral there participated: nineteen priests, fifty nuns and a countless number of men and women. The priest who conducted the service thanked the clerics and nuns and the faithful in his name. Since he had no relatives here, we all wanted to substitute for them. The school children, whom he had instructed in religion, ceremoniously covered his coffin with flowers. His possessions will be sold in order to pay for the funeral; there should also be enough to cover the expenses for a tombstone. The Reverend Professor gave his watch with chain, which he had brought from Czernowitz, to a cleric as a souvenir. I was very much affected, since I had served him for twelve years and now must vacate the apartment. His last words were that all his relatives whom this concerns be notified.<sup>10</sup> If the above letter truly reflects the sentiments of Emil's colleagues, parishioners, pupils and friends, one may reasonably conclude that he indeed faithfully fulfilled his life's ambition of service, while exemplifying the Bukovinians' characteristic ability to live peacefully and productively among people of different ethnic backgrounds.

The last of Emil's siblings died in 1997, bringing to a close a generation which reached maturity in Bukovina, experienced World War I and Russian military occupation, confronted the economic constraints of the interwar period, and in 1940 abandoned their homeland for an uncertain destiny. The hands of time have written, and having writ, move on.

<sup>1</sup> Markus Heiden, *Mein Versprechen: Die Maria-Wald Kapelle, Julbach/Bayern* (Oberding, Germany: Reimo Verlag Monika Reitmajer, 2001), p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> While the grandfather spelled his patronymic with a double L, the grandson, returning from Lemberg with superior knowledge, informed the family they had been misspelling the name for generations: it should be written with a single L.

<sup>3</sup> Emanuel Turczynski, "Das Deutschtum in der Landes- und Staatspolitik," in *Buchenland: 150 Jahre Deutschtum in der Bukowina*, ed. Franz Lang (Munich: Verlag des Südostdeutschen Kulturwerks, 1961), pp. 118-119. They sought the following: (1) proportional representation in local government; (2) limited national autonomy in local administration and education; (3) recognition of the *Volksrat* as the agency to guarantee autonomy; (4) equitable distribution of community holdings in communities with a significant German minority; (5) equitable settlement for German landowners in the event of agrarian reform; (6) civil service appointments based on ethnic proportionality; (7) recognition of the pension rights of civil servants, widows, orphans and war invalids; (8) representation of the Germans on matters relating to compensation for war losses, military service and future reconstruction; (9) a German university; and, (10) the right to maintain a German theater. Although the Romanian Provisional Government accepted all points but the last, events would soon prove otherwise.

<sup>4</sup> Georg Goebel, *20 Jahre Waisenhausverein—10 Jahre Josefinum: Ein Lob deutschen Opfersinns im Buchenlande* (Czernowitz: "Presa Buna," 1939), pp. 11-12.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> Jakob Welisch (Sondergay, Bavaria), private papers (hereinafter called Welisch Papers) in the possession of the author.

<sup>7</sup> Siegfried Mirwald, *Die Geschichte von bayrischen, deutsch-böhmischen Buchenländern* (2d ed.; Essen: By the author, 1997), p. 215.

<sup>8</sup> Norbert Gaschler, "Die katholisch-deutschen Priester und Gläubigen der Bukowina vor und nach der Umsiedlung," in *Mit Fluchtgepäck die Heimat verlassen: 50 Jahre seit der Umsiedlung der Buchenlanddeutschen*, eds. Irma Bornemann and Rudolf Wagner (Stuttgart/Munich: Landsmannschaft der Buchenlanddeutschen, 1990), p. 94.

<sup>9</sup> Welisch Papers.

<sup>10</sup> Letter dated May 3, 1954 from Margarete Lutz (Glatz) to Hellinger family (Wallersdorf, Bavaria) in Welisch Papers.

#### **Augustine-Flax Reunion**

-Saturday, July 26, 2003

-VFW Hall, Hays, Kansas

-Begins at 9:00 A.M. (Mass at 4:00 P.M.)

-Cost of Meal-\$9.00 adults, \$6.00 children

RSVP to Lawrence J. Flax

1937 Larson

Salina, KS 67401

e-mail Irvin Augustine at: [iaugustine@cox.net](mailto:iaugustine@cox.net)