



The Bukovina Society of the Americas NEWSLETTER

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Membership Dues:
Lifetime \$150.00
Annual \$15.00

SOCIETY NEWS

- Welcome to new life members: #207 Frank Collins, Las Vegas, NV; Zita Watzwalik, Los Angeles, CA; #206 Konrad Chmielewski, Victoria, Australia; and #207, Clint Meyers, Vancouver BC, Canada.
- We extend our sympathies to the family of Ralph Honas who died on September 2nd, 2013 with his loving family by his side. Ralph was a past president of the Society, attended and worked every function, and kept the headquarters in good repair.
- The Bukovina Society Board of Directors met on October 28, 2013 and elected officers for the ensuing year as contained in the letterhead. Elected as a new board member was Gilbert Augustine.
- A Buk-gen list subscriber called attention to the following interesting website. <http://www.stelijahpionermuseum.ca/>"<http://www.stelijahpionermuseum.ca/>



Newlyweds Nicole Eller and Alfred Wildfeuer are pictured at a reception in Ellis on August 28th, 2013, following their formal ceremony in Germany. They have been frequent visitors to the community while doing dialect research the past several years. They hosted the social and dinner for the many friends they have made here.

BUKOVINA SULPTURE DONATED TO SOCIETY

By: Guy Windholz

Renowned sculptor Pete Felten, whose studio is in Hays and the site of many tours during Bukovinafest celebrations, has limestone monuments in several states and also the Kanas Capital building in Topeka. Felten was a presenter at a prior Bukovinafest. Recently it was by chance we were both pumping gas at the same time in Hays and since I was scheduled to give a presentation on limestone buildings, I asked if he had a few minutes to visit. He said to meet him at his “shop” and when I pulled up, he showed me the small sculpture depicting immigrants from Bukovina to Ellis, Kansas. No one really knew he had done this, his interest in Kansas history is deep. I cleared my throat and asked him if the sculpture could be loaned to the Society to display at the 2013 Bukovinafest. Pete, with a wry smile, just said, “Take it”, and it now rests behind glass at the museum.



Sculptor Pete Felten with his tribute to the Bukovina Society.

2013 BUKOVINAFEST ROUND UP

By: Steve Parke

Through the extended weekend of October 3rd through October 6th, a little more than fifty Bukovina enthusiasts gathered in Ellis, Kansas, for a weekend of fun, interaction and programs. This article will attempt to summarize the major activities.

On Thursday evening about two dozen guests gathered at the Ellis County Club for an early bird social. A traditional German dinner was prepared and served at the Club by manager Shyrl Luea, and cooks Sheila Fisher, Ronald Bortzfield and Kyle Walker.

Later in the evening, many traveled across town to the Bukovina Society Headquarters for more discussion. It was quickly apparent that this was going to be a geographically diverse gathering of Bukovina enthusiasts. Attendees who traveled some distance included Nancy Hoedel and daughter Brandy from Alaska, Joe and Sherry Smith from British Columbia, Canada, Doug Reckmann from Oregon, Van and Mary Massirer from Texas, Becky and John Hageman and Vi McFeeters from Wichita, and Steve and Betty Augustine from Hesston. Local Bukovina descendents present included the surnames of Honas, Lang, Erbert, Deutscher, Gnad, Augustine, and Schuster. Others, including speakers who traveled considerable distance, will be mentioned as the article unfolds.

The first and major event on Friday was the 41st Annual Oktoberfest at Frontier Municipal Park in Hays near the grounds of Ft. Hays State University. The event is held on the University's Homecoming weekend. Opening ceremonies were at 11 AM but many of the Bukovina people were present by 10 AM, visiting the Bukovina Society display table as well as other historical, arts and crafts tables like those of the Ellis County Historical Society and the Sunflower Chapter of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia. Most helpful for the Bukovina Society was a large European display map that Oren and Guy Windholz had framed, showing the location of Bukovina and the routes of the German Swabian, Bohemian, and Zipser migrations to Bukovina. This visual was very popular and will be a repeat display.

By 9 AM on Saturday morning local Board members were gathering at the museum in preparation for the days events. The local Board of Directors as listed on the newsletter heading and other volunteers are here noted as they did the preparatory work, especially at the museum, also the society headquarters. For those who may or may not have been to the museum recently, a new display created by Guy Windholz was present. Several dozen family photos from the early 1900s are in the frame display for easy viewing.

Opening ceremonies were conducted by President Marcy McClelland and included an invocation by Steve Parke and a welcome by Jolene Niernberger, Ellis City Councilwoman who expressed the need to learn about the local Bukovina group.

At this time we acknowledged the special guests who had misfortune in route to the Conference. Anni and Klaus Haeusler, who first proposed the possibility of this Bukovina gathering, were traveling to Ellis when Klaus had a heart attack in the Denver airport. He was rushed to a Denver area hospital and survived the trauma. Within the week, he and Anni returned to Munich, Germany for further medical care. As we began our event their inspired but interrupted journey and efforts were acknowledged. Their vision and prompting led us to this event for which we are very grateful. We send our thoughts and prayers for Klaus' continued recovery.

With just a few days notice of the Haeusler's interrupted trip, a volunteer stepped forward with an alternate but similar talk. Maria Becker who had traveled with her husband, Ed, from New York presented on "The Umsiedlung (Relocation) from Bukovina during World War II". Maria has presented and written on this topic for the Bukovina Society several times before but her personal delivery of events experienced as a child in the village of Bori is always moving. Al Lang of the Kansas City area added to her comments, speaking of his visits to Germany. This program closed with a review of the slides prepared by Anni and Klaus Haeusler covering their recent trip to Bukovina.

Next up was Steve Parke from Colorado who presented on the Bukovina Germans of Ellis and Trego County, Kansas. His focus was on the early German Swabian and German Bohemian settlers in the Ellis area from 1886 to 1921 with the most immigrating from 1900-1905. An interesting topic was the village and family chain migration process. During this hour Doug Reckmann spoke briefly on the work that he and Gertrud Siewi are doing researching the Czech Republic online digitalized archives to find the Bohemian Forest villages of origin for the families that moved to Bukovina. Later, Ken Stillinger of Omaha noted that this presentation's phrase "Ellis, Kansas" could be replaced with "Yuma, Colorado" and the story would be quite similar.

After lunch Herman Ottschofski, also from Colorado, presented. He is of German Zipser descent, was born in the Bukovina village of Eisenau, and experienced the relocation of 1940 as a one year old. Herman has visited Bukovina three times, the most recent visit being in 2012. He showed colorful slides from his recent visit to Bukovina. He also showed some maps, the most interesting being a color coded version of a settlement map by Hugo Weczerka showing the different areas of settlement, generally speaking, for the German Bohemians, Swabians, and Zipzers in Bukovina, a very helpful visual.

Michael Augustin of Leonberg, Germany, then did a series of three short programs. Michael was in Ellis with his wife, Baerbel, visiting relatives while attending the conference. He has visited Bukovina three times and continues to gather significant Bukovina based material. During his most recent visit in May 2013 some long lost gravesites were found as well as some Augustin family records in an Orthodox Church, an unexpected find. He also used ancestral charts to show how the Augustins in the U.S., Canada and Germany are connected. Michael's trips to Bukovina have created a very complete, contemporary pictorial review of our ancestral villages, the most complete package this writer has seen to date. While traveling with family and friends, his tour guide has been Roland Loy, a first cousin of Sophie Welisch, Bukovina historian. Michael also has a fondness for the world acclaimed painted monasteries in Bukovina and showed a 15 minute documentary on such to conclude his portion of the program.

Zita Watzlawik who attended the Conference with her daughter, Zita, both of Los Angeles, California, spoke next. From 1912 to 1930 her Bukovina ancestors, the family of Johann and Petrona Watzlawik, moved from the Bukovina farming village of Augustendorf to urban Buenos Aires, Argentina, in a four part chain migration process. The ravages of World War I created some painful separation years for the family but eventually they were reunited in Argentina. Today Watzlawik descendents are in Argentina as well as Brazil and the United States and number over 110. Zita visited Bukovina in 2011 with the Augsburg Bukovina Institute under the leadership of Luzian Geier. She shared slides from that trip as well as joy over the understanding of how they could be Germans from Austria, Bukovina and Romania all at the same time.

We had a full day as the presentations continued. Next we had a most unique program from natives of Romania. Akos "Ben" and Krisztina Bencze, current Ellis County, Kansas residents spoke about living in Romania during the reign of President Ceausescu and shared contemporary photos. They are ethnic Hungarians from Baia Mare, in the northwest area of Romania just west of Romanian Bukovina. Ben spoke of his experiences growing up as a boy as well as the changes that have taken place in his city since 1989. The journeys of his family lead them to America in 2001 and to Ellis County more recently. Just like many of our Bukovina German ancestors he's still adapting to the High Plains wind.

After this presentation we had a short Annual Meeting as required by the Bukovina Society of the Americas by-laws. Routine business was conducted by President Marcy

McClelland as well as current issues discussed in part. Gratitude was expressed for the Bukovina Society website and the facilitation of such by Werner Zoglauer.

That evening we gathered at a new restaurant in Ellis, the Cancun, located at the site of the former Alloway's Restaurant. The Cancun serves Mexican-American dishes quite well and thus the cultural diversity theme of this Bukovina Fest continued . . . As we had some pre-dinner drinks, the Watzlawik's provided a Buenos Aires Tango demo to music provided by DJ Guy Windholz. Little did the Ellis crowd know that Guy himself could dance the tango with moves he dubbed the "Bukovina Tango". Until this event most of us have known Ellis County as polka country.

After a fine and filling dinner at the Cancun, we settled back for what would now be a tame presentation by Guy on the use of limestone rock in the Ellis County area. In the earliest of settlement time limestone was used for fence posts, buildings and even a bridge or two. A video depicting limestone cutting technique was shown. Limestone is also the raw material for art and local sculptor Pete Felten has done many such creations. One of the most significant would be the 40 ton buffalo near the Fort Hays State Historic Site. He also has four statues gracing the state capital rotunda in Topeka. Felten donated a statuette named "Bucovina to Ellis" to the BSA. It is now at the BSA Museum.

Sunday morning several small groups of people gathered at two local churches for services, St. Mary's Catholic Church in Ellis and St. John's Lutheran Church north of Ellis. Planners saw this action as a fitting manner to honor some of our religious roots as well as provide visitors an opportunity to visit the local churches and meet other Bukovina descendents. The respective pastors welcomed BSA visitors.

In summary this was quite the event. Those who were able to attend were treated to a well versed and active group of researchers and enthusiasts from across the country and several continents. Of those who formally spoke, three have lived in what we now call Romania at some point in their lives and five to six more of the speakers have visited old Bukovina at least once. Local Board members and volunteers kept the lively events moving from one facility to another. And local residents were treated to an event that comes to town only once every few years. This one will be hard to repeat.

YUMA COUNTY, COLORADO BUKOVINIANS

By: Ken Stillinger

One thing I learned from my trip to Ellis for the 2013 Bukovinafest, is that the BSA has very little, if any, information on the Yuma County, Colorado colony of Bukovinians. So, therefore, I will be making a good attempt to get information to the Society on this colony. Yuma Bukovina settlers consisted of some 30 families, of which about 24 families were directly related through the Schatz family. Colorado House Hotel in Denver was a place of employment for some of the young women of the Bukovina community. The families of Yuma had their own "Bukovina Society" and would meet at the Colorado House during weekends and visit their daughters working there.

Because of drought and locusts in 1894, 20 of these families relocated to Dorchester Wisconsin for one year, then to Boone County, Nebraska, where they stayed until this day, numbering several hundred now living in Boone County, and surrounding counties.

Another large colony of Glitt/ Lichtenberg/Solka area Bukovinians immigrated to Detroit from 1902 to 1914. to work in the auto industry. Ken and other associates now have the immigration records, and many census records of over 300 families from Detroit.



The Bukovina-German band of 1893. Some of the Bukovina Germans who left Nebraska to settle in Yuma County, Colorado, in 1886 returned to Nebraska in the early 1890s and settled near Randolph and Albion, Nebraska, where this picture was taken.

SOCIETY MUSEUM PHOTO DISPLAY

By: Guy Windholz

A new and exciting project of the Bukovina Society is the placement and storage of photos of our forebears who came to America from Bukovina. It came about when some two dozen photos from the Frank Schneller collection were taken to the Bukovina Institut in Augsburg, Germany on a visit by Paul Polansky, Irmgard Ellingson and Oren and Pat Windholz in 1989. The photos were enlarged for a display at the 40th annual meeting of their society. The photos were brought back to Ellis by Dr. Ortfried and Marie Louise Kotzian. The Bukovina Society board decided a fitting display of them should be made.

Art Honas, Joe Erbert and I assembled a donated display rack placed spanning a length of nine feet with two rows of inserts that will contain 320 sides that could display up to a size of 13 inches wide by 19 inches high. I volunteered to do the photo edits and work with the printer of this newsletter to enlarge old photos. The first of the photos went on display at 2013 Bukovinafest. The board asks all members to search their albums for ancestral photos to add to this preservation project. All originals will be returned. Contact any board member or email to gwindholz@media-net.net.



The new photo display which is getting many additions for display.

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