



# The Bukovina Society of the Americas NEWSLETTER

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e-mail: sawelisch@juno.com

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## BUKOVINA PEOPLE AND EVENTS

- On July 12, 2004 the annual meeting of the Bukovina Society took place at the headquarters in Ellis. Elected to fill the expiring terms as Board members were Oren Windholz, Raymond Haneke, Norma Lang and Irmgard Ellingson. The financial report confirmed \$6,067.35 in the general fund and \$21,935.85 in the life member restricted fund. Following the annual meeting, the Board of Directors convened to elect Oren Windholz, President; Raymond Haneke, Vice President; Martha McClelland, Secretary; and Bernie Zerfas, Treasurer.
- There is a new look on your envelope, a computer generated label. The manual system at our headquarters was merged with the online memberships received to create a database that will serve us well in future years. Thanks to Becky Hageman and Werner Zoglauer who turned our files into a modern address system. The new labels will indicate the time for renewal and a notice will be included in the *Newsletter* for the various payment options.
- Brigitte Haas from Durach, Germany will be visiting the United States from October 2<sup>nd</sup> through 24<sup>th</sup>. She will be particularly interested in meeting cousins of Bukovina heritage. Scheduled visits are, in order, New York, Chicago, Wichita, Ellis, Pueblo and Phoenix. Her ancestral names traced to the Ellis, Kansas area include: Aschenbrenner, Gaschler, Haas, Kohlruess, Schuster and Weber. If anyone is interested in meeting Brigitte at one of the above locations, please contact the Bukovina Society.
- Reinhold and Margaret Boschwitzki marked their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on July 4, 2004. Their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary was celebrated as part of the first Bukovinafest in Ellis in 1989. At that time, Reinhold pulled up to the banquet hall in the 25 year-old black Cadillac he had bought brand new to take his bride to the church on July 4, 1964. The Society's evening banquet included a reenactment of a *Hochzeit* (wedding) with numerous German traditions for the couple.
- The Society's museum has been included by the Hays Convention and Visitors Bureau for tour groups which visit the other Ellis museums and Ellis County churches. Board members volunteer as hosts during these events.
- The Society's was informed of the death March 5, 2004 of Dr. Rudolf Geimer in Mainz, Germany. Dr. Geimer was a special guest speaker at the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Bukovinafest July 16-18, 1992, one of 5 people at the convention born in Bukovina. At that time he also visited with cousins of the Schoenthaler family in Ellis. Dr. Geimer was a noted genealogist and editor of three separate genealogical studies (on the Bukovinan families of Geimer, Renner, and Uhrich), published by the Kaindl Society in Stuttgart, Germany.
- The Society extends its heartfelt sympathy to Professor Ayrton Gonçalves Celestino (Curitiba, Brazil) on the passing of his wife, Alryde on May 23 of this year. Professor Celestino was co-founder of our sister organization in Brazil, the Associação Alemã - Bucovina de Cultura - ABC and served as its president for many years. May he and his loved ones find peace and serenity in the trying days ahead.
- The Bukovina Society established an archive for preservation of books and documents very early in its founding in the Center for Ethnic Studies at Ft. Hays State University in Hays. At the first Bukovinafest in 1989, distinguished speakers visited the Center to donate the initial materials, and the collection has been expanded by donations of Society members. Established in 1977, the Center was first funded by the Volga German Society of Ellis County and is dedicated to the study of ethnic groups who settled in Kansas. The collections are stored in a controlled access research room in Forsyth Library on the campus of the university. We invite members to contribute their Bukovina-related artifacts and documents for the Society's archives and museum in order to help preserve and perpetuate our heritage for posterity.

# MY EXPERIENCES WITH THE BUKOVINA SOCIETY

by Gertrud Siewi, née Rankel (Tiefenbach, Germany)

Last year I wrote my Rankel family history, consulted my father's descendancy chart (Ahnenpass), and constructed a genealogy. Thus began the search for my forebears, which since then has left me no peace.

In June 2003 I turned to the Internet. My first attempt at "genealogy" via the Google search engine led me to the web site of the Bukovina Society. My heart began to beat faster. On August 13, 2003 I dared make an entry in the guest book. On October 14, 2003 Doug Reckmann responded. He wrote that he has "Rankel" in his genealogy database, and there is certainly something in it for me. That is how the transfer of data began. All of a sudden I had a tremendously large family. In the meantime I established contacts in Germany and the United States with Rankel family members as well as with families into which Rankels had married. Our "illusive" Uncle Franz Rankel, born September 19, 1899 in Lichtenberg, Bukovina had immigrated to America. The family never heard from him again. This had been the purpose of my research. On January 25, 2004 Richard Wolff (his grandmother was Pauline Rankel, married to Hugo Wolff) of California, notified me that he had found Franz Rankel on a passenger list. He sailed on the *Aurania* and on July 22, 1928 disembarked in the harbor of Quebec City.

The information at the disposal of the Bukovina Society is so comprehensive and wide-ranging that it is almost impossible to stop searching. As I wrote to President Oren Windholz: This page is my "home."

I am especially pleased with my latest contact, Werner Zoglauer. Hopefully I will be able to get more information about former Bukovinian compatriots.

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## BUKOVINA'S LUTHERAN COMMUNITY\*

by Ekkehart Lebouton

In this context it is neither possible nor do I have the requisite sources to make a comprehensive presentation on this theme. Therefore, this essay only sketches Protestant community life and the impact of select personalities on the development of German national life in Bukovina.

From the standpoint of the Protestants such a picture is easier to present than for the Catholics, since the Evangelical-Lutheran denomination in the southeastern area [of Europe] was almost exclusively German. This fact distinguishes the Lutheran Church in a special way from other denominations in matters concerning its role in support of this ethnic group.

When Germans were settling in Bukovina after 1775, the church was still the focal point of community life in Germany. While in the West, especially since the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, society had begun emancipating itself from the church, secularization in southeastern Europe proceeded more slowly. In any event at the time of the settlement, it was characteristic of the Catholics as well as of the Lutherans to have a church as the center of their community life. Therefore, in the villages the Lutheran communities established schools under church control, while in the cities, above all in Czernowitz under Spleny and Enzenberg, the first schools were state-run.

Relations with the Transylvania Saxons and colonists in Galicia impacted the ecclesiastical development of Lutheranism in Bukovina. As early as the Middle Ages Transylvania Saxon merchants and craftsmen could be found in the towns of Sereth and Suczawa. But after the Germans had been annihilated in 1563, the influx ceased. Also episodic was the settlement of Protestant artisans in Sadagora by Gartenberg, who, during the Russo-Turkish War of 1770 founded a Russian mint there, and the frontier establishment of Zaleszczyki, where in 1759 Count Poniatowski, with permission of the Moldavian Prince Ioan Tudor, opened a cloth factory on Bukovinian territory on which he settled Lutheran Germans from Prussia. The colonization of the Protestants under Maria Theresa proceeded very reluctantly, since the Empress was not willing to grant them religious freedom. It was only after Joseph II's Patent of Toleration (1781) that larger groups of Protestants began migrating to the Austrian lands.

At first there came artisans, merchants, artists and officials from the western crown lands of Banat and Galicia, some of whom were Lutheran. Soon salt and iron deposits were discovered in southern Bukovina after which German Lutheran miners from the Zips and Transylvania were brought in. Thus between 1784 and 1809 there arose the mining villages of Jakobeny, Kirlibaba, Luisenthal, Eisenau and Freudenthal.

The "Swabians," who had arrived via Galicia from various western German states and were for the most part Lutheran, were settled in the villages of Arbora, Fratautz, Illischestie, Itzkany, Milleschoutz-Radautz, St. Onufry, Satulmare, and Tereblestie

New Lutheran families followed them via Galicia, taking up roots in the communities of Balaczana, Hliboka, Satulmare, Storozynetz, and Unter-Stanestie. Because of the high birth rate in the first stem settlements, there arose daughter colonies including: Alexanderdorf, Katharinendorf, Neu-Zadowa and finally Nikolausdorf in 1893.

It is noteworthy that the first settlers did not discontinue their contacts with the old homeland so that the national union with the band of believers and the old German states was maintained. This led in 1817 to the visit of the tanner apprentice Johann Georg Zachmann from Illischestie to the hometown of his father in Kieselbronn near Pforzheim, who wrote to his parents that they should take the necessary steps there to see to an inheritance.

Most pastors came from Transylvania or Galicia with some also from Germany. Until the end of the First World War the Lutheran Church in Bukovina was organized as a seniority within the framework of the Galician superintendency A. and H.B. and under the Evangelical Upper Church Council in Vienna. Before the outbreak of the First World War this eastern seniority (eastern Galicia and Bukovina) was in the Galician-Bukovina superintendency of Biala with eleven parishes, twenty-one affiliated communities, nine preaching stations, sixteen schools, and 25,698 congregants under the higher jurisdiction of Vienna.

After the union of Bukovina with Romania, the Bukovinian section of this seniority joined the Transylvanian church. In a special way this connection was not only a haven of faith but also a bastion of German national life. With German no longer the state language, Bukovina's German minority was able to draw strength from Transylvania. However, they were not only takers but also givers, which was proven in the person of the former Czernowitz municipal pastor Dr. Glondys, who, soon after the war, was called to be municipal pastor in

Kronstadt and elected as Saxon bishop. His predecessor in Czernowitz, the Transylvanian Dr. Fronius, who pioneered important developments in ecclesiastical as well as in ethnic affairs in Czernowitz, played a reciprocal role in Bukovina's capital city.

In that Czernowitz became the provincial capital, it also held decisive importance for Protestant life in Bukovina. The twenty-seven Lutheran families who lived in Rosch and Sadagora in 1786 had already increased to sixty-eight families with 400 people by 1786, 4,300 by 1898, and 6,000 by the outbreak of the First World War. The number then sank to about 5,280 and by the time of the resettlement (1940) again rose to 5,668, of which the suburb of Rosch held a significant number. One-third of the Germans were Protestants, a proportion which also applied across the board to the total number of Germans in Bukovina. But while in the agricultural communities we are dealing with self-contained Lutheran or Catholic settlements, in Czernowitz and other cities the problem of denominational intermingling within the German community arose, thus burdening German national life. As long as the Germans had been the state people [with German the official language], this division was not serious, but when they became a minority, their very survival stood in jeopardy until they could resolve their denominational disputes in a supra-denominational organization. But this presented new problems for the church. Aside from the church as central focus of mutual coexistence, a second issue arose. If, as in Transylvania, church and ethnic communities were unified, it would have been easy to divide the tasks. But in Bukovina this was not the case. The situation was made more difficult by the fact that in the Catholic Church the Polish element agitated against such a union.

The organizers of the Bukovina seniority were Pastors Jenkner and Fronius. Reverend Johann Gottlieb Jenkner from Dornfeld in Galicia ran a disciplined authoritarian regime in church matters. Under his energetic leadership a new church, a parsonage and a school were built in Czernowitz. In 1849 Superintendent Haase consecrated the new church. That same year the parsonage was constructed on the same site where the old church had formerly stood. In 1853 a new school could also be opened, whose first rector was Dornfeld-born Friedrich Mayer. With his election the community made a very good choice. Rector Mayer and his successors gave the community a series of important personages with leadership abilities. In 1862 Jenkner became senior pastor of the eastern Galician seniority, which then transferred from Ugartsthal to Bukovina and then vacillated between Czernowitz and Radautz until the end. Jenkner also became assistant school district inspector.

Robert Fronius, a Transylvanian, was accustomed to having the church as the center of public life and extending its influence beyond a denominational framework. As an especially good speaker he functioned well not only when greeting Emperor Francis Joseph and Crown Prince Rudolf, but also at national gatherings. As an educator he knew the importance of the school for the education and maintenance of national identity. He was successful in securing additional funds for the school in Czernowitz and in building a residence for the teachers. In the agricultural communities the former parochial schools passed entirely under state control so that after 1913 there were Lutheran schools only in Czernowitz, Alexanderdorf, Katharinendorf, Neu-Itzkany and Stanestie. Attempts were again made to establish a denominational school system. In the wake of the energetic Romanization of the state schools after 1918, German education could be safeguarded only through a church-run system. Czernowitz retained its elementary school, and since it also accepted German Catholic

pupils, it made a significant contribution in furthering German ethnicity. Before the [1940] resettlement Lutheran parochial schools included the seven-class elementary school in Czernowitz and one-room elementary schools in Alexanderdorf, Katharinendorf, Neu-Itzkany, Unter-Stanestie, and Zadowa. In addition, there were three Lutheran kindergartens in Czernowitz and one in Jakobeny as well as a Lutheran orphanage, a gymnasium, and a banquet hall in Czernowitz.

That churches were also constructed in almost all communities affiliated with Czernowitz is self-explanatory. After the First World War they were mainly independent parishes. Fronius was able to give them financial support primarily through contributions of the Gustav Adolf Society. In his appeals to the Gustav Adolf Society in Germany he described the plight of the communities and concluded in a report of 1897: "My fondest moments were always those, when permitted to do so, to stand before the community in question with a donation from the Gustav Adolf Society and be able to tell them: See, this was sent to you by your co-religionist brothers and sisters in Germany with the sole wish that you remain Lutheran and German in your far-off homeland."

Fronius also tried to strengthen the German colonies through the promotion of German immigration, through improvement of German agriculture, and through advancement of the banking system. In order to raise the salary of the German teachers, he negotiated with the German School Society. Six times he was elected as Regional School Counsel, where for thirty-two years he worked on behalf of German educational matters. Where he could not construct a parochial school, he sought to establish German parallel classes in the public schools with Romanian, Ruthenian or Polish as the language of instruction and to employ German teachers. He also promoted the hiring of German district school inspectors. So one can safely say that his achievements in these decades before the First World War prepared the Bukovina German community for the difficult post-war period.

The newspaper, Bukowiner Nachrichten, announced his seventieth birthday on March 3, 1911 with the words: "Catholics and Protestants honor him as one of the best German men of Bukovina, in addition to being a particularly worthy and conscientious clergyman." And when in 1912 he retired, the same paper noted, among other things: "As a German, Fronius was no political partisan in the customary sense of the term, and yet he was the best, truest, and most devoted leader, teacher and advocate of the German people." Through the years Fronius was also chief delegate of the regional group of the German School Society.

Imbued with his spirit, his successors also worked for the church and ethnic community in exemplary fashion, above all Senior Martin Decker in Radautz, Hargesheimer in Itzkany and Czernowitz, Fischer in Tereblestie, Gorgon in Illischestie, Dr. V. Glondy, Dr. W. Arz and A. Herrmann in Czernowitz. During this time decisive changes and enhancements in church life were taking place, as for example the annexation to the Transylvanian church (1921-1927).

For the maintenance of church and ethnicity the rural community gained more significance in the course of time, since community life, above all in agricultural circles, was more intensely fostered there than in the cities. According to the first reliable census in 1869, we find 10,479 Protestant Germans as opposed to 29,502 Catholic Germans. Until 1927 the Protestant percentage increased from 26 to 29 percent, which can be attributed to the higher birth rate in the Swabian villages. Particularly significant settlements included the almost purely German

Protestant communities of Alt Fratautz, Badeutz, Eisenau, Freudenthal, Illischestie, Illischestie, Jakobeny, Neu-Itzkany, Luisenthal, Satulmare, and Tereblestie. If one reads the publication of the Society for Christian Germans in Bukovina for 1922, edited by the Lutheran chairman of the Society, Dr. Adolf Butz, it becomes evident that it was the Lutheran communities who in the first instance spearheaded the German work of this Society. The Society established the first libraries in Hliboka, Illischestie, (Molodia), Neu Itzkany and Satulmare. Dr. Butz earned significant distinction for the fostering of German ethnic life not only as the Society's chairman but also as director of the Protestant girls' high school in Czernowitz (founded 1927). In the framework of this organization there worked one of the most important men in Bukovina: Raimund Friedrich Kaindl, about whom I need say no more. Secondary school teacher Christian Müller from the Lutheran school in Czernowitz directed the Society's choir. The construction of the "German House" in Czernowitz as focal point of German life in Bukovina is due to the efforts of privy councilor Dr. Rudolf Wolf. With most of the Society's members coming from the communities of Eisenau, Hliboka, Illischestie, Itzkany, Jakobeny, Molodia, Poschoritta, Radautz, Satulmare, Suczawa, and Tereblestie, the majority were Lutheran. As before, an important fulcrum of German life was Rosch, whose local group sponsored the annual equinox celebrations on the Cecina (mountain). The ethnic houses or "German Houses" gradually became the second center of German life after to the church so that community life constituted an ellipsis between two centers – church and German House –which mutually supplemented and enriched each other.

It would be too detailed to note all the parsons, personalities and families, which from the Lutheran side contributed to the ethnic community. In conclusion I would only like to mention two distinguished Lutheran personalities: the provincial representative Fritz Kipper from Illischestie, who in the early post-war years did much for German national life in Bukovina and whose memorial is perpetuated in a large relief portrait on the "German House" in Czernowitz, and Professor Dr. Alois Lebouton, who in the interwar period was not only counsel for the "Association of German Agricultural Cooperatives," which worked to guarantee the German farmers a modicum of material security, but who also served as educator and representative, i.e., senator to rebuild the collapsed German school system. A solid agricultural community, a good school, and a true church are the fundamentals of a flourishing community.

In 1934 Bukovina had the following Lutheran parishes and members

<u>Founded</u>	<u>Members</u>
1791 Radautz (Satulmare, Badeutz, Milleschoutz, Arbora)	1,982
1795 Czernowitz (Unter-Stanestie)	5,668
1852 (Jakobeny (Dorna, Kirlibaba)	2,122
1858 (Illischestie (Gurahumora, Korlata, Balaczana, Brasca)	2,969
1902 New Itzkany (Mitoka-Dragomirna, Suczawa)	1,178
1902 Hliboka (Terescheny)	452
1905 Deutsch-Tereblestie (Sereth)	1,189
1908 Alt Fratautz (Neu Fratautz)	1,878
1923 Storozynetz (Zadowa, Nikolausdorf, Katharinendorf, Alexanderdorf)	1,127
1925 Eisenau (Frassin, Freudenthal)	1,484
1925 Poschoritta (Luisenthal, Kimpolung)	1,346
	21,395

The annual population increase averaged 1.5 percent, so that at the time of the resettlement the Protestant Germans numbered about

25,000 of the 75,000 Germans in Bukovina.

In 1938 the deaconate passed to Reverend Edgar Müller in Storozynetz, a position he held until the resettlement. Pastor Hans Rein of Radautz functioned as senior.

The Russian occupation of Bukovina in 1939 [sic] and the resulting resettlement brought down with one stroke 150 years in the development of Protestant life in Bukovina. In November 1940 the Bukovina deaconate ceased to exist.

When Germany recalled the settlers to their homeland in order to withdraw them from a lost outpost, it was again above all the Lutheran communities and pastors who unreservedly supported the action. With heavy hearts they abandoned not only their homeland but also the churches and cemeteries. The recently deceased Heinrich Kipper, a sort of spokesman for the German Lutherans in Bukovina, described one of the many farewell celebrations in Illischestie, where at a church service and a last visit to the cemetery on November 17, 1940, Pastor Ludwig Hehn, among others, said: "The funeral mounds of our dead will be witnesses and memorials of German work and of a German past in this land."

At the time of the resettlement in 1940 the following pastors were serving the Evangelical communities in Bukovina:

- Deacon Rudolf Fischer, pastor in Tereblestie, after the resettlement parish duties in Hindenburg, Upper Silesia, died December 3, 1953;
- Pastor Ludwig Hehn, pastor in Illischestie, after the resettlement refugee pastor in Biala, Upper Silesia, killed in action on the eastern front;
- Pastor Wilhelm Hehn, pastor in Eisenau, after the war pastor in Ihringhausen near Kassel;
- Pastor Franz Hochhauser, pastor in Alt Fratautz; after the resettlement returned to his homeland in Styria [Austria]
- Pastor Franz Florian Manz, pastor in Hliboka, after the resettlement, second pastor in Kutno, now serving the Bavarian regional church in Schierling, District of Mällersdorf;
- Pastor Edwin Mohr, pastor in Poschoritta, after the resettlement enlisted in the German army; killed on the eastern front;
- Deacon Edgar Müller, pastor in Storozynetz, after the resettlement pastor and superintendent in Pabianice, Warteland, now pastor in Hattenhofen, District of Göttingen;
- Pastor and Senior Hans Rein, pastor in Radautz, after his release as a POW, parson in Gönheim, District of Dürkheim, Palatinate; died 1955;
- Pastor Herbert Rückemann, second pastor in Czernowitz, after the resettlement in the service of the Lutheran Church of Brunswick died 1952.

In addition the following Bukovina pastors were in the service of the Lutheran Church in Transylvania:

- Pastor Hugo Kuczera, now in Endersbach, District of Waiblingen in the Württemberg regional church;
- Pastor Harald Müller, now in Ottrau ü Treysa-Hessen;
- Pastor Ekkehard Lebouton, now in Bad Gastein, Austria.

Bibliography has been omitted in the interest of space.

\*Ekkehart Lebouton, "Der evangelische Anteil am deutschen Leben in der Bukowina," [The Protestant Constituency in German Life in Bukovina], in *Buchenland: 150 Jahre Deutschtum in der Bukowina*, ed. Franz Lang, trans. Sophie A. Welisch (Munich: Verlag des Südostdeutschen Kulturwerks, 1961), pp. 257-266.

*Leon Loy with his mother Cäcilie (1916 - ) and sisters Angela (1934 - ) and Maria (1940 - )*  
*Photo: Seehuasen, German Democratic Republic, 1947)*



## LEON'S STORY\*

by Leon Loy (Baldwinsville, NY)

In reflecting on my life's experiences I find that the most turbulent and formative years were those of my childhood. Born in 1937 in Paltinossa, Bukovina, the son of Adam Loy (1906-1947) and Cäcilie (1916 - ), also surnamed Loy, I was named Leon, coincidentally the given name of both my grandfathers, neither of whom I ever knew. My maternal grandfather had died in the flu pandemic, which raged during the last two years of World War I; my paternal grandfather, who for several years had lived in Detroit, Michigan, died in 1932. Since they were related in the fourth degree of kinship, my parents were able to marry without papal dispensation.

As millions of other people in Eastern Europe the Bukovinians were overwhelmed by the events, which engulfed their region as a consequence of World War II. We Bukovinians of German descent were evacuated to Germany in the fall of 1940 in anticipation of being resettled. Given my young age at this time, there is very little I recall of these early years. I do know we were first registered in a camp near Kirchberg on the Raab near Graz (Styria, Austria) where my parents, sisters Angela and Maria and I shared a single room with my Uncle Leopold "Poldi" Loy (1908-1998), his wife Elisabeth "Lisi" (Jockel) Loy (1915-1993) and an unrelated family from Paltinossa. While we children found sleeping in bunk beds and eating cafeteria style to be adventurous, the older generation did not share these sentiments. We remained in the camp until the spring of 1941.

After a few applications to the VoMi (Volksdeutschemittelstelle, Ethnic German Central Office), we were able to settle in the same village as my two uncles (Poldi and Anton Loy [1907-1982]) and their families. The place: Wola Grzymalina in the District of Klezow in Warthegau (German-occupied Poland). The euphoria of resettlement, if one can speak of such, evaporated when we saw our new accommodations, which fell far below expectations. Nonetheless, my father was able to get a job in his field, which was forestry. It was in Wola that my brother, Hermann, was born in the fall of 1944.

Momentous for me were the closing weeks of 1944 when gunfire and bombardment got increasingly louder. Although we were told these were only field maneuvers, the elder generation talked of the collapse of the Eastern front. My father, as well as all the able-bodied German males age fourteen and over, had long since been drafted into military service, leaving women, children and the elderly to fend for themselves against the partisans and the impending Soviet steamroller.

December, 1944 was our last Christmas in Wola, and a sad one it was. In late December we four siblings came down with the measles. Although my sisters and I recovered, our brother Hermann died on Christmas Eve and was buried in the local cemetery without the customary religious rites. Since the German occupation, the village church had stood empty, its Polish priest sent to labor in a coal mine. On January 11 the villagers were notified that they should be packed and prepared to evacuate the area within forty-eight hours.

For our flight out of the war zone my grandmother, Maria (Braun) Loy (1882-1965), had prepared smoked ham and bacon. The convoy, with covered wagons and horses, included fifteen families, three of them the Loy families, as well as a Red Cross nurse and a group leader assigned by the authorities. Fields and roads were covered with ice and snow for the entire three weeks during which we were en route. On the first night out we encountered retreating German troops, which forced us off the road. Given the poor road conditions, our wagon overturned, and while my sisters and mother were thrown free, I was trapped underneath and unable to free myself. In desperation my mother called out for the German soldiers to help her son. The reply she got is with her still: "Verrecken soll er!" (He should croak!) With the assistance of my aunts the wagon was eventually set upright, and I emerged uninjured.

German authorities had established reception centers to assist the refugees with food and supplies. In some cases vacated houses along the way provided temporary accommodations. Danger also loomed overhead from daily British and American air raids. During an air raid we abandoned the wagons and ran for cover, wherever that might be. No fires were permitted at night so as not to alert the planes of our presence. During a bombing raid on the city of Cottbus, which we had just left twenty-four hours earlier, we saw the night sky turn to day while the very earth trembled under our feet. On one occasion my mother, who had reached the breaking point of endurance, defiantly stood next to our wagon and shook her fist at the dive bombers. "Here I am," she shouted. "Drop your bombs right over here and put an end to this misery." Happily, they neither saw nor heard her.

Our strength lay in the fact that we were traveling as a group and able to help each other. When one of our two horses died, we teamed up with my Aunt Lisi Loy. It was during the flight that Hedwig, the two-month old infant of my Aunt Lena (Hilgarth) Loy (1908-1990), died of malnutrition and exposure. We buried the child along the side of the road. Aunt Lena's son, my twelve-year old cousin Theodor (1933 - ), often took the reins of the horses and drove the wagon. On one occasion my mother's shoes froze to her feet; on another she fell asleep while walking alongside the horses. For the very young and the very old these were trying times indeed. My grandmother, who felt she was more a hindrance than a help, implored us to leave her along the wayside and go on without her. And my sister Angela, in her need to quench her thirst from the salty meat, frequently jumped off the wagon to eat snow, causing the convoy to come to a halt and our fellow passengers to vent their frustration.

In mid-February 1945 we arrived at what was to become our end destination: Seehausen in the state of Sachsen-Anhalt in northern Germany. Seehausen is a small village near Wittenberg, the town where in 1517 Martin Luther nailed up his ninety-five theses, thus triggering the Reformation. In Seehausen we were assigned quarters at the home of Paul and Mina Dümchen, on whose farm my mother worked for the next six years with no pay and only for food and shelter for herself and us three children. At the dinner table it was especially painful for her repeatedly to hear: "One works; four eat." We felt like pariahs: poor, destitute, and without hope for any improvement in our situation.

The war ended on May 8, 1945. Soviet troops, who "liberated" the area, were everywhere in search of vodka and women. During the first six weeks of Soviet occupation my mother and two aunts hid in a pigeon coop while my grandmother watched over us eight children. When the Russians asked where were the mothers of those children, she pretended she was a deaf mute, gesturing that they were dead. Happily for us, the Russians were not stationed in Seehausen, so that we infrequently saw them. Nonetheless, it became the task of the two oldest cousins, Angela and Theodor, to stand guard. When they saw Russian soldiers approaching, they gave a distinctive signal and my mother and aunts would seek shelter in the pigeon coop.

With the restoration of law and order the school reopened where we refugee children proved to be in the majority. I can truly say we faced no discrimination or taunting. Education for grades 1-5 took place in a one-room schoolhouse, where the older children taught the younger ones. Russian became a compulsory course of study. While today I value education and especially the study of foreign languages, at that time I resented having to learn the language of the country which was still holding my father as a prisoner of war and where he died in 1947. I recall, too, that history lessons centered on the ancient Greeks and Romans; we had no clue as to what was transpiring in the broader world around us.

We children also had civic duties to perform. Among others, these included scouring the fields for potato beetles, which, so it was claimed, had been deliberately dropped by the Americans during the war. This activity took place during the normal course of the school day. In addition we had to help with the tobacco harvest. Each farmer had to set aside a portion of his land for the cultivation of tobacco for the benefit of the state, which held a monopoly on tobacco.

While many in postwar Germany faced hunger on a daily basis, I can truly say we were never hungry. Living in an agricultural area, we always managed to "find" an apple, a pear, or a few walnuts. In addition, after the crops were harvested, we were permitted to glean the fields, i.e., to gather any crops that had been left behind. This tradition, which had existed from medieval times, was intended as a means of providing for the poor. Moreover, it was expected that the farmers deliberately leave some of their yield in the fields for those in need.

But urbanites were not that fortunate. Often city dwellers appeared at the local farms, bringing with them jewelry, crystal, and other valuables to exchange for food. Every second week Mrs. Dümchen gave my mother an extra pound of butter. With this butter and other scraps of food she was able to barter for shoes, clothes and other basics.

Three of my four uncles (Alois, Leopold and Anton Loy) returned from the war, but not my father. In 1947 we received word that he had died in a POW camp in Ulyanov on the Volga. This was a devastating blow for us. We had pinned all our hopes on his strength and leadership, and now we would have to carry on without him. I

still recall the day a messenger came into our school with the announcement that the children of Cäcilie Loy should be dismissed from class to be with their mother, since she had just been notified of her husband's death. To this day I still hear my sister Angela's screams as she bolted out of the school and ran home. Later that evening the church bells pealed, announcing his death to the community; these sounds reverberated like hammer blows to my heart.

My father's passing proved to be a turning point in our lives. Sometime in 1947 we had established contact with my Aunt Susanna (Loy) Welisch (1903-1950) in New York. And Michael Nowecki, my father's uncle in Detroit, wanted to sponsor one of Adam Loy's children to the United States. Our destiny now pointed to the West.

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\*Recorded in August, 2003.

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## Dr. RUDOLF WAGNER IN MEMORIAM

Sophie A. Welisch (Congers, NY)

The Society was saddened to learn of the passing on April 27, 2004 of Dr. Rudolf Wagner, noted Bukovina historian, publicist and political figure. His work on behalf of his beloved Bukovina and of the myriad of eastern European refugees in the post World World II era are detailed in the May 2004 issue of *Der Südostdeutsche*, the monthly publication of the *Landsmannschaft der Buchenlanddeutschen* (Augsburg, Germany) by Luzian Geier, the paper's editor.

Born in Dulipy near Stryi in Galicia, Dr. Wagner grew up in Bukovina and, along with his Bukovina-German co-nationals, participated in their mass resettlement to Germany in 1940. His achievements during a lifetime of service to his homeland and his ethnic group are legion; among others, he represented the southeastern Germans as a signatory of the "Magna Charta" der Heimatvertriebenen (1950) ("Magna Charta" of the those expelled from their homeland); forged a collaboration between Bukovina Catholic and Protestant clerics in carrying out charitable enterprises; participated in the founding of the *Landsmannschaft der deutschen Umsiedler aus dem Buchenland* (1949) (Regional Society for German Resettlers from Bukovina), the predecessor of the *Landesmannschaft der Buchenlanddeutschen* (Bukovina German Regional Society); together with Reverend Kurt Bensch, published the newspaper, *Buchenland*, the first Bukovina newspaper in Germany (starting February 1950), which later evolved into *Der Südostdeutsche* and which he edited for several decades; and served an elected representative in the Bavarian regional parliament. Several other undertakings which witnessed Dr. Wagner's participation include: the establishment of Bukovina settlements in Darmstadt and Büsnau, the sponsorship of the District of Swabia for the Bukovina German ethnic group, and the founding of the Bukovina Institute (Augsburg) for the research and documentation of Bukovina and the Bukovina Germans.

It is as an historian that Dr. Wagner left an indelible legacy. His research resulted in over ninety books, articles and reviews, which laid the foundation for the thematic research into Bukovina history. Luzian Geier notes that for most specialists in the field Dr. Wagner is recognized "as the most significant Bukovina-German historian of our times"(p.8). Those interested in Bukovina, its history and its people, owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Rudolf Wagner for his many contributions to the field. He will be sorely missed by family, friends, and people on both sides of the Atlantic, whom his life and works have touched. To the family of Dr. Wagner the Bukovina Society of the Americas extends its heartfelt sympathy.