



The Bukovina Society of the Americas NEWSLETTER

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Membership Dues:
Lifetime \$150.00
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BUKOVINA PEOPLE AND EVENTS

- The Bukovina Society is pleased to welcome three new life members: #169 Friedrich Plechinger (Korbach, Germany), #170 Daniel Maxin (Aliquippa, PA), and #171 Reuben Huber (Calgary, Alberta, Canada)
- We are pleased to announce the publication of a children's book, *Mud Poppers and Leaf Whistles: Journey of a Young Austrian Immigrant*, by fellow Society member, Janet M. Gagnon, née Weber (Fairfax, VA). Realizing the dearth of age-appropriate fiction for 8-12 year-olds, Janet has chronicled the journey of Johann, a twelve-year old youth, beginning with this departure from his Austrian homeland, his harrowing trans-Atlantic voyage, and his eventual settlement in Ellis. To be sure, his trials and tribulations did not end with the family's acquisition of a homestead in Kansas. Once firmly established, they nonetheless continued to face the hardships of taming the harsh western Kansas frontier. Johann's adventures and adaptations to a new environment, undoubtedly reflecting the experiences of many immigrant adolescents before World War I, offer the reader an interesting historic insight into a bygone era. Born on a farm in Kansas, the author pursued higher education at the George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. Research into her ancestral roots include a trip to Romania and Ukraine sponsored by the Bukovina Society in 1996. Her 65 page book including numerous illustrations, may be ordered through the Bukovina Society in either a paperback (\$14.99) or hardcover edition (\$24.99).
- The Bukovina Society was pleased to receive a note from Friedrich Plechinger. With his membership, he was able to access Gertrud Siewi's genealogy database, containing over 28,000 names. Because of Gertrud's willingness to share her database, Herr Plechinger went from not even knowing the names of his grandparents, to identifying many of his ancestors, some back to 1790 - in the span of two days! If you are a current member, and have not accessed the genealogy section, and want to experience the excitement of tracing your ancestors as Friedrich did, please contact Werner Zoglauer at

webmaster@bukovinasociety.org. All you need is an email address, and a password will be emailed to you. Enter at the Webpage at <http://www.bukovinasociety.org/genealogy/ng/index.php> and click on the "Search and Database Entrance" link. The Bukovina Society has merged thirty-three genealogy databases, currently with over 263,000 names (with some duplications). As many of our members already know, it takes a lot of hard work and time to build and maintain a genealogy database, especially when the source data is hard to read and is often incomplete or when common names are so repetitive. The database allows us to share this genealogy treasure with as many people as possible. It allows our database contributors to concentrate on research, and it allows our members to work independently on their own family tree research. We at the BSA would like to thank all of our contributors who make discoveries like this possible.

- The September 2007 *Newsletter* featured the story of two Madonna and Child statues carried from the Bohemian Forest to Bukovina in the early 19th century. One was later taken to Brazil by Adolf Wolf and the other given to Sophie Welisch in New York. Sophie has generously donated her statue to the Society. Oren Windholz, custodian of artifacts, plans to exhibit the statue in area museums and libraries where Bukovina German ancestors reside. Should anyone have a religious icon similar to those noted above, please contact Oren Windholz, giving him a description, chain of custody (if known) and a photograph of the item. Depending upon the response, the Society will consider presenting them in a picture booklet. The Society has been the recipient of numerous artifacts for its museum and encourages members to let us know us if they have something of interest.
- Society member Francisco J. Saidl (Spring Grove, PA) has informed us of the passing of his former teacher, Dr. Alceu Antônio Swarowski (1932-2007), a long-time friend and confidant of the Bukovinian community in Rio Negro, Brazil. Dr. Swarowski is descended from an Austrian family, which in 1863 immigrated to Brazil and settled in São Bento do Sul. Radio commentator, teacher, lawyer, twice mayor of Rio Negro, member of the Assembly of Deputies of Paraná where

he represented South Paraná including Rio Negro, and City Councilor, Dr. Swarowski always found time to participate at the festivities of his Bukovina compatriots. In his book, *Os Bucovinos do Brasil . . . e a História de Rio Negro* (p. 549), Professor Ayrton Celestino acknowledges his many contributions to the success of their endeavors. Nor has the family's support of Bukovinian activities ceased with Alceu Antônio's demise. In 1994 his son, Alceu Ricardo Swarowski, as mayor, signed a law naming the street leading into Rio Negro in the Bairro Bom Jesus as *Praça Bucovina* (Bukovina Square). This place has special significance since it was here that our Bukovinian immigrant compatriots first set foot in 1887.

- The Bukovina Institute of the Romanian Academy, Radautz, Romania, founded in 1992 to study and research the history and culture of Bukovina, has sent us a courtesy copy of the first two issues of their publication, *Analele Bucovinei* (*Bukovina Annals*). President Marcy McClelland in turn sent several of our books and publications to their research center.
- The Society has been receiving the newsletter of the Indiana German Heritage Society, which, with the IUPUI Max Kade German-American Center, issues the newsletter. The former *IGHS Newsletter* is now available online with a one-year embargo to favor paid members. To view back issues, see the website at www.ighs.org and click on Newsletter Archive.
- Dr. Valentin Reitmajer (Munich, Germany), who published a cookbook featuring the traditional German Bohemian cuisine, has donated his stipend from sales of his book to the Society. *German-Bohemian Cookery in 19th Century Bukovina* is one of the best sellers on the Society's website Store: www.bukovinasociety.org/store.html

BOOK REVIEW

Kurt Scharf. *Die Bukowina: Entdeckung einer Kulturlandschaft: Ein Reiseführer* [Bukovina: Discovery of a Cultural Landscape: A Travel Guide]. Vienna/ Cologne/Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2007. Pp. 155.

Reviewed by Michael Augustin (Leonberg, Germany)

In the spring of 2007 Kurt Scharf published the first German-language book about Bukovina to appear in quite a while. The subtitle: *Entdeckungen einer Kulturlandschaft: Ein Reiseführer* is a bit misleading in that only about half the paperback can be described as a travel guide. The author, who studied geography and history in Innsbruck, devotes the first section to Bukovina in general. Here he concentrates on its geography, ethnic groups, cultural and political classifications as well as its history including its economic and social development. The historic section offers a concise presentation with interesting and occasional new aspects and relationships, which even the reader who is knowledgeable on the topic will find of value. Contemporary happenings are not thoroughly explored and considered only in isolated instances; as a result, the reader will not glean a deeper understanding of the current scene, which was perhaps so intended.

The second section, the actual travel guide, encompasses four possible routes for exploring the countryside plus two strolls through Czernowitz, the former capital of Bukovina. In the latter the author discusses the Austrian and Romanian eras through 1945 followed by the post-World War II Soviet-Ukrainian period.

All three one-day trips begin and end in Czernowitz: (1) to Waschkiwizi, Wischnizja, Beregomet and Storoschynez; (2) to Chotin, Kamjanez-Podilskij, Skala-Podilska, Kasperiwizi and Salischtschiki; and (3) to Bila Krinizja, Siret, Dragomirna and Suceava. The fourth, a two-day journey, starts in Suceava and continues to Mestecanis, Ciocanesti, Cirlibaba, Jacobeni and Vatra Dornei on day one with return the next day via Moldovita, Ciumarna, Sucevita, Marginea, Putna, Solca, and Cacica back to Suceava. Only fleeting mention is made of several of the world-renowned Moldavian monasteries. The partial elaboration of the routes with pictures of the places to be visited is very informative. The reader might well benefit from a few regional maps for purposes of geographic orientation. Street maps the size of matchbook covers, which accompany background information on towns and villages mentioned in the text, have decorative value at best.

In conclusion, this book is a contribution to an enhanced understanding of Bukovina. The reader may well envision himself in its scenic and cultural milieu and be tempted to set foot on the routes described by the author.

Die Bukovina can be obtained for 19.90 euros from Böhler Verlag, Wiesingerstrasse 1, 1010 Vienna, Austria or www.boehlau.at>

1907 KANSAS GERMAN-BOHEMIAN WEDDING CELEBRATION RECOUNTED

by Steve Parke (Pueblo West, CO)

On a weekly basis the *Western Kansas World* of WaKeeney, Kansas, publishes a column compiled by Cathy Millard, the "100 Year Files of the Western Kansas World." The column recounts selected 100-year-old news items describing the history and local culture of the area in an informative and often entertaining manner. WaKeeney is twenty miles west of Ellis, Kansas.

In the November 22, 2007 edition of the *World* the "100 Year Files" noted a great piece of local Bukovina cultural history with a quote from a November 1907 Big Creek neighborhood news column. The Big Creek column appears to refer to happenings generally in the Big Creek neighborhood just west of Ellis. Several news postings in this column also mention Ellis.

The quote of interest reads: "Ye scribe learns that a good time was had by all at the Nemecek wedding last Tuesday. There were sixteen kegs of beer, also fifteen dressed geese, one beef, and four fatted hogs butchered for the feeding of the guests, and that dancing and card playing were the order of the day Tuesday and the guests continued the festivities until Wednesday evening."

If those numbers might sound fanciful to some, the author made sure that we got it right as the numbers were spelled out. This must have been quite the wedding or should I say party? The article reveals a number of historical and cultural themes of the German Bohemians of Bukovina.

The local German Bohemian Nemecek family arrived from Bukovina in 1898 and lived just south of Ellis in Ellis County. This family had lived in Furstenthal, Bukovina since at least 1805 when Mathias Nemecek married Barbara Stark. Many of the

local Bukovina immigrants arrived in Ellis between 1900-1905. German Bohemians and Swabian Germans from Bukovina also came to Ellis in significant numbers between 1892 and 1895. And then of course, the earliest of each of these Bukovina immigrant groups arrived in Ellis in 1886/87.

This wedding was celebrated with customs ever so recently brought over from the old homeland, Bukovina. Note the celebration over an extended period of time, the dancing, card playing, feasting, and beer drinking. I would like to know where they put all those people for two days, during the festivities and at night. They probably traveled back and forth to their homes in the evening, which would have been possible since everyone lived relatively close by.

When I visited some old mountainside German Bohemian villages in southern Bukovina in 1991, there were geese running about, probably with numbered days, as a place awaited them on the dinner table. In New Ulm, Minnesota, which was settled by German Bohemians directly from Bohemia in the mid-to-late 1800's, the German Bohemian neighborhood, along the Minnesota River, was called Goosetown! By the sounds of the wedding article, there were apparently plenty of geese running around the Ellis area in those days as well.

Whose wedding could this have been? Which Nemechek got married in 1907? Not being adept with such details, I had to look this one up. It was my grandfather, Stephen F. Nemechek, who married his first wife, Bukovina immigrant Philomena Reitmaier, on November 26, 1907. In closing I can say that while the family has not carried on the goose-eating tradition, some of us have maintained a healthy consumption of beer.

“NO JOY IN JOY VALLEY”: THE FOUNDING OF THE SETTLEMENT OF FREUDENTAL (= JOY VALLEY) IN BUKOVINA

by Claus Stephani (Baldham/Munich, Germany)

Original publication: “Ka Freid in Freid’tal”: Zur Entstehung der Siedlung Valea Stinei [Freudental] im Buchenland [“No Joy in Joy Valley”]: About the Founding of the Settlement of Freudental in Bukovina]. Neuer Weg (Bucharest). 14 Nov. 1978, p. 6. Trans. Sophie A. Welisch.

One year after the founding of the “Work Colony of Eisenau” on the Moldova River and the later community of Eisenau (1809), seven Zipser laborers constructed the “Foundry across the Water” in nearby Moldovitzatal on the Moldova River: thus arose the settlement of Freudental. The names of these migrants, who presumably came from the Lower Zips (today in Slovakia), have been documented: Gottfried Knoblauch, Josef Luschetzky, Josef Pankowitsch, Johann Schneider, Franz Spielmann, Ferdinand Stebermann, and Georg Stebermann,

Between 1809 and 1810 the above were joined by another twenty-five Zipser families, among them: Antl, Ast, Brodner, Gassner, Gleisner, Hendl (also Händel), Klein, Kobilansky, Kortsch, Lusch, Mahlich, Moroschaner, München, Münster, Spitzschuch, Sterk (also Stärck), Tauscher, and Tomasi (also Thomasius), who

settled on both banks of the Moldova River. In the first half of the 19th century Germans from Bohemia, Galicia and northern Bukovina also took up roots here.

At about the same time German craftsmen – from the Rhineland, from Franconia, Swabia and Hesse – established themselves in the Romanian village of Moldovitzta in the vicinity of the monastery of the same name.

When later a sawmill was opened in the vicinity of Russ-Moldovitzta, numerous German craftsmen and laborers, as for example the forebears of the families Bahr, Ruttka, and Schlapak (a blacksmith from Frumossa), relocated there.

Those immigrants who could not find employment in the “Work Colony of Freudental” later moved further on to the nearby Paltin Valley and there founded the community of Ochsenthal.

“Freudental or, as we say, Freid’tol [dialect],” according to the lumberman Johann Schneider, “got its name because the Zipsers, when they came to Bukovina, thought: Now we will have work and peace – but it was not like that . . .since the young Manz (Anton Manz, Knight of Mariensee, son of Karl Manz, owner of several mines and foundries – gambled away all his money at the casino and then declared bankruptcy and that wonderful fortune was gone – he once owned all the mountains here: Skojeny, Pallamania, Wassilberg, everything up to Eisenau and Mariensee. The Imperial and Royal Religious Foundation took over everything and life became difficult — we Zipsers found no more joy in Joy Valley.”

With the passing of the Manz iron works of Freudental to the Religious Foundation in 1870 the economic straits of the Zipsers, already difficult, deteriorated significantly. After the closing of the Freudental mining facilities the now unemployed workers found themselves in constant economic need and either had to look for employment in the nearby towns of Wama and Kimpolung or settle for work as rafters and lumbermen.

The first German school building in Freudental stood where today we find the courtyard of the widow Marie Mahlich; when it was demolished at the beginning of this century, Johann Knoblauch constructed a house there. Out of private donations a new school was built in 1940 on the corner of Hauptgasse and Berggasse, which still stands today. For instruction in the German language, the teachers Johann Vetter, Wanda Illassiewitsch and Arthur Illassiewitsch deserve special praise.

FOLKSONGS OF THE LABORING CLASS

by Claus Stephani (Baldham/Munich, Germany)

Original publication: “Nix bie Orbeit und ka Freid”: Arbeiterlieder aus der Südbukowina und dem Wischauer Land: Ausdruck des Klassenkampfes [“Nothing but Work and No Joy”]: Songs of the Laboring Class of South Bukovina and Wischau: Expression of Class Warfare]. Neue Literatur. 21/5, 1981, p. 12. Trans. by Sophie A. Welisch.

In the early 19th and early 20th centuries folksongs such as the one below could be heard on both sides of the Prislop Pass, *i.e.*, in

the mining districts of Maramaros (in Pfefferfeld and Oberwischau) and Bukovina (in Mariensee and Jakobeny). During the Communist era such folksongs became politically useful as an expression of class warfare.

BERGMANNSLIED

Der Bergmann in sein' schwarzes G'wand,
geht still durch das Leben, man achtet ihn nicht.

Die Krone aufs Haupt setzt der Fürst sich mit Glanz,
den Bergmann, den armen, vergessen s' schon ganz.

Wo nehmt sich der König die Krone wohl her,
wenn tief in der Erd der Bergmann nit wär?

Das Ringlein, das scheene, o Braut, steht Euch gut,
ein Herz voll Rubinen so rot wie Eur Blut.

Das Ringlein am Finger hat bindend g'macht,
doch sagt's, wer holt Euch das Gold aus dem Schacht?

Wo nehmen die Reichen das Gold wohl her,
wenn tief in der Erd der Bergmann nit wär?

MINER'S SONG

The miner in his stark attire,
pursues a job which few desire.

A noble wears his crown with pride,
but miners' roles he sets aside.

From whence the king his crown derives,
if not from miners' woes and sighs?

Oh bride, the ring you wear looks fine,
as does the ruby brooch of thine.

The ring has you in marriage bound,
but say, who brings the gold upground?

From where would rich men get their gold,
if in earth's depths no miner toiled?

In any event we were prepared to leave the land, which overnight had become foreign to us, no longer our homeland, and which could offer us no protection. The resettlement was completely voluntary and accepted by 95,770 Bukovina Germans. According to a census taken by the Germans, there still remained 7,295 Germans in Bukovina in 1941, *i.e.*, about 7 percent of the original number.

Only with heavy heart did the older generation, whose forebears had cultivated the land by the sweat of their brow, abandon their homesteads. This was especially true of the rugged, unpretentious German Bohemians, familiar with forestry, who with their experience, ambition and love of work, had played a not insignificant role in clearing the land.

The younger generation, on the other hand, was eager to move on and believed what the resettlement commission promised them. In Germany they would receive already established farms with four times the amount of land, which would be made available to them after four to six weeks in a resettlement camp. They were also aware that the Humora Valley offered them no rosy prospects for the future.

The return to Germany was well organized. November 28, 1940 was the great day of the departure to a new uncertain homeland, which the *Führer* had prepared for all those Germans abroad who were willing to resettle. The first train left with about 600 people, including half of those from Buchenhain, followed a few days later by the second train with our remaining fellow countrymen. On the way to the church, where they were to gather and then proceed on foot to the station in Gura Humorului, the departees glanced back at their mountain chain, the stone cliffs and the forest surrounding their beloved village. Often the Romanians stood by the wayside and shook their head. They could not understand why the Germans were leaving and asked: "Where are you Germans going? Are you no longer satisfied in Romania?" It was awkward not to be able to give them a clear answer. One person replied: "We are making room for you in order that you can better expand [your land holdings]."

The special trains first took us Buchenhainers to Styria in Austria and specifically to Mautern and Kapfenberg, where we became naturalization German citizens. The overwhelming majority of the Buchenhainers were designated as "O" (*Osten*, East) candidates, a small number as "A" (*Altreich*, Old Empire). Therefore, it came as no surprise that our new homeland would be in the eastern regions of the Reich. In the recently annexed Polish territories including Upper Silesia, the fertile lands of the Polish farmers awaited speedy management.

After several months the Buchenhainers were resettled in Upper Silesia and henceforth the watchword was: "The Poles must abandon their properties and the German Bohemians would in the future be considered the owners of their farms." And not only that! The Poles not only lost their properties, but they also had to work as our servants. We could give them only what was allowed by law. To be sure, our fellow countrymen did not always adhere to this stipulation. Often a sack of grain or other things were set aside for them. What a great injustice took place here under Adolf Hitler!

A MEMORIAL FOR OUR BELOVED POIANA MICULUI (PREVIOUSLY: BUCHENHAIN)

by Maria Beckers née Hones (Cologne, Germany)

PART II. (continued from *Newsletter*, December 2007, vol. 17). After World War I the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy collapsed and in 1919 Bukovina came under Romanian administration. When in March 1938 following a coup d'état in Vienna German troops marched into Austria, the whole world was confounded. With great astonishment it became evident that Adolf Hitler's presence in Austria was not only wildly celebrated but that he was acknowledged as spokesman of Greater Germany. "One people, one empire, one leader" became the motto of the day.

This news unleashed mixed feelings in the upper Humora Valley in that one could clearly detect rejection from the Slovak and Romanian population. After Hitler's succession as chancellor in 1933, the laws against the Germans [of Romania] became more stringent. In schools only Romanian was spoken and taught. Even entrepreneurs engaged only people who spoke Romanian well or who could prove Romanian descent.

In June 1940 the Soviet Union presented Romania with an ultimatum to cede Bessarabia and northern Bukovina. Under pressure from Germany and Italy Romania accepted this ultimatum. Among its consequences was an agreement between the Soviet Union and Germany, which provided for the evacuation of the German population of these territories to the Reich. A treaty between Germany and Romania made similar provisions for the Germans in southern Bukovina. Anyone with at least one German grandparent was considered German and therefore an eligible transferee. For their part, the Bessarabian and north Bukovinian Germans had the option either to remain in the land of their ancestors or to accept Soviet rule.

A German resettlement commission for southern Bukovina inventoried the properties of those to be evacuated. The commission took photographs of their houses, which were to be given to the families in Germany.

War continued to rage relentlessly. Our men were inducted into military service while the women with their children and the elderly remained behind to cultivate the fields and face the partisans. According to law the farmers had to deliver a certain quantity of produce to the State. The new homeland brought our fellow countrymen no happiness, since in January 1945 they had to flee as Upper Silesia stood in imminent threat of the Soviet military advance.

After the war many of our fellow countrymen reached Bavaria, where they created a new homeland for themselves. In fact, they had returned to the land their ancestors had abandoned centuries ago. Other compatriots found themselves scattered throughout Germany and many immigrated to the United States, Brazil, Canada and also to other European states where they set down roots and established a new existence.

World War II did not bypass Buchenhain without a trace. During the withdrawal of the German troops in 1944, the Germans occupied the village and controlled it for a short time. Among Buchenhain's majority Polish and Slovak population the Soviets found many collaborators, whose antics repeatedly led to German military casualties. This proved to be the misfortune of our birthplace. The unexplained disappearance of a number of soldiers—many were murdered—was soon clarified. German street signs had been falsified, so that German troops walked directly into the arms of the Soviets. In order to avoid further losses, the commanding German general gave the order to destroy the entire village.

As a result, on May 1, 1944 our dearly beloved Buchenhain was burned to the ground. No single house remained standing. Nor was the elegant little church spared. Only its masonry remained with everything made of wood having entirely burned. Later, however, with much effort, the church was reconstructed according to old plans and photographs.

In her monograph, *Die Auswanderung aus dem künischen Böhmerwald* (Grafenau: Morsak Verlag, 1995), p. 32, Inge Jordan poignantly notes: "Fire and clouds of smoke rose to the skies when Buchenhain was founded. Fire and clouds of smoke rose to the skies when Buchenhain was destroyed. Today the Romanians build houses on the foundations where once German houses had stood. Today Romanians sow and reap on the very land, which once German Bohemians had cleared with the sweat of their brow. Buchenhain no longer exists; Buchenhain was utterly reduced to ashes. No single house was spared from the occurrence of that time."

In order to commemorate the fact that German Bohemians had founded this village in 1841 and had lived there for almost a century, our fellow countryman Hermann Schuster, the former President of the Upper Bavarian District Council, who had also organized this trip to Romania, prepared a marble memorial plaque with the following text: "In respectful memory of the Roman Catholic German Bohemian settlers who in about 1835 came to the Humora Valley, in 1841 founded Poiana Micului and lived here until their emigration in 1940. The descendants."

Our fellow countrymen took this plaque with inscriptions in German and Romanian to the Church of the Sacred Heart in

Poiana Micului on Thursday, August 14, 2003. The memorial plaque was ceremoniously unveiled and blessed during the church service at 4:00 p.m. by His Excellency Bishop Petru Gherghel, the local Catholic priest, and other religious dignitaries from the surrounding area.

As the bells pealed during religious services, it seemed to me that we were being greeted by all our fellow countrymen the world over, who, dispersed from their former homeland by the resettlement in the German Reich and expelled from Upper Silesia and elsewhere during World War II, had to seek a livelihood elsewhere.

During mass our fellow countryman, Markus Heiden, brought to the altar a beautifully decorated heavy cross weighing ten kilograms, which the bishop blessed and which today adorns the altar. We German guests heard for the first time the music played on the organ, which had been earlier transported here by Max Heiden, among others. The entire service was very well planned, with songs alternately in Romanian and German. The final hymn, "Holy God, We Praise Thy name," sung by the entire congregation, brought tears to many an eye. Tears also welled up in my eyes, since this was the church in which I had been baptized.

After the festive religious service, a congenial gathering of about three hundred villagers followed. Tables and benches had been set up next to the church for this purpose. The villagers demonstrated various old customs, sang German songs and above all made us feel most welcome. I was particularly pleased with the dancing of the children, who truly did a fine job. In addition all houses were decked out with many flowers. In the bus we had heard: "Poiana Micului is already topsy-turvy." For this small locality the festivity was a great event, since a bishop does not visit on a daily basis. Gifts were exchanged and a light meal consumed. We had brought some containers of stew (*Gulasch*) for the villagers. In this manner we celebrated happily and peacefully. In earlier days the people in this region had lived in mutual harmony and understanding, irrespective of their ethnic origins. Together they had gone through good times and bad.

Before the celebrations we had had an opportunity to observe the village of our birth more closely. The bus took us through the entire village right to the end of Poiana Micului, often stopping to let certain fellow countrymen get off when they recognized their former homestead. All were curious as to what was now being planted. My former homestead was at the very end of the village. At once I recognized the small bridge, which led across the Humora Brook of which my mother had spoken.

I then sat down in the verdant fields where once the house of my parents and my cradle had stood and where in my childhood far from home I had dreamed of a village, which lay behind the mountains, reminiscent of the fairy tale, "Snow White behind the mountains with the seven dwarfs." I recalled the stories of my mother, my grandmothers, my aunts and uncles, and in my mind's eye a picture of life as it was once lived here enfolded before me. On our property there are now several barns. An old, seemingly contented and friendly lady was working outside, and as in times of yore, she used a washboard to do her laundry. Unfortunately we could not understand one another. I, as well as my cousin Edeltraud, who had once lived on a neighboring farm, were

especially pleased to give this lady several gifts. She thanked us with her many smiles.

How does Poiana Micului look today? From the many accounts I had heard I had imagined it to be a much poorer village. The people appeared still to be living as we Germans did before 1940. Beyond a doubt the hands of time have stood still for these people. Life there cannot be compared to our present standard of living in Germany, but since the fall of Nicolae Ceausescu in 1989 conditions are improving. In Bukovina, for example, one can see that many streets have either been newly repaired or are under construction. Regrettably this does not hold true for the long road through Poiana Micului. This road is scheduled for repair in the next few years, which we fellow countrymen nonetheless doubt. The street to Poiana Micului from Gura Humorului is also in need of repair, making the bus ride a sheer adventure. The many stones on the road caused us to be bounced about mercilessly.

Romania is making an effort to modernize, since it wants to be accepted into the European Union. All the churches, which we saw and visited in the neighborhood, were in good repair inside and out. I also considered the church in Poiana Micului to be attractive. In the meantime the village has added a Greek Orthodox church.

The cemetery was not in particularly good condition. It is precisely the graves, where our forebears are interred, that are overgrown with grass. Otto Hoffmann, our only remaining fellow countryman still living here, even warned me about snakes. I found the graves of my grandfathers and great-grandparents with the inscriptions still legible. The graves of the Poles are adorned with numerous colorful plastic flowers. In the future the new priest promised see to the proper maintenance of the cemetery.

There are not as many houses in the village as when the Germans lived there. The landscape is simply beautiful and on the seven kilometer-long road through the village we encountered not only people but also horses, cows, goats, sheep, chickens, etc. The houses and properties are fenced in up to the mountains in order that boars not invade the gardens. According to an account by the taxi driver, natural gas, salt and black granite had recently been discovered in Poiana Micului. Perhaps there is something to this story and economic conditions in the village will improve. This would be a boon for the inhabitants.

All the people whom we met were very friendly. Despite their difficult lives, they gave the impression of contentment. Children approached us in anticipation of getting some souvenirs. And these we gladly gave them. In appreciation they let us photograph them and gave us a big smile.

As the time for departure from Poiana Micului approached, I was a bit sad. Gladly would I have remained, since I felt as though I had come home. I immediately fell in love with the gorgeous scenery and would like to return. If the distance from Germany were not that great, my husband and I would like to build a vacation home here in order always to be near the place of my birth. The friendliness of the people, their contentment, and the hospitality with which they received us, will long be etched in my mind.

After this very eventful day in Poiana Micului, we visited the pilgrimage church in Cacica. Here we also participated in a

festive religious ceremony in the basilica of "Our Dear Lady" with the bishop and many religious dignitaries. We were all somewhat amazed that confessions were held outside the church. One could, so to say, pass close to someone making a confession. We encountered a very great flow of people, while left and right on the street many stands had been erected for the sale of goods.

We also visited the villages of Dumbrava and Cornu Luncii. Before the war several of our fellow countrymen from Poiana Micului had settled in these two villages. A family received us in Dumbrava. It seems incredible, but they immediately invited our whole busload of people in for a meal. Yes, hospitality there is truly magnanimous.

On the following day we were scheduled to visit the Democratic Forum of the Germans in Bukovina headquartered in Gura Humorului. Here we were also well received and served a hearty meal. In the evening we enjoyed a congenial gathering where we sang German songs, made music and danced. Max Heiden then played songs of the homeland on his harmonica as he had done on previous days as well.

Before we set off on our return trip, we visited the three Orthodox monasteries, which the United Nations has declared as world cultural heritage sites, namely the monasteries of Humora, Voronet and Moldovita.

The visit to the homeland in old Moldavia's loveliest quarter and to the land blessed by God with great beauty, seen for the first time by the majority of our fellow countrymen, will remain a memorable experience for us all.

THE KIPPER GENERATIONS

by Irmgard Hein Ellingson (Grafton, IA)

In August 2007 Bukovina Society member Urania E. Erskine of Germantown, Tennessee, wrote to Society Headquarters and to Webmaster Werner Zoglauer: "I have noted that you had photographs of men who had served in World War I who were from Bukovina. Enclosed you will find a photo of my grandfather, Johann Kipper, who served as a supply officer."

Mrs. Erskine sent scans of her grandfather's confirmation certificate and obituary, the first of which states: "Johann Kipper, born November 10, 1889, baptized November 23, 1889, was today confirmed in the Evangelical Church in Illischestie and admitted to the communion table. [Signed] Josef Folwartschny, April 9, 1903."

His obituary notes: "We have lost our best! My dear husband, our good father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and father-in-law



Johann Kipper (Czernowitz, 1911)

Hans Kipper left us on Friday, August 30, 1974, in his 85th year. The farewell took place on Sunday, September 1, 1974, at 10:30 A.M. at the War Memorial in Gams [Austria]. . . . In deep sorrow: his wife Hilde Kipper, his children and in-laws Hans and Hella Kipper, Gudrun and Harry Treace, Michel and Dr. Herta Kipper, Hiltrude Walth-Kipper, grandchildren Urania and Bryan, and great-grandson Michel.”

Biskirchen and Bissenberg in Hesse, Germany. According to Johann Christian Dressler, longtime Illischestie schoolteacher and genealogist, the earliest recorded ancestor of the Kipper dynasty was Johannes Kipper, born in 1719 and died in Biskirchen in the landgraviate of Hesse. In 1994 I translated and edited Dressler’s manuscript and published it under the title *Illischestie, A Rural Village in Bukovina: Primary Source Material for Family History*. The Kipper section begins on page 213.

Biskirchen and Bissenberg, with the Lahn railroad station, Leun and Stockhausen, are now part of a small town called Leun in the District of Lahn-Dill, located north of Frankfurt in west-central Germany. The district, named for the Lahn and the Dill rivers that flow through it, is located in the foothills of the northern Taunus and the Westerwald mountains.

Biskirchen was first cited in a document of 1245. Until the Middle Ages, the village name remained *Bischofskirchen* or bishop’s church and is well-known beyond its boundaries because of its mineral springs with carbonated water. The community well, called the *Gertrudisbrunnen*, was already mentioned in the year 1650 and to this day its mineral water is available to everyone without charge. The Gertrudis Clinic in Biskirchen is a widely-recognized neurological facility that focuses upon diagnosis and treatment of Parkinson’s disease.

Bissenberg first appears in documents in 1313. After the fourteenth-century decline of Wetzlar, Leun experienced a great boom especially through its wool market and emerged as one of the most important locations in the Solms earldom. Its Roman chapel was destroyed in the Thirty Years’ War (1618–1648) and rebuilt in 1723. Today its forests and elevation contribute to making Bissenberg a popular tourist attraction.

For more about Biskirchen, Bissenberg, and the Leun community, see <http://www.biskirchen.leun-web.de/html/wissenswertes.html>
<http://www.leun-web.de/html/wissenswertes.html>

Kipper Ancestors. It was in Biskirchen that Johannes Kipper, the earliest documented ancestor, saw the light of day. In 1774 his oldest son, Johann Otto, married Christina Margaretha König, daughter of Joseph König and Helene Margaretha Spiess. This couple had five children, all born in Bissenberg. One son and one daughter died at very young ages.

After 1783, the names of Johann Otto Kipper and his family members no longer appear in the Bissenberg and Biskirchen church records. Information based on archival records in the Office of the Exchequer (*Hofkammer*) in Vienna shows that in 1784 Otto Kipper, a linen weaver from Bissenberg, in the District of Wetzlar, immigrated with six persons to Galicia via Neustadt, Moravia and Vienna. The family remained in Sambor, Galicia, until their final settlement in Bukovina (see Franz Wilhelm and

Josef Kallbrunner, *Quellen zur deutschen Siedlungsgeschichte in Südosteuropa*, p.196). Since his arrival in Bukovina is not recorded, it can be presumed that Otto died before he could be resettled.

Single or widowed men and women were not eligible for settlement. According to researcher Franz Adolf Wickenhauser in *Die deutschen Siedlungen in der Bukowina*, volume 2, Otto’s widow was twice remarried, first to Johann Christoph Steinkönig, then, in 1785 to Josias Hunker. Christina Margaretha was thirty-seven, her third husband, Josias Hunker, twenty-six, and her sons, Johann Heinrich and Johann Friedrich, were eleven and ten when in 1788 the family became one of the first twelve colonial families in Illischestie. These two grandsons of Johannes Kipper were subsequently the ancestors of all the Illischestie Kippers.

Johann Heinrich, born in 1776, became a wheelwright. He married Christina Margaretha Friedge, born in 1777; the couple lived in Illischestie, house #123 with their twelve children.

Their son, Heinrich, married Katharine Schäfer, daughter of Wilhelm Schäfer and Sophie Wudki. Heinrich was a musician who played the violin (*Geige*) as a result of which his descendants were nicknamed the *Gei-Frittre*. He and his wife Katharina lived in Illischestie, house #113, with their thirteen children.

One of Heinrich and Katharina’s sons was Ludwig, born July 12, 1852 in Illischestie, house #113 (note: his birth date was July 24, 1852 according to the new calendar, but other sources list it as August 5, 1852). In 1876 he married Maria Kerth, daughter of Friedrich Kerth and Sophie Scherer. Of their nine children, only two sons and a daughter survived to adulthood. The family lived in Illischestie, house #293.

Dr. Heinrich, Luise, and Johann Kipper. Ludwig and Maria’s oldest surviving child was Heinrich, born in 1875. Heinrich Kipper was a gifted and renowned poet, author, and philologist whose efforts awakened the interest of the so-called Bukovina *Schwaben* (Swabians) and all other Bukovina Germans in their linguistic and literary heritage.

After completing primary school in Illischestie in 1889, Heinrich became a candidate at the teacher training college in Czernowitz, graduating with honors in 1895. He took the teachers’ examination for village public schools in Trautenau (now Trutnov, Czech Republic). Before and after World War I, he attended lectures in philosophy, history, and German at the Czernowitz and Vienna universities and in 1913 served as a member of the examinations commission for primary and public schools in Czernowitz.

Heinrich Kipper began his teaching career on 1895 in Gurahumora, Bukovina, worked in Illischestie from 1897 until 1901, and after that in Karlsberg, Itzkany, and Czernowitz, all in Bukovina. In 1915, he was named a professor at the teacher training college in Czernowitz. From 1919 until the date of his retirement, he served as professor at the teacher training college in Hollabrunn, Austria, where he was a member of the examinations commission for primary and public schools and a committee member for examinations in the Evangelical Lutheran religion.

As a teacher, Heinrich Kipper worked tirelessly for the professional and economic betterment of his peers in Bukovina. He was

also a member of the Czernowitz municipal council. As a political representative, he was respected by his friends as well as by his adversaries. For his political endeavors in oral speech and published writing, Heinrich Kipper became a leading public figure. From 1901 to 1908, he was joint owner of the *Freien Lehrerzeitung* (Free Teachers' Newspaper) in Czernowitz and editor of the *Bukowina Bote* (Bukovina Messenger) until the outbreak of World War I. [Erich Beck's *Bibliographie zur Landeskunde der Bukowina: Literatur bis zum Jahre 1965* credits Heinrich Kipper with twenty publications in journals and newspapers published in Berlin, Czernowitz, Kronstadt, Lemberg, Mainz, Stuttgart and Vienna in the interwar period. His 1931 essay, *Brauchtum der Karpatenschwaben* (Traditions of the Carpathian Swabians), was translated into English by Irmgard Ellingson, who presented it at the first meeting of the Bukovina Society of the Americas in 1989.—SW]

Although he initially wrote lyric poetry only in dialect, Kipper began to use the standard language after World War I. His best lyric poems in the Hessian-Palatine dialect were published in the volume titled *Mei Ährefeld*.

Dr. Kipper completed his military service in 1896 and in 1897 served as a one-year volunteer in the Third Infantry Regiment in Brünn, Moravia. On August 1, 1914, two days before the outbreak of World War I, he was called to active duty and in November of the same year, was promoted to first lieutenant. Severely wounded in the Carpathian Mountains in 1915, Kipper subsequently lost a leg. In 1917 he was prepared for, and promoted to, the rank of captain and received distinctions from time to time.



Luise and Hans Kipper (1899)

Heinrich's sister, Luise, married Franz Prosser, a teacher in Radautz, Bukovina. The third sibling, Johann (Hans) Kipper, the grandfather of Bukovina Society member Urania Erskine, was a teacher, newspaper publisher, and author who retired in Gams ob Frauenthal, a village north of Graz in the Austrian province of Styria.

Hans Kipper was a courageous and uncompromising fighter for the national and traditional unity of his ancestral people. Through the spoken and written word he sought above all to promote the liberal spirit in the German soul. His advocacy for the freedom of the German people gained him countless critics to which he only yielded when the anticipated end of Austrian rule forced him to shelve his national educational effort.

In 1917, Hans married Hermine Sueti of Graz and their son Hans was born in 1918. The marriage ended in 1919. In 1922, he married Hilda Maria Scheuchner, daughter of postmaster and estate owner Franz Scheuchner and Maria Semlitsch. Children born to this union include Hiltrude (1923), Gudrun (1925), and Michel Peter (1929).

The Kipper Legacy. The Kipper legacy to their descendants and to all Bukovina Germans is rich and diverse. The Kippers used their literary abilities to preserve their native dialect and in doing so, inspired others to take up similar philological and linguistic studies. Their educational, publishing, and military careers demonstrate their commitment to education and the public good.

We salute the memory of Johann (Hans) Kipper, his brother Heinrich Kipper, Ph.D., and all their forebears and descendants who have contributed so much to the Bukovina heritage!



Center front: Maria (Kerth) Kipper; back row, left to right: Luise (Kipper) Prosser, Kurt and Erna Prosser (grandchildren), Franz Prosser (1927)