



The Bukovina Society of the Americas NEWSLETTER

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Membership Dues:
Lifetime \$150.00
Annual \$15.00

The Board of Directors extend their best wishes for a blessed Christmas holiday and a happy New Year to all members of the Bukovina Society and their families. We thank you for your support during the past year and look forward to continued mutual efforts in bringing Bukovinian traditions, history and culture to our readership.

BUKOVINA PEOPLE AND EVENTS

- The Society is pleased to welcome our newest lifetime members, # 176 Manuel Mueller, Berlin, Germany; #177 Linda Gellner, Kars, Ontario, Canada; and #178 Erwine (Pilsner) Haering, Stony Point, NY.
- The next issue of the *Newsletter*, March of 2009, will include program and registration information for the twentieth anniversary celebration of the Bukovina Society scheduled to be held in Ellis on September 19. On the following two days members are welcomed to attend the annual Midwest Deutsche Oktoberfest in Hays.
- At a time when many organizations are raising dues, the Bukovina Society is pleased to have kept the cost of membership low and unchanged for some fifteen years. Part of our success in holding expenses down can be attributed to the fact that all work is done by volunteers; in addition, many members are now receiving a PDF copy of the *Newsletter* by e-mail. Anyone wishing a sample copy of the *Newsletter* via this electronic delivery service may e-mail windholz@bukovinasociety.org. Another major source of financial support is the online membership and the web site shopping store.

- Anyone interested in subscribing to *Der Südostdeutsche*, the monthly newspaper of the *Landsmannschaft der Buchenlanddeutschen* (Regional Association of Bukovina Germans), may contact the editor, Herr Luzian Geier, 86159 Augsburg, Alterpostweg 97a, Germany or Sophie Welisch at 2 Hughes Street, Congers, NY 10920, USA. Subscription cost in Germany and Austria: 28 euros; overseas: 30 euros.
- Herr Luzian Geier has informed us that he is currently working on the creation of a virtual Bukovina cemetery for the web site and has asked that anyone with pictures of grave stones of Bukovinians and their descendants, in whichever country they may be located, be sent to him at geier@bukowina-institut.de or at his postal address noted above. Please identify location of cemetery with name and origins in Bukovina (if known) of person interred.

BAD WILSNACK GATHERINGS

by Douglas Reckmann (Portland, OR)

On the evening of June 10, 2006 at the Bad Wilsnack Song Festival, a group of Bukovinians found themselves sitting together at one end of one of the tents. Someone mentioned that it was "too bad" that with so many Bukovinians in the area they rarely saw one another much less gathered together as a group. A number of those present suggested that they have their own little "Bukovina Festival." When confronted with "but where?" Lydia Hefke née Beer countered with "*im Deutschen Hof bei Karl-Heinz*" (Tischler). Karl-Heinz' family came from the Bukovina villages of Ostra and Schwarzthal (Tischler, Fleissner, Frisch). The next day, when Lydia asked Karl-Heinz about the possibility of using his banquet room for such a meeting, he immediately

responded “of course, and without the normal booking fees.” A meeting was set for September 9, 2006 with a short announcement in the local paper and word-of-mouth the only advertisements. Those wishing to attend were asked to RSVP to Karl-Heinz.

Approximately sixty people attended this first meeting including guests from Würzburg, Giffhorn, Celle and Rheinsberg. At the end of the afternoon there were numerous requests to repeat this event the following year. The date: September 8, 2007 with the same general structure as before with an emphasis on including people with Bukovina roots.

This was my first meeting. There were about sixty-to-seventy people in attendance including many of my Schwarzthal friends and family. We reminisced about our previous gatherings (over lots of great food and beer), and I was able to update them about the latest details of my Schwarzthal research. Lydia Hefke welcomed the group and introduced the Bukovinians, who had not been at the previous meeting. Stephanie Reck née Citron was among this group. Three years earlier I had been contacted by her grandson, Arian Morgner, who was looking for information about his grandmother’s ancestry. Arian wanted to present her with a family tree on the occasion of her eightieth birthday. Together we developed a six-generational family tree. I marched over and introduced myself and discovered that my e-mail friend, his mother, his aunt, AND his grandmother were there as well. What a thrill!

After I was introduced as a family tree researcher for Schwarzthal from the USA, one of the attendees, Maria Ahlberg née Weber, approached me, introducing herself as a great granddaughter of Ferdinand Seemann from Klosterhumora. She was pleased to learn that we were related: Ferdinand Seemann and Wenzel Seemann (my great-great grandfather) from Schwarzthal were brothers. I was able to send her a 1925 photograph taken in Schwarzthal, which included all the children of my great-grandmother including and her uncle, Ferdinand Seemann.

Before departing, all attendees agreed to convene the following year on the first Saturday in September. A number of us met the next morning for lunch and said our final “goodbyes” until 2008.

In the spring of 2008 while visiting Gertrud Siewi in Landshut, Bavaria, I told her of my experience in Bad Wilsnack the previous fall. I suggested that it would really be interesting to couple the upcoming meeting with a “serious genealogists’ component.” We decided to meet in Bad Wilsnack on the Friday before the general gathering. About a week later, while visiting other relatives, I was able to speak with Adolf and Irmtraud Schaper in Nienhagen (near Celle, Hanover). After mutually sharing various and

sundry information, I informed them about the genealogists’ meeting scheduled for the fall. They immediately assured me that they would attend.

And indeed they came. Our “genealogists’ meeting” this year (September 5, 2008) attracted fifteen participants. We discussed our common research goals, our individual projects, our successes, and our frustrations, confirmed common approaches to our work, agreed to share data, resources, and do whatever it took to facilitate our goal of documenting our Bukovina ancestry. Since our meeting, the Internet lines have been blistering with our combined communications. Now that we know one another our personal correspondence is so much easier.

And so on September 6, 2008 about sixty-to-seventy participants again showed up including many of the previous guests as well as a few ones. As anticipated, they were immediately inundated by questions from the genealogists. Four laptops were pressed into service, and we were inputting data at lightning speed. My distant cousin, Maria Jedliczka née Bernhauser, who brought her grandmother’s photos, asked everyone if they knew any of the people she could not identify. Maria Ahlberg recognized some of the unfamiliar individuals as her maternal grandparents with their six children.

The group including the hardcore genealogists agreed to meet again in Bad Wilsnack next year with details to be worked out later. Anyone wishing information about the 2009 meeting may contact Lydia Hefke, Jahnstrasse 26, 26928 Pritzwalk, Germany; tel: 0 33 95/30 29 93 or the author at his e-mail address: douglas.reckmann@gmail.com.

NEW PUBLICATION

Irmtraud Schaper and Adolf/ Josef Neuburger, *Buchenhain: Die Heimat unserer Deutschböhmen: Vom Leben und Wirken der Deutschböhmen–von der Kolonisation bis zur Umsiedlung– von der Ansiedlung bis zur Vertreibung* (Bad Lippspringe, Germany, By the Authors, 1986/2008), 240 pp.

Irmtraud and Adolf Schaper have alerted us to the publication of the above-referenced monograph about the Bukovinian village of Buchenhain (Romanian: Poiana Micului). Building on Josef Neuburger’s out-of-print book of the same title, this publication adds several new features including charts of the first settlers, of men killed in action during the First and Second World War, of the 1940 transferees to Germany as well as numerous elaborations, information about individuals, and other relevant data based on recent research. Interested readers may order the book directly from the authors at Fliederstrasse 21, 33175 Bad Lippspringe, Germany or via e-mail at adolf-schaper@t-online.de. Price: 20 euros plus postage.

Brazilian “Bucovinos” on YouTube

by Steve Parke (Pueblo, CO)

There was a flurry of activity among some North American Bukovina enthusiasts in October as a Bukovina researcher found YouTube videos composed by a young Brazilian Bukovina descendent, Lucas Schafaschek. One video is entitled *Bucovinos Brasil* and the other, *Familia Schafaschek*. Those who have not yet seen these videos may go to www.youtube.com, type “Bucovinos” in the search entry box, click on “search” and you will be greeted with a listing of Lucas’ Bukovina visual productions.

The videos are short and to the point. Even though the text is in Portuguese, I could understand the flow of the narrative through recognizable words, names, and pictures. *Bucovinos Brasil* tells the story of Germans moving from Bavaria to the Bohemian Forest, to Bukovina, and then to Rio Negro in the State of Paraná, Brazil. Familiar images are included such as the Bukovina coat of arms, the logo of Bukovina Society of the Americas, and the emblem of the Brazilian *Associação Alemã-Bucovina de Cultura-ABC* (German-Bukovina Cultural Association) of Rio Negro.

Familia Schafaschek traces the Schafaschek family history beginning with Johann Schafaczek born circa 1797 in Seewiesen (now Javorná), Bohemia. In 1835 Johann with his wife and son Johann II set off for Austria’s easternmost crown land of Bukovina and were among the thirty German-Bohemian pioneering families who founded the village of Bori. Johann II and his wife, Katharina Seidl, had a son Andreas who married Theresia Reindl in 1875. In 1888 Andreas and Theresia immigrated to Rio Negro, Brazil, as part of a large Bukovina contingent. Just two years earlier other Bukovina families had begun to settle in Ellis County, Kansas, USA.

One of Johann II’s sons, Rudolf, married Regina Hones in Brazil and to them a son, Alfonso, was born in 1924. Our videographer, Lucas, born in 1993, is the grandson of Alfonso. Thus we have 200 years of Schafaschek family history, which, by the way, is recorded in *The Bori Story* by Maria Lang Becker, Larry Jensen, and Sophie Welisch and includes a listing of over 650 Schafaschek descendents. Ayrtton Gonçalves Celestino from Curitiba, Brazil, founder and long-time president of the *Associação Alemã-Bucovina de Cultura-ABC*, was instrumental in providing the Brazilian Bukovina story and the family information noted here.

In 2001 eight BSA members from the USA and Germany attended a *Bucovina Fest* in Rio Negro, Brazil. We also visited the village of “Schafaschek” near Rio Negro where Rudolf had established a large farm. Here we had dinner with the Schafaschek family. Before and after dinner we took pictures of those in attendance and of the surrounding landscape with the ancient, massive trees. In the group



photo to the left, Lucas has his arms around his mother, Celia. His sister Ana Marta is behind him and Alfonso is on Lucas’ left.

Getting back to the videos, you will love the background music. For instance *Familia* has a polka, *Zic Zac*, performed by *The Montanari*, similar to those polkas I heard and to which I danced during our visit to the 2001 *Bucovina Fest* in Rio Negro. German-Bohemians have great musical traditions and this has been amplified by the Brazilian *Bucovinos*. In October 2008 the *Boarsicher Wind*, the musical Brazilian Folklore Group, celebrated its seventeenth anniversary. Attending the celebration were Lucas, his mother Celia, and sister Ana Marta as seen in the back row of the *Bucovinos’* anniversary party photo above.

There are other videos by Lucas on YouTube. To access them you must go to the search entry box at www.youtube.com, type “Schafaschek,” and click on “search.” It is quickly evident that many of these videos are comedies with headings like *Comedia and Humor*. I probably missed some of the humor due to cultural and generational differences but plenty humor shines through in the acting. Lucas might some day be an actor or a movie producer and you first read about it here in the *BSA Newsletter!*

Lucas’ videos are not the full extent of his Internet efforts. See his Bukovina web site at <http://www.bucovinos.tk> for some interesting links. The language difference will be a hurdle for some of us but the music, photos, and images will be familiar. Enjoy!

AN EXCURSION TO BUKOVINA PLANS, PREPARATIONS AND REALITIES

by Peter Grunikiewicz (Büsnau/Stuttgart)

In early October of 2008 my friend Michael Augustin and I undertook a ten-day journey to southern Bukovina about which we would here like to report. In that our adventures and impressions were very multifaceted, we decided to divide our essay into four distinct sections, beginning with a discussion of how the trip came about and how it progressed. This includes a detailed account of our participation in the sixcentennial celebrations in the city of Czernowitz on October 4, which, incidentally, had been the original motivational trigger for our trip. The second section will emphasize our research experiences in the Suceava archive. Two additional sections will be published in the next issue of the *Newsletter*, the first delineating the tourist highlights

of our trip and the last describing our visits to the cemeteries of the former German communities.

It all began in the autumn of 2007 with a discussion with Mrs. Gertrud Romberger (the Cultural Advisor of the Baden-Württemberg branch of the *Landsmannschaft* of the Bukovina Germans). She mentioned that the *Landsmannschaft* would like to hold its 2008 convention in Czernowitz. The occasion was the celebration of the sixcentennial of the first citation of the city in an official document. Mrs. Romberger wished to ascertain if there would be sufficient interest in organizing a bus trip from Büsnau.

By February 2008 it was already clear that a bus trip from Büsnau would not take place. An article in the March 20 issue of *Der Südostdeutsche* announced that the yearly meeting of the *Landsmannschaft* would not be held in Germany during Pentecost as usual but rather in early October in Czernowitz in collaboration with the “First World Forum of Bukovinians.” I decided to jump at the chance and saw this as an opportunity for an extended visit to Bukovina. In 1984 I had already been to Bukovina with my sister, brother-in-law, uncle, and one of my brothers, at that time mainly for a family visit. In 2005 I again had an opportunity to travel to southern and northern Bukovina with the *Landsmannschaft*.

In the meantime I sought to interest Michael, who had never been to Bukovina, to undertake the trip. My next step was to make contact with the Bavarian branch of the *Landsmannschaft*, where I attended a meeting at which the journey was discussed. But it soon became evident that the objectives of this group were not clearly formulated and that it was doubtful if a definite date for the visit would be set. Since our interests were much greater in visiting southern rather than northern Bukovina, Michael and I explored another approach. Sophie Welisch (Congers, NY) had several times mentioned to Michael that her cousin, Roland Loy, who lives in Germany, travels to Suceava several times a year and would gladly take along people for whom he also arranges tours in Romania. Roland, whose parents were among the Bukovina Germans resettled to Germany in 1940, was born in Scheifling, Austria, the following year. In 1945 he, along with his mother and three siblings, were repatriated to Bukovina. Until his immigration to Germany in 1978 Roland lived in Gura Humorului to which he regularly returns as a visitor. Knowledge of the Romanian language and of the area presented no problems in addition to which Roland showed a great flexibility and a spontaneous enthusiasm for our travel plans and for our great interest in Bukovina.

Timewise we organized our itinerary according to the program of the World Forum provided to us by Mr. Luzian Geier, Director of the Bukovina Institute in Augsburg. We

scheduled our trip to Bukovina for September 28-29 and our return for October 7-8. At our first preparatory session with Roland in Ulm we were quickly able to reach a meeting of the minds about the remaining details. As our permanent quarters in Bukovina Roland suggested a boardinghouse in Gura Humorului from which we might undertake all our side trips. In Ulm we also met our fourth fellow traveler, Maria “Mitzi” Bursan. She was born in Czernowitz, and – like Roland – resettled in Germany in 1940 only to be repatriated to Romania after the war with never an opportunity again to visit the city of her birth. In 1985 she immigrated to Germany with her husband and has lived in Ulm ever since. Mitzi has often accompanied Roland on his trips and now, after sixty years, wished to see the city in which she had spent the first years of her life. Although the “First World Forum of Bukovinians” was officially cancelled due flood damages during the summer months, we remained undeterred in our resolve. Our travel plans were set in stone. Instead of the originally scheduled two days, we cut our visit to Czernowitz down to one. Surely there would be some jubilee celebrations!

All went according to plan; we drove to Gura Humorului and spent the first week sightseeing, to be described in the next issue of the *Newsletter*.

The visit to Bukovina’s former capital of Czernowitz was on the agenda for Saturday, October 4. We departed Gura Humorului at 8:00 a.m. under an overcast sky. After an hour we reached Ukrainian territory. The border crossing guards were polite but the process cost us almost one hour of waiting time. Eventually the sky brightened and the nearer we came to Czernowitz, the better our frame of mind.

There was relatively little traffic on the well-constructed street from the border to Czernowitz, and it struck us that there were no horse-drawn carts to be seen. After we had already passed the first larger houses of Czernowitz, we had to continue on without our vehicle. On this Saturday the inner city of Czernowitz had been declared a pedestrian zone with only taxis and buses permitted entry. However, since on this day the free-fare buses were already arriving at the bus stops overfilled with passengers and most of the taxis were also fully occupied, we decided to walk the two kilometers to the center of Czernowitz. People of all ages, well dressed and in good humor, were streaming into the city.

And Czernowitz received its guests under blue skies and with newly paved roads and freshly painted houses. An exuberance had overtaken the whole city and marriages were being sealed in the public registry office. Magnificently decorated automobiles were surpassed by still more magnificently attired brides. It seemed apparent that the city’s entire population was in a festive mood.

At the far end of Ring Plaza (the central area in front of

town hall) a large stage had been set up with numerous screens for video presentations in front of which for over an hour all possible groups and dignitaries passed in review. As the unending parade passed by the stage, they saluted the



Musicians in traditional Romanian national attire.

high-ranking representatives of the state and the community. Since the gigantic crowd made it impossible for us to approach the stage no closer than thirty meters at best, and since in addition we did not understand Ukrainian, we could only glean visual impressions projected onto the large screens. In the afternoon there were folklore presentations on the stage after which individual groups sang and danced in the streets.

At the perimeter of Ring Plaza there were stands and a display with all sorts of breads, cakes, pastries and sundry baked goods. At Theater Plaza we saw a floral exhibit and everywhere there were stages on which various musical groups performed. And naturally there were also large numbers of stands offering food and beverages, which found widespread favor.

To the right and left on *Herrengasse* (today *Kobyanskaia*) a strip of black granite had been set into the street pavement with "Czernowitz" engraved in six different languages. The German House also shone forth in new splendor. Unfortunately the renovation of the interior was not yet completely finished, so that we could not enter. For Western tourists orientation has been simplified in that the street names are not only in Cyrillic but also in Latin letters. Since we were beginning to tire a bit, we sought refreshment in the *Café Vienna* where we indulged in a cup of coffee and a piece of the very prolific assortment of cakes and pastries.

Toward evening dance music was scheduled in all the larger sections of the city. Unfortunately we could not participate in this entertainment, since we did not want to drive to our quarters after dark. As we had come, so we again returned to our auto, passing the *Volksgarten* (People's Garden) and the Hotel Bukovina. Czernowitz is a city worth seeing and much too complex for one day only. To be sure this will not be our last visit.

We had a lot on which to reflect during the return ride to Gura Humorului: the folklore groups which danced through the streets, the festively dressed people, the noticeably large number of young folk, and finally the uplifting spirit of Czernowitz. On that day Mitzi had good cause to be proud of the city of her birth.

RESEARCHING IN THE SUCEAVA ARCHIVE

by Michael Augustin (Leonberg/Stuttgart)

Shortly before our departure for Bukovina my friend, Doug Reckmann (Portland, OR), e-mailed his best wishes for a good trip and at the same time asked us to pursue research in the Suceava archive relevant to our common genealogical interests. This proved to be a stroke of luck in that a stop-over at the archive had not been included in our original travel plans.

According to schedule, we departed from our base in Gura Humorului for Suceava on Friday morning hoping for the best. We simply wanted to tour the city and at the same time discern the location of the archive. Both our fellow travelers, Roland and Mitzi, had their own plans, so Peter and I set off alone. Our first goal was the Catholic church, which was open, but where we found no one whom we could question. Yet right next to the church we discovered a tourist information office, where we then put our luck to the test. Unfortunately the employees' knowledge of English was rather limited. After a telephone call and a short delay, they tried to describe to us the areas where could find old wooden churches. We again repeated that we were in search of church records, whereupon they regretted not being able to help us and suggested we inquire at the museum. This was only a few hundred meters up the street, and there we found a friendly young man who spoke English very well. Several colleagues were drawn into the discussion through which we learned that the archive was in the same building and accessible through a side entrance. Thus despite our limited efforts, we found the archive in a relatively short time.

The archive behind the unpretentious entrance is comparable to others of its type, which we have seen in other parts of the world. A security guard was posted at the entrance, who could, however, speak no English and therefore had to bring an archive employee. This lady was helpful and friendly and showed us two catalogues of approximately 250-300 pages each. For each community the catalogues listed one-to-two pages of church books, which were available and organized according to the various religious denominations (usually Orthodox, but also Jewish, Catholic and Lutheran). We immediately realized that the registers for the Catholic communities in which we were interested (*Fürstenthal/Voevodeasa*, *Buchenhain/Pojana Mikuli/Poiana Micului*, *Karlsberg/Gura Putnei*, *Kaczyka/Cacica*, etc.) almost without exception contained the years which to date had eluded us.

Since it was almost noontime, they did not want to let us use the books but rather requested that we return Monday morning. At the same time they allowed us to film the registry pages of the Catholic communities so that we might

get oriented and prepare for the task ahead. Upon our departure an awkward moment arose when Peter, in accordance with his previous experiences in Romania, tried to give the lady at the archive a tip, which she declined in indignation. How times have changed!

We spent the noon hour wandering through the market and ate *mititei* (grilled rolled up chopped meat seasoned with garlic). At 2:00 p.m. we had arranged a meeting with Codrin Grunichievici, Peter's second cousin. He is an orthopedic doctor in Suceava and had not had contact with Peter in the last twenty years. It was through a fortunate chain of events that we found him. Codrin speaks English well. Aside from his apartment in the city, he owns a very lovely house with a large yard in Illischestie about twenty kilometers from Suceava, to which he invited us. Thus by chance we got to see this former Swabian settlement and the Lutheran church dating from 1901. Beautifully renovated, it stands gleaming white and visible far and wide on the slope overlooking the village. In any event there are no more Protestants in the city today so that the church now serves as an Orthodox house of worship.

Encouraged by our earlier fortuitous experience in the archive, we changed our plans and decided to return to Suceava on Monday and spend an extra day in the archive. Since it had rained all Sunday and the weather on Monday was still overcast, this was, in retrospect, not too great a sacrifice. This time we arrived at the archive precisely at 10:00 a.m. when the archive opened and came fully equipped: laptop, identification papers, digital camera with enough storage and battery capacity and above all a tripod. We had already been informed on Friday that there would be a charge of 6.25 lei (c. 1.60 euros or 2.10 US dollars) for the filming, which had to be done without flash bulbs. Otherwise there were no other archival costs. This time we were assisted by another female archive employee who, however, had already been informed by her co-workers about our coming and our objectives. We had to fill out some papers and pay the above-mentioned trifle. This could not be submitted to one of the archive's employees; rather, Peter had to go to the neighboring bank and make out a check payable to the archive.

In the meantime with a stool and my tripod I set up a small structure in front of the window where



Michael setting up his tripod in the Suceava archive

we would be able to photocopy the church books. The records are not on microfilm; the researcher works from the originals. One may request a maximum of fifteen church books at a time. Confusion arose when we were assured that there were no records for Fürstenthal or Voevodeasa nor could we locate them in the catalogues we had used on Friday. Only after Peter again completely reexamined them did he find the records under Codrul Voevodeasa (Forest [Settlement] Fürstenthal). But even after we had resolved this problem it still took us almost another hour until they brought us this particular church book. Apparently it had also been misplaced in the archive.

In our five hours of available time we photocopied some 1,500 pages; Peter turned the pages and I worked the camera. Not having more time that day, we concentrated on the records from Fürstenthal and Buchenhain, of which we have a complete copy, as well as those from Kaczyka, which we could only film partially. In the process we found the condition of the records to vary from excellent to badly damaged. A portion of the latter records was in its original condition, another portion had been very properly and professionally restored. Although no one said anything, we nonetheless had the impression that the archive's employees were somewhat astonished at the intensiveness with which we utilized their permission to photocopy. We hope that the liberal attitude for the digital reproduction of the records in the archive of Suceava will continue to prevail. There is still much work to be done.

KIMPOLUNG AND BEYOND

by Peter Straub (Congers, NY)

On the eve of my eightieth birthday (September 1928) I reluctantly consented to an interview, which led to the biographical narrative below. I say "reluctantly," since memories can be selective and take on a life of their own, sometimes embellishing events and at other times suppressing them. Nonetheless, what follows is as accurate an account of the highlights of my experiences as I recall them and written in order that subsequent generations might gain an insight into the life and times of that generation born in Bukovina during the interwar period.

According to extant records, my ancestors were not only German (*Straub, Hoffmann*) but also Czech (*Cziczek*) and Polish (*Ojkuthyn*). Yet, interestingly enough, when a German-speaking individual asks my ethnic identity, I reply with some degree of pride, "*Ich bin ein Walach!*" ("I am a Walachian," *i.e.*, someone from Walachia, one of the kernel provinces of the Old Kingdom of Romania, with "Walachian" the earlier designation for Romanian). As the reader may know, Bukovina was a multiethnic territory, sometimes called "Switzerland of the East," which a myriad



Peter Straub (1950)

of nationalities called home. Inter-marriage among these groups was not uncommon, with religion rather than nationality the possible obstacle.

I was the second son of Albert Straub and Rosa Cziczek and saw the light of day in Gurahumora (German population in 1930: 2,441). I never knew my grandfather, Peter Cziczek, who

had immigrated to the United States in 1910 and for reasons not clear, never returned nor sent for his family. Peter Cziczek died in New York City in 1930. Ironically, my grandmother, Leontine, who had resisted leaving her homeland in the second and third decades of the twentieth century, eventually immigrated to the United States in 1949, after having lost hearth and home during the Second World War.

So much for family background. As for me, I saw the light of day in Gurahumora, where I resided with my parents and older brother Bruno until 1930 at which time we relocated to Kimpolung (German population in 1930: 1,637). My contacts with Gurahumora continued, however, since every summer we returned to spend the time with my grandmother, who lived in the section of town called Glassberg. In 1932 my sister Trudy was born in Kimpolung where we resided until the en masse relocation of the Bukovina Germans to Germany in 1940.

As I recall my youth, the contrast in lifestyle, opportunities and recreation between then and now, between that of myself and my siblings to that of our children and grandchildren, is stark indeed. During my entire youth the only store-bought toy we had was a ball. We had no cards, board games or record players nor was it fashionable to go swimming, although we lived close to the Moldova River. In the absence of electricity we lit our rooms at night by means of a kerosene lamp and cooked our meals on a wood-burning stove, the wood for which had first to be chopped and hauled from the neighboring forest. We had no in-door toilets and had to draw water for cooking and washing from a neighbor's well. In Romania water was viewed as a gift God had given to mankind; therefore, even a stranger could feel free to draw water from any well he might encounter along his path.

Life for the adults centered on work with evenings spent in neighborly visits and at Church-sponsored social functions. Since farm work is seasonal, there were periods of relative inactivity, which led some men to spend their time in the local saloons. As I recall, Kimpolung had a number of such establishments, which contributed to the alcohol addiction of many a villager. Fortunately my father was not among those who sought relief from ennui in the local pubs.

As most of the other villagers of Kimpolung, we had a small farm whereon we raised chickens, pigs and geese. In addition we had a garden with a few fruit trees where we also planted corn, peas, potatoes, beans and beets. Our mainstay and the staple food of Bukovinians was mamaliga, a cornmeal mush, washed down by herbal tea or milk. In that my father had sustained life-limiting injuries during World War I for which he received no pension, my mother assumed the role of principal family provider. To bring in a little spending money she performed housekeeping and laundry chores for a nearby better-off family. As was customary, a local stream served as the community washing machine. It was at its banks that the women gathered, usually once a week, to rinse their clothing and linens. My mother's labors, begun as an adolescent, were to continue until her seventy-eight year, when, as an immigrant in the United States, she finally applied for social security and was able to live out the remainder of her life in well-earned tranquility.

Romanian was the language of both our home and the school. Although I understood German, I did not have any formal instruction in that language until I attended Sunday school in preparation for my first communion. My public school education, begun at age seven (1935), continued until interrupted by our transfer to Germany in 1940. All in all I have a favorable recollection of my school years and a good impression of our teachers.

The year 1940 brought a dramatic change into our lives. After the Soviet annexation of northern Bukovina, Germany and Romania entered into an agreement to evacuate the German population of southern Bukovina. The transfer was voluntary, but to be eligible, the applicant had to document at least one German grandparent; this my parents were able to do. Unfortunately my father died shortly before the resettlement.

We departed Bukovina via rail: destination Germany where for one year my family was housed in a school building, which had been modified to function temporarily as a transition camp. Here we had our own room with meals served cafeteria style. After about one year of camp life, we were resettled in Bielitz (Bielsko), Upper Silesia, in a home from which a Polish family had just been evacuated. To us

Bukovinians, who had lived in peace and harmony with multinational peoples, this was a painful experience, but to speak up against such injustice would have brought dire consequences.

In Bielitz, where we lived for four years, I began an apprenticeship for mechanic (*Maschinenschlosser*). My brother Bruno had been inducted into the army, and my sister Trudy continued with her elementary school education. With no ifs, ands, or buts, I had to join and attend meetings of the Hitler Youth, while my sister became a member of the *Bund der deutschen Mädel* (League of German Girls). It was no coincidence that their meetings frequently fell on Sunday mornings, when our families wanted us to attend church services.

Upon reaching my sixteenth birthday I was conscripted into the *Volksturm* (People's Army, a local defense militia of all able-bodied men between sixteen and sixty years of age). In this capacity several neighbors and I were sent to Krakow in late 1944 to dig trenches intended to forestall the Soviet military advance. The Russian steamroller, however, rolled on inexorably, capturing Krakow on January 19, 1945. The local population of Bielitz, including my mother and sister, had already been evacuated to the west. Thanks to the efficient organization of the German Red Cross, which posted names and destinations of passengers at the railroad stations, I found out that they had boarded a train for Bad Ischl in Lower Austria. A few weeks later I followed, hoping soon to reunite with them.

During the train ride the German Red Cross provisioned the passengers at stops along the way. At night the train stopped, presumably in order that its lights not be seen by enemy aircraft. Although we witnessed several air raids, we were fortunate in that neither our train nor the rails were ever bombed although fear and anxiety were our constant companions. We were also fortunate when we consider the flight of the rural population whose mode of transportation was horse and wagon on snow-covered roads and paths at below-freezing temperatures.

In Bad Ischl I was able to reunite with my mother and Trudy, who had found refuge at the farm of a Mrs. Rottenhauer. Short of farm help, I could now apply my knowledge of animal care and machinery in exchange for living accommodations for our family. As refugees we were eligible for food cards, which provided the basic sustenance to keep body and soul together.

I worked for Mrs. Rottenhauer for one year after which I found employment with a Mrs. Rettenbacher, who ran a truck transport and taxi business. This involved the assis-

tance of her two horses, Fritz and Maxl, who hauled wagons filled with lumber and farm products and were occasionally needed to take a wedding couple to the church. Needless to say, it was the latter, which proved to be the more pleasurable event for both man and beast. The horses had an easy haul and got sugar cubes at the wedding reception while the driver enjoyed a good meal and the festive music. My job with Mrs. Rettenbacher definitely had its benefits; nonetheless, I was not able to complete my apprenticeship as a mechanic and had an increasing concern about my future.

But as the saying goes, "Man proposes, God disposes." By 1947 mail service between the defeated Axis powers and the outside world had been reinstated, and to our delight, my aunt Stephanie "Fanny" Haas found out our address and initiated correspondence with my mother. It was Tante Fanny, who now impacted our lives by her willingness to sponsor our immigration to the United States. The first to cross the Atlantic was my grandmother in 1948 with my departure following two years later from Bremen. This incidentally afforded me the opportunity to visit my brother, Bruno, living in Holstein, northern Germany, whom I had not seen since 1944 and who had recently been released from an American POW camp. On February 19, 1950 the *SS Washington*, of which I was a passenger, crossed the Atlantic and docked at New York Harbor. Tante Fanny, having immigrated to the United States in 1922, not only sponsored my grandmother and me but later also my mother and siblings Trudy and Bruno.

Life for us in America was everything we could ever have imagined. I was always able to find satisfactory employment, usually with firms with a predominant number of native German speakers. My spare time was often spent in Yorkville, New York City's erstwhile German section, where for some twenty-five years I belonged to a *Schuhplattler* group (Bavarian country dance group). It was at the Forest Rendezvous Club in Yorkville in 1952 that I met my future wife, Marie Griesbeck, with whom I had two sons, Peter II and Gerald, both college graduates and both holding management positions. America has been good to me beyond all expectations, yet in quiet moments I sometimes recall as though in a dream my formative years in Bukovina and the tumultuous war and post-war experiences which shaped my life.