



The Bukovina Society of the Americas NEWSLETTER

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

Vol. 20, No. 4 December 2010

Board of Directors

Martha McClelland, President
Hays, Kansas
O.M. Windholz, Vice President
Hays, Kansas
Shirley Kuppetz, Secretary
Ellis, Kansas
Arthur Honas, Treasurer
Ellis, Kansas
Irmgard Ellingson
Decorah, Iowa
Joe Erbert
Ellis, Kansas
Eileen Goetz
Hays, Kansas

Rebecca Hageman

Wichita, Kansas
Norma Lang
Ellis, Kansas
Steve Parke
Pueblo, Colorado
Darrell Seibel
Hays, Kansas
Werner Zoglauer
Naperville, Illinois

International Board

Michael Augustin
Leonberg, Germany
Ayrton Gonçalves Celestino, Ph. D.
Curitiba, Brazil
Laura Hanowski
Regina, SK, Canada
Ortfried Kotzian, Ph. D.
Augsburg, Germany
Edward Al Lang
Sycamore, Illinois
Paul Massier
Las Vegas, Nevada
Van Massier
Crawford, Texas

Douglas Reckmann
Portland, Oregon
Kurt Rein, Ph. D.
Baldham, Germany

Publisher: O.M. Windholz
windholz@bukovinasociety.org
Co-editor: Irmgard Ellingson
Irmgard@bukovinasociety.org
Co-editor: Rebecca Hageman
rhageman@bukovinasociety.org

Webmaster: Werner Zoglauer
zoglauer@bukovinasociety.org
Asst. Webmaster: Rebecca Hageman
Member Data Base: Rebecca Hageman

Web Site: www.bukovinasociety.org



Membership Dues:
Lifetime \$150.00
Annual \$15.00

A Blessed Christmas to our members

BUKOVINA TOURS

Numerous members of the Society have traveled to our former Bukovina homeland and continue to do so. In 1996, some 30 of our members enjoyed a group tour conducted by the Bukovina Institute of Augsburg. We have received inquiries from people interested in a group tour guided in English. Luzian Geier informed the Society they are willing to conduct another such tour. The tentative dates would be approximately the last two weeks of September, 2011, departing from Germany by luxury bus and returning for one day at Oktoberfest (which ends October 3rd) in Munich about October 1st. In addition to touring the former Bukovina in Ukraine and Romania, other sites of interest will be included both in Germany and along the route.

In order to determine the feasibility of a tour, we are compiling a list of individuals to whom we will send a detailed brochure. The deadline for responding is January 15, 2011. There is no obligation for this reply or for receiving the subsequent brochure. Please send an email to owindholz@bukovinasociety.org, or postal response to O M Windholz, P O Box 1083, Hays, KS 67601 with the following information: Name(s), postal address, phone, email address and the names of village or cities of interest. This does not guarantee visits to those locations, but will assist in tour planning. If you do not have email, please reply by postal mail and provide an email address of someone who can receive updates for you.

is also available in color by pdf attachment if you wish to convert from postal to email. Send your email address to rhageman@bukovinasociety.org for this convenient and cost saving feature.

- Eileen Goetz has compiled a family history book with many photos titled; *The Four Werb Sisters Who came over from Illischestie, Bukovina, Austria*. A copy has been donated to the Society library and interested persons can contact the author at: egoetz@eaglecom.net
- Life Member Anita Busek died August 10th at her home in Seatac, Washington. She was born and raised in the Bukovina community around Chehalis and was very active in support of the Bukovina Society.
- Matt Erbert, grandson of Society charter members Joe and Arlene Erbert, has put his hometown of Ellis in the football record books during high school. He was selected to play in the 37th annual Kansas Shrine Bowl in July. After that he headed for training at Pittsburg (Kansas) State University where he signed to play in their storied football program.
- We were pleased to welcome Herman Ottshofski to the annual meeting of the Bukovina Society from Colorado. At the subsequent regular board meeting officers elected were: Martha McClelland, President, O M Windholz, Vice President, Shirley Kuppetz, Secretary and Art Honas and Norma Lang, co-treasurers.

THE FRANZ MASSIRER HISTORY

By: Van Massierer

Part II

When the Massirers arrived in their new homeland, they found fertile land to be farmed and adequate rainfall to grow their crops. Indeed the land was similar to what they left behind in Austria and also to that left behind by the earlier families when they

PEOPLE AND EVENTS

- Please notify the Society of change of address. At times, envelopes containing the Newsletter are returned without forwarding information. You have paid for these mailings and we strive to see that you receive them. The Newsletter

departed Germany and immigrated to Austria in 1785. The terrain was rolling, with scattered trees, and in some places, completely wooded areas. The streams and springs ran clear and held numerous fish, and the water was pure enough to drink. Wild game was plentiful in the woods. Wildflowers presented a rainbow of colors from spring to fall, and winters were relatively mild. Probably one of the most striking differences that the family encountered were the ever-changing weather patterns. They may have found it somewhat shocking at first to rise on a mild autumn morning and then find the temperature below freezing before sunset.

There is little doubt that Franz's finances were almost depleted by the time he and his family arrived in central Texas. With no money to buy land, they lived at first on a farm in Coryell County about one mile west of the little village of Osage and about nine miles west of Crawford. Here they were tenant farmers. Through hard work and their well-known German frugality, they were able to save enough money to make a down payment in 1896 on a 481-acre farm in McLennan County. The purchase price was \$8 per acre with a down payment of \$200 and the remainder financed for six years. Although the move to the new place in terms of distance was a relatively short one of about two miles, it must have seemed as if it were much more. When one compares the meager holdings the family left behind in Austria with what they had accomplished financially in four years in America, only then does the significance of this short move become evident. With more than a twelve-fold increase over what the family had ever owned in Austria, but also with ten percent interest on the outstanding notes, it must surely have been a time of great pride tempered by anxiety about making the payments.

There was no house on the new farm, so one of Franz's first tasks was to provide shelter for his family, which had by now grown to include Adam, his wife Caroline, and their two small children. Franz chose to build his house in a grove of live oak trees near the center of the farm. This particular place had been used as a campsite by the previous tenant, who had been leasing the land and grazing cattle on it. The house consisted of two large rooms that served as both bedrooms and sitting rooms and a large kitchen that stretched across the width of the house on the back. An upstairs area was finished only with a floor, and the roof as a ceiling, and served as a sleeping area for the children. The house was used until 1923, when son, Phillip, tore it down and replaced it with a larger two-story house.

Since the soil on the new farm had not been tilled previously, Franz and his sons had to clear the land of trees and rocks. The trees, mainly live oak, elm, and ash, with some cedar, pecan, walnut, bois d'arc, sumac, and shinnery, were cut with axes and used for firewood that provided warmth in the winter and fuel for cooking year round. Trunks from cedar and bois d'arc were saved for fence posts. Bois d'arc posts were extremely hard and practically indestructible and could be expected to last fifty years or more. Tree stumps were removed by using pick axes and grubbing hoes in a labor-intensive process known as stump grubbing. Not wasting anything, the family cut the stumps into pieces small enough to fit in the stove. In later years after the tillable land had been cleared, only dead trees were used for firewood.

After an area was cleared of trees and rocks, it was plowed and crops were planted. In the fall, usually in November, oats, wheat,

and barley were planted. These crops were then harvested early in the following summer. Corn was planted in late March, along with some forage crops for the livestock. Cotton, the main crop, was planted in late April or early May and was harvested in September and October. Two cotton gins were nearby; one was at Osage, slightly over a mile away, and the other was near where the present-day Canaan Church Road crosses Rainey's Creek, about two miles away.

Because so much of the fieldwork was done by hand, the family stayed busy year round, often working from sunrise to sunset. In addition to the field crops, the family also took care of a large garden and orchard. Almost everything they ate was grown on the farm; they bought only staples such as flour (in barrel lots) and seasonings. The garden provided potatoes, radishes, carrots, turnips, tomatoes, melons, sweet potatoes, squash, cucumbers, beans, peas, and cabbage.

Both potatoes and cabbage had been staples in their native Austrian diets and continued to be produced in large quantities in Texas. After the potatoes were harvested, they were stored in a cool, dry place, such as under the house. They were covered with wheat or oat straw to prevent freezing in winter. Cabbage was eaten fresh from the garden or preserved as sauerkraut.

The orchard provided peaches, plums, pears, and grapes. Peaches and pears were preserved whole or in jam and stored in glass jars, while plums were used mainly as fresh fruit or preserved as jelly. Grapes were both eaten fresh and used to make wine. Although the church did not approve of alcoholic beverages, Franz, along with nearly all of the other Austrian and German families in the community, did not give up his wine. Instead, he chose to imbibe discreetly, and when the local pastor came for a visit, it was put out of sight.

Pecans were abundant from the native trees that grew in the deeper soils. A few walnut trees grew in the creek bottom, but the shells of the nuts were so hard and the kernels so small that they were practically useless.

In addition to fruits, vegetables, and nuts, the family also raised hogs for meat and chickens for both eggs and meat. They butchered several hogs each winter, always choosing a particularly cold day to do the butchering. Because of limited storage and the difficulty of preserving meat, usually only one hog was slaughtered at a time. A by-product of the pork came from the fat that was trimmed off the meat and made into lard for cooking and into soap for bathing and for laundering clothes. Sausage was made by grinding some of the meat, seasoning it, and stuffing it into casings made from the hog's intestines. It was then hung in a smokehouse for smoking and drying. Hams and bacon were hand-rubbed with a salt-based mixture and allowed to cure or stored in large crocks and covered with lard. Fish, which were occasionally taken from the creek that flowed through the farm, provided a bit of variety in the diet.

While beef was a luxury that the family seldom enjoyed, they kept cows for milk. Butter and cheese were made from the milk. Other food items that had to be kept cool were stored in a cooler with a metal frame and shelves that were covered with cloth side curtains. The bottoms of the curtains were draped into a pan of

water on the lower shelf and became wicks for the water. The water-soaked curtains then acted as a coolant to keep food several degrees cooler than the outside temperature.

The family also kept draft animals. Franz preferred mules to pull his farm implements, which included at least a one-sweep middle buster, a one-sweep turning plow, a one-row planter, a small grain drill, a one-row cultivator, a reaper, and a wagon. Mules were also used for riding and for drawing the family buggy. Hoes were plentiful on the farm; they were relatively cheap, and with five sons still at home, there were plenty of hands available to use them.

In order to confine the cattle and mules on the farm, Franz and his sons built several miles of perimeter fence, plus shorter lengths around the tilled plots. Barbed wire was purchased, and cedar and bois d'arc trees were cut for posts. It was no doubt a long and tedious job, with most of the work done during the winter months when there was less field work to be done.

However, life was not all work and no play. While church activities were foremost on Sundays, with no work permitted, there were plenty of opportunities to celebrate birthdays and anniversaries or just to get together to talk and visit with kinfolks and other families in the community. Since all of the families were rather large, someone was celebrating something nearly all of the time. Gatherings always included plentiful amounts of food and perhaps even a little schnapps for the men to drink. Because the church did not approve of dancing, there were games for the kids, while the adults enjoyed mostly talking and visiting. While the wine could be hidden, the dancing could not. However, some of Franz's sons went to house dances at their Lutheran neighbors' parties; that practice was apparently more acceptable. One of the sons was well known for carrying a bottle of liquor in his saddlebag when he went to a party. All conversation at family gatherings was, of course, in German, and since it was a closed, tight-knit group, there were never any *Amerikaners* in attendance. Generally, anyone who did not speak German was an *Amerikaner*, not always a particularly complimentary term.

Although Franz had lived in the community and had been active in church work since 1892, he did not officially become a member of the Canaan Baptist Church until April 21, 1894. Canaan church records indicate that the reason for this delay had to do with difficulty in obtaining Franz's letter from his former congregation in Austria. Margaretha's membership began on March 10, 1895.

The Canaan membership roll also indicates that Franz was removed from membership on December 26, 1898, and there is no indication that he was ever reinstated. While the records contain no direct justification for this action, there are other indications interspersed through the minutes of the business meetings that indicate Franz may have been at odds with church doctrine or with particular individuals in the church. The early churches barely tolerated those who did not closely follow church doctrine, and it was not at all uncommon to deny communion or even to strike from the roll those who did not follow the straight and narrow path as defined by the congregation. During the early years, everything went reasonably well for Franz and his family on the farm. However, Franz did not get to enjoy life in his new homeland very long, for he died on October 23, 1900. Following a long

illness, Margaretha died on January 10, 1902. Both were buried in the Canaan Baptist Cemetery, where their graves are the oldest marked burials in the cemetery. It was then time for the sons to take charge of the farm.

It was customary at the time for sons to inherit the family land, while daughters were likely to get household items or cash settlements. Franz's family was no exception to this, as each of the five sons inherited an equal share of 96 acres from the original 481 acres. The two daughters relinquished any claim to the real property by each accepting a \$5.00 cash payment and probably some personal items.

For some twenty years following the deaths of Franz and Margaretha, their family lived and worked on the original and adjoining farms. However, the family eventually began to disperse for several reasons. Everyone was living in very close proximity, and several children became associated with other religious faiths. Coupled with petty jealousies and unbending and unforgiving ways, these factors led some family members to move away. The dispersion was also fueled by the desire to get off the farm and seek what was perceived as a better way of life elsewhere.

Some family members were seldom heard from until 1975 when 126 people came to the first family reunion at the Canaan Baptist Church. That first reunion was planned and brought to fruition by Edwin Massirer, a grandson of Franz and Margaretha.

What began as a family of two when Franz and Margaretha married in Austria in the late 1860s has grown to a family of several hundred in Texas and other states. Two Massirer families still live on and own parts of the original farm, where a pear tree, planted by Franz more than 100 years ago and still bearing fruit, stands as a silent sentinel and reminder of the heritage of the past.

WILD WEST RAILROAD CAPITALISTS PAVE THE WAY FOR BUKOVINA IMMIGRATION

By: Steve Parke

The area of Kansas occupied by the 1887 Bukovina immigrants has a well-known Wild West history. Fort Hays was one of General George Custer's posts from 1867 to 1870. Wild Bill Hickok was a vigilante sheriff in Hays City in 1869 and a year earlier Bill Cody became known as Buffalo Bill by winning a buffalo kill contest over Bill Comstock just west of Oakley. But did you know that from 1875-1892 Jay Gould, a notable Wall Street speculator and railroad owner, traveled, sought, and eventually bought and influenced the area's Kansas Pacific railroad?

Gould has an interesting story no matter which version one reads. Many New York newspapers from the 1860s through his death in 1892 often gave him unfavorable press. He fared no better with historians of the Progressive and Depression Eras. For instance, Mathew Josephson, 1934 writer of *The Robber Barons*, referred to Gould as Mephistopheles, one of the seven princes of hell, because of his stock market and business maneuvers during America's Gilded Age.

Revisionist histories of Jay Gould based on business records and

other primary sources were written in the latter part of the 20th Century. In 1957 Julius Grodinsky wrote *Jay Gould: His Business Career: 1867-1892* and in 1986 Maury Kline wrote *The Life and Legend of Jay Gould*. Both authors presented Gould as a stock trader and businessman in the days of unregulated entrepreneurial activity in America. From this perspective Gould was most notably, a successful strategist in Western railroad expansion, especially from 1879-1881, when the Kansas Pacific was (KP) merged with the Union Pacific (UP). Yet just like the earlier mentioned Wild West characters, Gould sometimes functioned in a manner that left a wake of negative fall-out.

The KP railroad built from Kansas City, KS, to Denver, CO, was in Ellis by 1867 and reached Denver in 1869. In 1870 the land just west of Ellis in Trego County was still unsettled prairie. The 1870 Trego census shows 166 residents, most of them near the railroad tracks, one-third being foreign-born Irish. To the south along the Smoky Hill River were 40 temporary residents, all Smoky Hill Trail workers, i.e. teamsters, wagon masters and Indian scouts.

The UP ran from Omaha, NE, to Cheyenne, WY, and on to Promontory, UT, by 1869. In 1873 Gould bought UP stocks at depressed prices and was soon the primary owner and president. He first attempted to merge the UP and KP in 1875 but to no avail. In 1876 he fortuitously bought inexpensive KP finance instruments, groundwork for the merger finally realized in 1880.

Meanwhile, the first development effort in Trego County, just west of Ellis, had its beginning. James F. Keeney “discovered” Kansas while touring the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. In 1877 he toured the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe line on the old Santa Fe Trail and the KP line on the old Smoky Hill Trail. According to his promotional literature, Keeney chose the better land on the KP line just west of Ellis. In late 1877 he contracted with the KP to sell land granted by the U.S Government to the KP for building the railroad. Keeney and a partner, Albert E. Warren, both of Chicago, then formed corporations to build a town site named “WaKeeney” and sell land. By 1878 settlers were streaming into the area. Many were from Illinois but others migrated from various states bordering the Great Lakes from New England to the Corn Belt states.

In following the stories of New York capitalist Jay Gould and Chicago capitalist, James F. Keeney, some interesting parallels arise. This may all be coincidence but the further one looks, the more the trails converge. For starters Keeney “discovers” Kansas while Gould is making his first investments in the KP. And then as Gould almost closed the UP and KP merger in 1878, Keeney’s town building, land sales, and promotional efforts ramped up with cross-county flair.

Gould’s 1878 merger plans failed due to the pricing demands of Henry Villard, a German-American, and his European KP bondholders. Then in an odd twist in late 1878 Gould sold much of his UP stock due a stock market crisis. With this cash he bought Villard’s bonds and gained control of the KP by March 1879. In late 1879 Gould also bought control or influence in other railroads, including the Wabash and Denver Rio Grande. With these purchases Gould had quietly aligned a route from Toledo to Hannibal, Kansas City, Denver and potentially on to the South-

west Pacific railroad, a transcontinental route utilizing the KP as a connecting link.

On the verge of leveraging a merger between the KP and UP, Gould goes on a European family vacation in July 1879. Upon returning to America, Gould and family members travel west in October, briefly stopping in WaKeeney, visiting Keeney.¹ Gould said the town was the finest. Upon Gould’s visit, Keeney arranged for the shipment at \$6 a ton coal from the Wyoming UP coal mines as local residents were worried about maintaining an economical coal supply through the winter. Earlier that year Keeney had gone to Washington, successfully advocating for the relocation of the Land Office from Hays City to WaKeeney. Keeney had clout in high places.

On January 14, 1880, the UP Board of Directors met Gould in New York and penciled a merger deal. With Gould’s control of an East-West transcontinental route via the KP, the UP Directors humbly asked for a merger knowing that the alternative would be UP’s demise. Gould had orchestrated a strategic coup. Early historians recount this event as a very profitable, conniving transaction for Gould as KP stocks, once as low as \$9 a share were merged at par with UP stocks, both now at about \$95 a share. Contemporary historians see this as an example of Gould’s strategic business skills. Interestingly Keeney was in New York for “business” from the 8th to the 13th of January.² One wonders if he working with the KP or Gould and if so, how?

Through 1880 Keeney, continues to promote WaKeeney and Trego County railroad land, prestigiously served as President of the Western National Fair at Bismarck Grove near Lawrence, and was elected as a State Representative. Meanwhile by early 1881 Gould had sold most of his UP stocks, some for as much as \$130, and turned to other investment interests. With similar timing, Keeney becomes notably absent from WaKeeney by April 1881 for business matters in Chicago and in 1882 his railroad land goes back to the UP. Many then thought the drought of 1879-1881 had pushed Keeney out of Kansas but maybe his work with Gould or the KP was completed. In November 1882, Keeney married Hattie Hannah in Michigan, the couple residing in Chicago.³

Yes, Western Kansas had a Wild West with wagon trains, military forts, buffalo hunters, and vigilante sheriffs. At the same time capitalists from across the country brought their own versions of raids, takeovers, and business as usual. Contemporary historians point to Jay Gould’s strategic brilliance and faithful network of business partners in America’s westward expansion, and as this article outlines, the Money King of the Gilded Age came through Kansas on the KP line in a big way, shaping land and rail companies for later Bukovina immigration.

¹WaKeeney Weekly World, October 4, 1879.
“Railroad Reckonings”

²WaKeeney Weekly World, January 24, 1880.
“Washington Letter”

³WaKeeney Weekly World, November 18, 1882. “News Notes”

THE LAST TIME

By: Judy Hoffman

(Mr. Kramer gave a similar presentation at Bukovinafest 2009. Originally published by the Sunflower Chapter AHSGR and reprinted with their permission.)

During the course of our guest speaker's story of life in wartime Germany, Fritz Kramer emotionally stated, "This is the last time I will tell my story. It's too painful."

Fritz grew up in Eastern Germany. The Crusaders had settled there in the 1200s. Danish, Dutch, and Germans settled there. The language was Low German and still is today. It's called "Low German" because it's spoken in the lower part of Germany.

In the 1930s Germany was in bad shape. That's why Hitler was voted in; he promised all kinds of things. For example, he promised every German a car. After the Nazis won the election, there was great pressure to join the Nazi Party.

The religious faith of Fritz's family was Seventh Day Adventist, and they noticed that periodically secret police would attend their church services. Fritz's parents did not agree with Hitler and the Nazi Party. They could never accept hatred of the Jews.

His family lived on Hitler Street, a fancy street lined with really fine homes. But his own family lived in a caretaker's apartment. His dad was a blacksmith who would not work on Saturdays because of his faith. During the war, though, he was forced to work those days, too, in violation of his religious beliefs.

In 1939 Fritz was playing in the yard with his sister. Suddenly they heard lots of noise and looked up, where they saw German warplanes going to bomb Poland. Fritz was 10 years old in 1940 and experienced a great deal of peer pressure to join the Hitler Youth, so he joined. In 1944 he became company commander of 100 boys. Still he could not accept hatred of the Jews. One day he was given an order, but Fritz told his commander to "kiss my a**." Immediately he was taken before his leaders and stripped of his medals and rank, but he remained in the company.

Although Germany had been very successful during the first few years of the war, in 1944 everything changed while they were battling Russia. Fritz decided to return home to protect his mother and sister from advancing Russians. By then his dad had been conscripted into the war effort. While Russians surrounded his town, his National Guard group retreated to an island peninsula. They were armed and hungry, but fortunately needed to do no fighting. Fritz found his dad there and got some food from him.

Later his dad was taken prisoner by the Russians and spent two years in a POW camp. Fortunately he spoke some Russian as a result of capture by the Russians in World War I. Back then, he'd been a cavalryman. When his horse was shot, he was captured and ended up spending six years in a POW camp in Siberia. So here he was with history repeating itself.

Meanwhile, Fritz became part of a group of twenty military youth who were put on a sub and taken to Western Germany. There was no food there so they were given the freedom to go to their nearest

relatives. He went to Berlin and stayed with an aunt. Berlin was being bombed heavily, so they spent most of the time in an air raid shelter.

Then the Russians arrived in Berlin. It was terrible; you could hear the women screaming as they were being assaulted. Still being a brave--or perhaps foolish--boy, Fritz volunteered to be a courier to German troops. His first effort was his last, for machine gun fire as he tried to cross a street drove him back. He hid with his aunt in the cellar. When Fritz finally came upstairs, there were two Russian soldiers with guns trained on him. For some unknown reason, they let him go.

In Russian-occupied Berlin they could find no food, no water. Somehow they survived. They did find lots of wine in cellars, as well as lots of dead German and Russian soldiers. Fritz also saw the ghastly sight of fellow Germans hung by diehard Nazis who considered them traitors for refusing to comply with Germany's orders.

Somehow Fritz found enough food for his aunt and him to survive, but he really wanted to return to Eastern Germany to find his mother and sister. He had a bike and decided to go find an uncle, but Russian soldiers stopped him and took his bike away. Ticked off, he demanded to see the Russian commander. When he spoke to the commander about his bike, the commander laughed and said to his men, "Give him another bike!" The soldiers then took him to a building where he found hundreds of bikes, and he was given his pick. Fritz chose one and started out on his trip of several hundred miles. He decided to take the tires off the bike and just ride on the rims so the Russians wouldn't take his bike again.

When he came to a river, a fisherman took him and his bike across. On the other side, he encountered Polish soldiers who promptly took him prisoner. Somehow he escaped and got back on his bike. He followed a set of train tracks, hungry all the while and looking for food. Eventually, now walking along the tracks, a Russian soldier stopped him and took him prisoner. A Pole came along, and the Russian traded Fritz to the Pole for a bottle of vodka. Fritz then was taken to a farm and forced to work for two weeks, where he ended up sleeping in a bed that a Russian had slept in. As a result, he got lice. He was upset but what could he do? After the Polish farmer let him go, Fritz returned to the train track and walked until he came to a train station. He hopped a train that went to his town where he found his mother and sister. His mom took one look at him and said, "You have lice!" and promptly got him into hot bath water.

In their town of Stolp, Russians had stolen everything they possibly could and shipped them back to Russia, but there were still some cultural events going on. Fritz and two friends decided to go to a movie. When one of the boys made some comment about Poles, soldiers suddenly appeared and the boys were taken for interrogation. Fritz was beaten and tortured with electric shocks. When he quit screaming, he was put in a cellar. Two days later he was released through the help of his mother. When she had found out what happened, she had gone to a Polish soldier who was Seventh Day Adventist, and the soldier got him freed.

Another time he was watching a theatre performance when Russian soldiers came in and marched off all the young men.

They lined them up in front of the courthouse where big Russian banners bearing the images of Stalin, Molotov, and other heroes were hanging. Fritz pretended to be very interested in the banners, gazing up at them while backing slowly away. Suddenly he took off running; the soldiers didn't fire at him, and he got away. All the others were marched off, and Fritz never found out what happened to them.

He had a friend who was always cooking up schemes to make money. His friend said he had relatives in the country who would buy some furniture if they could just get it there. But on their first try they were stopped and it was confiscated.

Then they decided to go to the country and teach school kids. The families would feed them if they'd teach their kids. They went to a little village where they stayed with farmers. Fritz was 16 years old and teaching kids. He had some music skills so he put together a choir. One day a neighbor knocked on his window at the farm where he was staying and said, "Hey Fritz! They're coming for you!" But the warning was too late; Fritz climbed out the window and was met by five armed soldiers. They demanded the school's maps--that was all they wanted. Fritz didn't think the maps were all that valuable, so he turned them over.

There was a Russian outpost at the village. The Russians and the Poles did not like each other, and there was lots of disease now, including typhoid fever and diphtheria. With no medicines available, people were dying. The nearest big town was 50 miles away. So the people went to the Russian soldiers to ask for help. By this time, after all his experiences with Polish soldiers, Fritz was so full of fear that he got sick to his stomach every time he walked by a Polish soldier.

A year later Fritz, his mother, and his sister were forced to go to another town. His mother managed to smuggle some money through customs by hiding it in a teddy bear. Now they were in Holstein, and the year was 1946. They stayed there several years. At first they were housed in a gym containing 100 people, mostly women and children. One morning the door opened, and

a man stood there with a Russian coat--it was his dad! He had tracked them down. They next moved into a one-room apartment and lived there several years.

Fritz attended a music school until it closed. Then he worked in an asbestos factory. The Adventist Church was now sponsoring families to come to America, so in 1951 Fritz signed up. He ended up in LaCrosse, Kansas, where a friend said, "Let's go to Hays--there's a college there!" He did, but Fritz couldn't even read the entrance exam. He didn't know enough English yet. So he went to Liberal, Kansas, and taught music.

Later Fritz was drafted into the US Army and ended up playing the glockenspiel in the army band. Eventually he was sent to Germany as an interpreter for a colonel. After his return to civilian life back home in the USA, he met his wife in 1959 and in 1960 he finally got his college degree. He spent the rest of his career as a teacher in the Hays school system.

Fritz's closing remarks included a reading recommendation. "If you'd like to know what it was really like in those POW camps, read the book *The Longest Walk*." Then he ended his presentation with a violin duet with one of his current music students, Roy Schmeidler. What a grand ending to a breathtaking tale of adventure and survival!

