



The Bukovina Society of the Americas NEWSLETTER

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PEOPLE AND EVENTS

- Our heartfelt sympathies are extended to the family of Irene Keller-Zerfas of Hays, Kansas, widow of the Bukovina Society's founding treasurer Bernie Zerfas. Irene died Wed. January 23, 2013, in Hays, and funeral services were held at St. John's Lutheran Church north of Ellis on Friday, January 25. She was the daughter of the late Frank and Carrie (Wentling) Keller, and was also preceded in death by her first husband, Albert Keller, son of the late Jake and Minnie (Huber) Keller, all of rural Ellis County, Kansas. Irene's positive attitude and enthusiastic energy were greatly appreciated by all who knew her, including the Society's board.
- Our hearty congratulations to Nicole Eller and Fred Wildfeuer who were married December 8, 2012. They plan to visit Ellis County and other points of their research in March 2013.
- Please let us know if/when you have a postal and/or email address change. You may notify us by postal mail or one of the email addresses above.
- An old sign on the historic former First Congregational Church building, home of the Bukovina Society and other community organizations, has been removed after years on display in the elements. In the spirit of a good neighbor, the Society purchased and installed a new sign which complements the refurbished Society marker and gives visitors a little history of the structure.
- Steve Parke, Board member and frequent contributor to the Newsletter has resigned, but will continue as an International Board member. He will continue on the Editorial committee and as you can see from this issue, will add interesting and valuable content to

the Newsletter. Steve has researched, traveled and written extensively on our Bukovina heritage as well as his Czech roots. This year two major presentations by Steve are scheduled for the Hays area. The first, a Kansas Czech History presentation, will be given at the Hays Public Library on Thursday, April 11, at 6:00 p.m. The Bukovina Society appreciates Steve's years on our Board and as well as his ongoing contributions.

- During our landmark visit to Germany for the 40. Bundestreffen in Augsburg of the Landsmannschaft der Buchenland Deutschen, Irmgard Ellingson, Paul Polansky, my wife Pat and I were received as founders of the Bukovina Society of the Americas. We were guests of honor at a series of formal and social events. Pat and I were approached by Willi and Edith Hanus who asked if we would like to tour some of the sights in that part of the country. Such hospitality we had not seen before and it was a wonderful friendship that lasted through the years. It was with sadness we learned from the SOD that Willi died. He gave many years of service and support to their Bukovina German work and was properly eulogized in an extensive article in the SOD by dignitaries Ewald Zachmann and Luzian Geier.



Willi Hanus

- Our friend Luzian Geier mailed the most recent copies of *Der Südostdeutsche* to us on Thursday [20 December 2012). He wrote, “If the Christmas greetings are too late, I hope that the New Year greetings will arrive in a timely manner.” He mentioned one particular report in the current issue: “The instructor/consultant Gaëlle Fisher (University College London) gave the second English-language presentation of the colloquium with “From Survival to Belonging: German-speakers from Bucovina after the Second World War.” Her research interest relates to the culture of memory among the Bukovina Germans and their reconstruction of their identity after World War II. A transnational approach will assure the comprehensive assessment of all Bukovina Germans, who have since settled in all parts of the world.” For more about this project, which is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and hosted by University College London (UCL), <http://www.reverberations-of-war.net/home.html>.
- Zita Watzlawik visited her Bukovina homeland of Argentina in 2012. Her ancestors immigrated to Buenos Aires over a hundred years ago. They lived in nearby Puerto Madera (pictured). In the center are seven buildings facing the river that were standing at the time that her family arrived.



BUKOVINA SOCIETY OKTOBERFEST PLANS

Irmgard Ellingson and O. M. Windholz have received emails from Anna and Klaus Häusler in Germany. Luzian Geier of the Bukowina Institut had encouraged them to express their interest in attending a Bukovina Society activity and to visit with relatives whose roots are primarily in Pojana Mikuli in the former Bukovina. The Board of Directors have invited

them to attend the annual Oktoberfest in Hays on Friday, October 4, 2013 and to participate in a few other events surrounding and in connection with the occasion. The Society will schedule social opportunities to hear from Anna on her life in Bukovina and their recent tour of her ancestral region. A new presentation on the Bukovina Germans in Kansas by Steve Parke will also be scheduled.

Anna’s family ties to the Ellis Bukovina colony include Reitmajer, Lang, Flachs, Seidel, Honas, many of whom homesteaded in Ness County, Kansas.

These events will certainly be of interest to many of our Society members. All welcome to join us, so please mark the dates around that time and plan to attend! More details about the schedule and the reservations will be published in the June 2013 issue of our Newsletter.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE BUKOVINA VILLAGE LICHTENBERT FROM THE FAMILY ESTATE OF A MARRIED COUPLE WHO WERE TEACHERS THERE

Translated by: Irmgard Hein Ellingson
 from *Das Bukowiner Dorf Lichtenberg in der Erinnerung;*
Aus dem Familiennachlass eines Lehrerehepaares
 by Hartmuth Renner
Der Südostdeutsche: Nr. 7/8, 25 Juli-August 2012, 7

SOD Editor’s Note

When Hartmuth Renner sent the following to us, he told us that he had found chronicles relating to Martin und Katharina Wittal in Lichtenberg, written by their daughter Anna. He transcribed these handwritten pages from the old Rechtschreibung, or German script, word for word. Was it all accurate? He thought so, as his father had recorded similar recollections from his own life at that time. Hartmuth Renner obtained the permission of his relatives for publication of these excerpts, and the editor wishes to acknowledge and thank them.

Translator’s Note

Martin and Katharina (Gebert) Wittal, the subjects of these recollections, had four daughters: Elfrieda, Anna, Adelinde, and Friederike. Hartmuth Renner is the husband of the oldest daughter Elfrieda [“Elfi”] and he has transcribed memoirs written by his wife’s sister Anna.

Martin Wittal was born 3 January 1898 in Radautz, Bukovina, to Friedrich and Katharina (Eisenhauer) Wittal, who were both

born in St. Onufry, Bukovina. Katharina Gebert was born 20 October 1892 in Arbora, Bukovina, to Karl Gebert, born in Arbora, and his wife Albertina nee Scheinost, born in Glitt.

Part I by Anna Wittal, daughter of Martin and Katharina, may be compared Part II by Hans Heinz Renner, father of Hartmuth Renner and father-in-law of Elfrieda Wittal.

Part I

Teachers in Glitt and Lichtenberg

In 1927 my parents were teachers in Glitt. They lived in a rented home, the *Hofbauer-Haus*. This was one of the stateliest houses in the village. The village had a mixed population: Romanians, Germans, Jews (the *Kolonialwarenhändler* or store owner) and others. At the time of my baptism, my parents had stated their intention of contributing to the construction of a Catholic church. My father Martin started a collection which also extended to America and the Germans who had emigrated there from Bukovina. A respectable sum was gathered, and the Catholic church in Glitt was built. This had been initiated by my parents, Martin and Katharina Wittal.

My parents were transferred from Glitt to Lichtenberg (in Romanian: Dealul Ederii) in the summer holiday of 1928. Immigrants from Bohemia and the Bohemian Forest lived here. I remember the song, “*Tief drin in Böhmerwald*” which was practically the national anthem of the village. Next my *Tata* [father] went alone to Lichtenberg, which was about two kilometers from Glitt. Mama followed with their daughter Elfi and Anna a short time later. On 1 January 1929 our sister Adelinde Friederike (Fritzi) was born. *Tata* and Mama were the only teachers at the school in Lichtenberg. There in Lichtenberg I spent the most wonderful years of my childhood. In this village, which was completely inhabited by Germans, *Vati* (or *Tata*, as we called him) was a *Standesperson*; he was first and foremost a teacher (principal) but also organist, an official, an advisor, helper, a kind of *Seelsorger* or spiritual caregiver, “doctor,” “veterinarian,” farmer, and much more. In the village were the church, school, farm houses, and properties with stables and barns. Lichtenberg was a *Strassendorf*, a village arranged along a street that was about two kilometers long. Above it, on an elevation, stood the church and the single-class school. We lived in that school building as well.

The Gebert ancestors of my parents Martin and Katharina, nicknamed “Käthe,” came from Bohemia and the Wittal ancestors from the *Sudentenland*. All came to Bukovina (*Buchenland*) as farmers and artisans. My grandfather Wittal was a *Schreiner*, or cabinet maker, coffin maker, and later a

Leichenbestatter, or mortician, in Radautz, the *Kreisstadt*, or county seat. This grandfather and his wife Katharina (we called Baba, because she was the only grandmother whom we knew) had fourteen children. The youngest was my *Tata*, Martin Wittal.

Mama, or Käthe, came from Arbora, a little village located between Radautz and Solka. Her father (my maternal grandfather) was a farmer. He had a stately agricultural property with a sizable house. His name was Karl Gebert and his wife was Albertine, nee Scheinost. This marriage produced nine children, of whom my mother Katharina / Käthe (also lovingly nicknamed “Kati”) was the eldest and the only one who was able to continue her education. She also became a teacher.

The End of the Good Times

The good times ended in the early autumn of 1936 in Lichtenberg. My parents had worked as teachers for more than eight years in Lichtenberg. It was hard for Germans because they spoke the German language with their German *Landsleute*. But it was much worse that my mother taught German to the children at that Romanian primary school. This did not remain a secret. She was betrayed and as a result, we had to leave Lichtenberg. Mama was forced to retire and had to leave the household in Lichtenberg. *Tata* remained alone in Lichtenberg for a time. Mama, Anna, and Fritz moved to Radautz and took up residence with the Baumgartner family in the *Kirchgasse*. It was a poor home. Elfi was already attending the *Gymnasium*, or high school, in Radautz and lived with the family of Frau Polzer, who was one of her teachers. Somewhat later she came to live with us.

In September 1938, *Tata* was transferred from Lichtenberg to Bessarabia (note: a region in Romania that had formerly been part of 19th century South Russia). This took place as a judgment or punishment, because he was known to be German. It was a sorrowful time for us all but especially for *Tata*. He was homesick for his family and we missed him! He was sent to a place called Tarzien in Bessarabia. It was a little village in the malaria-plagued area along the Pruth River. The houses were straw-covered *Lehmhäuser*, or clay houses. After a year – we had not seen one another throughout that entire time – there was a knock on the door and there stood *Tata*. He was *demissioniert*, which meant that he had to give up his profession, and then he returned to his family. In the meantime, Mama and we children had moved out of our two-room apartment in the Baumgartner family house and into the home of *Tante* (aunt) Marika Gaschler, our father’s sister, who lived in the *Friedhofsgasse*. Here we also lived in two rooms and also had a cellar, a

little ground, and a shed. This is where we were when *Tata* returned to us. I still remember it exactly: *Tata* was carrying his bedding and a few things on his back. Sewed into those things was a *Korbflasche*, or wicker bottle, filled with costly red wine. That made for quite the “hello!” *Onkel Franz*, *Tata’s* brother who operated the *Leichenbestattung*, or mortuary, visited us. The two of them talked and I, a twelve-year-old girl, listened.

In the time that followed *Tata* worked two doors away in *Onkel Franz’s* mortuary and nailed coffins for a bit of money. In 1935 my parents had started to build a house in Radautz. The house, the barn, and an addition were standing. Their money ran out; construction was given up in 1938 and the unfinished house stood like that right until the time that we were resettled from Bukovina in 1940. *Elfi*, who attended *Gymnasium* [similar to an American high school] for a short time in Czernowitz, had to return home. No money! She then attended the fourth class in the German *Gymnasium* in Radautz.

In March 1939 *Elfi* did not go to school any more. She was at home – without any professional training – and gave private lessons. We were living with *Tante Marika* in the *Friedhofgasse*. Also living in the street were *Onkel Franz* with his family including the children *Hertha*, *Hansi*, and *Ottmar*. Practically everyone in the *Friedhofgasse* was family.

Part II

The following is excerpted from the reminiscences of Hans Heinz Renner, Harthmuth Renner’s father, who was himself the son of a Prätor, or lawyer.

Elfi’s parents, father and mother, were teachers in the primary school in Glitt.

1928

Bordering right on Glitt was Lichtenberg, a completely German village. A few years later my mother- and father-in-law moved to this charming village populated by Bohemian Forest descendants. The village does not exist as it once did; today the residents are all Romanians.

During the summer holidays of this year, my wife *Elfi’s* parents moved from Glitt to neighboring Lichtenberg. My father-in-law taught at the school there and for the time being, his wife continued to teach in Glitt.

1929

At the same time *Elfi* entered primary school in Lichtenberg. She lived in the school house there with her parents and siblings. She was already nine years old and attended the second class in the primary school so that her father was her teacher. My father, who had the administrative oversight responsibility for the schools of the district, stayed at the home of the teacher *Martin Wittal* in the course of an inspection in Lichtenberg and enjoyed the sumptuous meals prepared by his wife. None of them knew at that time that they would share a closer relationship in the future.

My future parents-in-law had a contented, peaceful life in the immaculate village of Lichtenberg. Both of them taught at the village school and as already mentioned, lived in the school building. This was located next to the church. The Lichtenberg people were all Roman Catholics. My father-in-law *Martin* was practically the *Standesperson*, or leading official, of the congregation. He taught the youth, played the organ in church, directed the choir, led cultural activities with his wife, cared for the sick and the dying - and in the event that a cow was calving, he was even fetched for that. This was the full life of a village school teacher! Next to the school was the land that my parents-in-law cultivated. There were horses and cows, pigs and goats, chickens and geese. There were hired laborers and maids to assist with the work. *Martin* and *Katharina Wittal* lived the best years of their life in Lichtenberg.

Some Words about *Elfi’s* Family

The *Wittal* and *Gebert* ancestors – my mother-in-law was a *Gebert* – came from Bohemia and the *Sudentenland* to Bukovina, as did my *Renner* and *Mang* ancestors, at about the end of the 18th century. They were also farmers and artisans. The parents of my father-in-law lived in Radautz, the *Kreisstadt* or county seat. The father was a *Schreiner*, or cabinet maker, and with diligence and skill, he built up the *Leichenbestattung*, or mortuary, in the community. He and his wife had fourteen children. The youngest was *Elfi’s* father *Martin*. My mother-in-law came from *Arbora*, a large village between the towns of Radautz and *Solka*, and her father was a farmer. *Katharina Gebert* was the oldest of nine children.

1936

The beautiful years in Lichtenberg came to a sudden end in the early autumn for my future parents-in-law and their children. *Mama* had taught her students in the German language, and that was forbidden. She was *angezeigt* or reported, unfortunately by Germans. Release without

notice seemed imminent. To avoid this, she was supposed to immediately retire with poor health as the pretext. She did in fact become ill after that. But forcible retirement followed and the Romanians engaged in removing Germans from public service had made one more step in that direction.

The family household was broken up. My father-in-law remained alone in Lichtenberg, and his position was also endangered. Mama, Anna, and Fritzi moved to Radautz, which was not far away, and found an apartment there. Elfi who was attending *Gymnasium* in Radautz, could be with her mother and sisters.

1938

In September, at the beginning of a new school year, the good years in Lichtenberg came to an end for my future father-in-law. He was relocated to northern Bessarabia [in another part of Romania]. This was downright harassment, which had also befallen my father some years before that, and it was hardly an unexpected action for the Romanian authorities to take against a German teacher.

It was another heavy blow for the family. They had not been living together since the autumn of 1936. The mother and children had moved to Radautz at that time, and they were only together on holidays. Now the father was sent even farther away, to a completely unfamiliar, unfriendly environment. This displacement was naturally associated with financial losses, the cost of maintaining two households, longer travel, and so on. The construction of a house in Radautz, which had started in 1935, could not continue a year later and finally had to be given up. That is the way that it remained until they were resettled out of Bukovina in 1940.

WHERE IS ALTHÜTTE AND HOW DO YOU GET THERE?

Translated by: Irmgard Hein Ellingson

from *Wo liegt Althütte und wie kommt man dahin?*

Kontaktaufnahme/Kapitel aus dem Resitagebuch von Hans-Joachim Aschenbrenner

Der Südostdeutsche: Nr. 7/8, 25 July-August 2012, 5-6

Tuesday, 10 May 2011

The name of the village Althütte, located somewhere in the vicinity of Czernowitz in the foot hills of the Carpathian Mountains, comes up again and again in the tales about my

father's origins. Since the early 1990s, after stumbling across a number of Aschenbrenners between Lam and Bavarian-Eisenstein near the Bavarian and Bohemian border in the early 1990s, I have been interested in knowing where my ancestors came from, why they made the long journey from the Bavarian Forest as well as the Bohemian Forest to the other side of the Carpathians, and how they developed new lives and established themselves there.

When the name *Althütte* is entered at <google.com>, the web sites of the *Landsmannschaft der Buchenlanddeutschen* or the Bukovina Society of the Americas come up. That shows this village really did exist, although nothing with this name can be found at Google Earth. My research at the *Institut für Genealogie* in Leipzig had already showed me that *Althütte* must have been in *Kreis* [county] Storoszynez near Krasna or Krasna-Ilski, which I had found on an old travel map from the *Herzogtums Bukowina*, or the Austrian crown land of Bukovina. Perhaps after the 1940 resettlement of the Germans it had become a ghost town. Well, I wanted to see it for myself.

This was a normal work day in Czernowitz. We took it upon ourselves to determine what the bus connections to Krasna were. Maybe it would be possible to walk or take a taxi from there to Althütte, or whatever it was now called.

Our *Reiseführer*, or published travel guide, said that buses in Ukraine were a reliable means of transportation and could take a person everywhere, but I doubted that after we saw the crowded, old, junky little buses that jolted over the uneven paved streets of Czernowitz.

My wife Regine convinced me that we should check into it. The bus station was only a kilometer or two up the street that went past our hotel in the direction of the city so we headed in the direction that that we had covered in the two previous days. Here the city was not as clean and scrubbed for tourists and the pedestrians here were not as relaxed as those in the inner city. Rather, we saw the houses and the impoverished surroundings, and how hard the residents had to work just to live from day to day. At the bus station, I lost any hope of finding reasonable connections to our destination. Maybe the bus system and schedule are intelligible to the local people but they weren't for us.

We decided to go back to the hotel, take a break, and then after lunch go back into the city and make inquiries in a tourist bureau about how to get to Krasna-Ilski. I thought I had seen such a bureau in the inner city on our first day there. And indeed we found one in the Kobylanska street near the *Heiliggeistkathedrale* [Holy Ghost Cathedral] . . .

In a stationery shop, we bought a map of the surrounding Ukrainian *oblast* [county, district] which is the former Czernowitz district. A quick look at the map showed us that it covered the area to the Romanian border and that Krasna-Ilski was identified as Krasnoilsk. Therefore the little place next to it, marked as Stara Krasnoschora, had to be what was once called Althütte.

With the assistance of the receptionist at the tourist bureau, the Aschenbrenners made contact with Ludmilla, a German student at the Czernowitz university. She made arrangements for a car and driver, and the next day, accompanied them to Althütte.

Wednesday, 11 May 2011

The car could hardly be said to have glided over the streets. It rattled at a rather high speed over rough streets. We were en route to Stara Krasnoschora, to Althütte. Ludmilla and the driver, whom she had introduced to us as Alexandr, sat before us. The sun laughed and I felt that this would be a beautiful day.

We sat without seat belts in the back seat of a dark blue Passat. We did not want to use them because we had learned that wearing seat belts is regarded as a sign that one does not trust the driver's skill and expertise in operating the vehicle. To mitigate the effects of bumping in the pot holes, Regine and I clung to the grips mounted above the doors. It was not the newest car but was probably from the late 1990s. In response to my question, the driver assured me that it was a very good German car in which he only had to change the shocks every other year. With his other car, it had been necessary to do that every year.

From the hotel, we headed into the city for a short distance until we reached a corner by the main entrance of the park. Here was the turn to Storozynetz. From there, the route led southwest through the suburbs over a bumpy paved road from which we could see the local landmark: the 537 meter high hill called *Cecina*.

We drove through the foot hills of the Carpathians in the direction of Storozynetz, which is located about 25 kilometers from Czernowitz. The villages appeared to be very neat, and to the right and left were many relatively large and new villas with very different architecture. Many of these I would describe as very expensive-looking bloopers. In response to my question, Ludmilla indicated that these were the homes of what she termed *Businessman*. There is no industry in Czernowitz, just a large bazaar outside of the city. Apparently a lot of money can be made in that kind of trade.

We had only a fleeting glimpse of Storozynetz. At the entrance to the town, a military tank on a platform reminded me that here, as in the former Soviet Union, World War II is called "The Great War of the Fatherland." In Krasnoilsk, about 25 kilometers beyond Storozynetz, we turned to the right off the main road. Two kilometers along the way, we came to a sign pointing right in the direction of Stara Krasnoschoara. We turned onto the open, ascending road and bumped another two kilometers to the village sign that announced our destination.

At our request, Alexandr stopped and Regine and I got out of the car to take a look around us. Before us was a broad undulating valley basking in the beautiful clear morning sun. The meadows were light green. Here and there were scattered properties with colorful between blossom-laden trees on the hills and on the hillsides. On the opposite side, the far valley was bordered by dark forests ascending the slopes. We saw that the dusty village street, edged with houses, wound down to the right in a wide arc into the valley. There, about a kilometer and a half away, a church was recognizable as the unmistakable center of the village.

We told Ludmilla that we wanted to walk and she joined us after arranging with Alexandr that he would wait for us below at the church.

As we went down the steep village street, we were able to see the entire village. Farmsteads were loosely arranged along the road and as we approached the center, they got closer and closer to each other. Still it was possible to get a good view between buildings. Precisely aligned lattice fences enclosed the parcels of land, making for a tidy impression. The houses were traditional wooden structures. Most were colorfully painted: dark red predominated but here and there, light grass green and medium green was seen. Windows and doors were often white, and some of the moldings nailed above the exterior siding were painted white. They provided a contrast with, or a differentiation from, the darker colors of the setting. The blossoming fruit trees, the shrubs, and the green of springtime enhanced each house in a special way. Even Ludmilla was impressed by the charm of the countryside and the idyllic village.

A *Ziehbrunnen* (an open-bucket or drawing well) was located in each farmstead. In a very practical manner, some were located right behind the gate, next to the entry to the house.

Some stood further back in the garden, beneath the blossoming fruit trees in the grassland. Somewhere, probably in a fairy tale book in my childhood, I had seen this romantic picture before. I felt that I had landed in another

world and surprised myself by rhapsodizing to Regine and Ludmilla, “Isn’t it just like in the fairy tales?” Ludmilla looks at me in surprise and Regine with some compassion, saying only, “Yes, it is very nice but please keep your feet on the ground.”

Leisurely, unhurried village life prevailed on the village street. A little old grandmother tended her cows upon the meadow. There were at least a couple of cows and their milk and butter production probably provided a modest kind of livelihood. A rubber-tired *Panjewagen*, drawn by two horses, transported building materials. Other women, mostly older and wearing *Kittelschürzen* (apron-dresses, or sleeveless overalls worn over dresses), stood in their gates and looked down the street as though they were waiting for something special. Even children, who might have had the day off from school – were seen on the street at this unlikely time of day.

Down below at the bus stop by the church, a lot of people were scattered around a small bus with open doors. Apparently the bus was waiting there for the scheduled departure time. On the sign I could read that the bus would travel via Storozynetz to Czernowitz.

The church and the small yard around it were enclosed by a wrought-iron fence. The gate was locked but one could look through the bars and at the side of the door, read that this is a Roman Catholic church with regular Sunday masses. Regine and I were taken aback by this, since the German Catholic population had been resettled out of Bukovina in 1940. Who was living in this village now? They could hardly be Ukrainians because then the church would be Uniate [Greek Catholic] or Orthodox. Maybe the present residents were descendants of those whom the World War II –era German *Prüfungskommission* had found to be “not German enough” and had to remain here rather than be resettled. I do not know if they regretted their fate but at least they did not have to leave their paradisiacal homeland.

The Aschenbrenners asked Ludmilla to talk to the local people and find out where the cemetery was located.

The cemetery in Stara Krasnoschora, which once was Althütte, lies upon a high plateau above the village. There we encountered an older man occupied in tending a grave. Ludmilla asked him where the German graves in the cemetery were located. “All over,” he said, waving his hand over the large field. Tall grass grew on the sunken grave mounds and between them thick clumps of blooming narcissi sprung up. Here and there were tipped, leaning wooden or iron crosses, and some stone gravestones. The old man accompanied us across the cemetery and indicated

some graves in which he thought we would be interested. The inscriptions were difficult to read. Some showed that a child was buried in the plot – I had determined in the church registers that the child mortality rate had been very high at that time. The symbols on one stone indicated that the deceased was a Freemason – yes, even such free spirits had once lived in Bukovina.

After criss-crossing the wide premises for a long while, suddenly we found an iron cross with a very clear inscription. It was the grave of Tomas Aschenbrenner, who was born in Althütte in 1866 and died there in 1936. The fact that the first name “Tomas” was written without an “h” after the “T” could probably be attributed to the written Romanian language. He could have been a younger brother or perhaps a cousin of my great-grandfather because “Thomas Aschenbrenner” was recorded under the letter “A’ on the same page of the birth register as my great-grandfather and great-grandmother.

A garland made of colorful artificial flower decorated the cross on the grave, as though someone had recently visited the grave with thoughts of the deceased. I asked Ludmilla to ask the old man if any descendants lived in the village. “No!” he answered. Who then had decorated the grave, I inquired. Thereupon the man pointed to himself. He takes care of the cemetery and since the death of his wife, goes there every day. Then he showed us the place where his wife was buried. It was a double grave, with the second side prepared for him: his name and his birthdate were already engraved upon it and only the date of death was missing. He had a Polish name written in Roman letters.

Back in Czernowitz, the Aschenbrenners went sightseeing with Ludmilla.

We ate lunch at a Ukrainian restaurant on the Tschervonoarmiska, one of the main roads leading south out of the city. Across the street was a marketplace within eyesight of the *Jesuitenkirche* [the Jesuit church]. The latter was supposed to be the archival repository of Bukovina. Glancing through the window, I mentioned that I wanted to take a look in it because maybe it would be possible to look in the original church record books.

“The archives have been moved,” Ludmilla responded. “The church has been closed for some time due to disrepair. The tower is beginning to lean to one side.”

Thanks to Ludmilla, we had enjoyed a wonderful and successful day.

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