

the Heimatbrie

A Newsletter Magazine of the German-Bohemian Heritage Society

Celebrating the GBHS' 17th Year

Vol XIII No. 4

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Group photo of Seifert Cousins?

Front row L to R; Theresa Seifert Ubl, unknown, unknown

Back row L to R; Unknown, unknown, Mary Seifert Ubl, unknown, unknown

If any of the unknown's are familiar to you see query on page 7

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Advent and Christmas in Bohemia

In one of his village histories, Peter Rosegger tells about how great an impression the rites of the first Sunday of Advent made upon him. He recalls the priest in the violet Advent vestments at an undecorated altar and the organist playing the hymn "Tauet Himmel den Gerechten". These were always a sign that the parish was entering a new church-year. As children we, too, witnessed the beginning of Advent -- often after a long hike to the church -- when we entered a chilly House of God whose exterior was beautifully decked out in wintry frost. We recall the sermons given then, advising us to prepare ourselves with joyful anticipation for the most beautiful feast of the church-year -- Christmas. Hearing the joyful bells (glockenspiel) that sang out their special songs every morning of Advent just before daybreak was an especially memorable experience. It was as if the Son of God called his flock with songs that proclaim, "Hail blessed Mary, the light of the morning star shines around you reveals to mankind what the Angel Gabriel has told....."

Saint Nicholas visited each house as a harbinger of the Christ child. All the children had to present themselves and to demonstrate that even those who were not yet in school knew their prayers. Then, he would open his bag and give us apples and nuts he carried inside. Once at Christmas a very small boy was reduced to fearful tears at the sight of the stately St. Nicholas with his long white beard and no comforting words from anyone could calm him down enough to recite what he knew. In spite of that he would still receive an ample share of gifts from the sack. He regained his courage only as St. Nicholas opened the door to leave and said, "Mama, look! St. Nicholas is a crook! I know for sure that he has taken our neighbor's boots!"

A beautiful custom in some areas was the "Christkindel-Einsingen". This group of singers and musicians went from house to house. First, the group leader of the group went into the main room to give everyone a witty greeting that

mentioned every individual, introduced himself and called the singers in one by one as Peter, the angel Gabriel, some shepherds, and finally Mary and Joseph. Each was called to make his entrance with the words like: "Petrus, Petrus komm herein, die Tür soll dir geöffnet sein!" (Peter, Peter come inside, the door for you is open wide!) . When everyone was inside a little cradle with a doll inside representing the Christ Child was placed on the floor, Mary and Joseph knelt beside it and while they rocked the cradle the others danced in a circle around them singing "Ihr Kinderlein kommet"! This beautiful custom appears to have almost completely disappeared following World War I.

As children we awaited the holy eve with great excitement. Somehow, all the preparations managed to strengthen our belief in the Christ Child. If the heavens glowed red at sunset everyone said the Christ Child is baking and when baking started at home it was because the Christ Child needed help because there had to be something for so many children. When the holy bells began to ring on Christmas Eve it was because the Christ Child had arrived. He was led into the main room where there was a magnificent Christmas tree glowing with candlelight on the table. It was so heavily decorated with elaborate sugar candy, with flat chocolates wrapped in colorful tin foil, with gingerbread, nuts and apples, that the branches bent down under the weight. Star shaped lights shone in heavenly splendor. That is how the Christmas trees looked in the houses of the Bohemian Forest.

By way of contrast, there were only a few gifts under the tree -- usually one picture book or coloring book with some crayons and rarely any other toys. The Christian-tree was all that our young hearts needed to give us the greatest pleasure.

When we grew big enough that our belief in the wonderful Christ Child began to wane we were allowed to go with the adults to midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. It often happened that we made our way to this solemn church service in a cold wintry storm, navigating through blowing and drifting snow with a lantern to light the way. Whatever difficulties we had in reaching the church, the rewards were truly marvelous! "Stille Nacht" never sounded so solemn and touching as when it was sung on that night at that service. And when we arrived at home a huge feast awaited us. There would be "Mettenwurstens" made from livestock slaughtered before Christmas on almost every farm. The holy eve was one of the days on which meats were prohibited, making the Mettenwurst after midnight Mass taste even better.

Yes, that's how it once was. Today all of that is thought of lightly, almost like a fairy tale. This new attitude brings to mind some words of a song, "A melody from my childhood stays with me always. O why is all that once

was dear to me is now so distant?"

By Georg Woratsch, Wassertr dingen

Published as "Advent und Weihnachten - wie's daheim einst war" in Glaube und Heimat, Jahrgang 45, Heft 12, Dezember 1993.

Translated by Karen Hobbs

German-Bohemian Küche Korner

By Jerry Gulden

Again we meet at the dining table!

Let me first give a big THANKS to Angie and George Portner for securing the location of the annual picnic and the many behind-the-scenes help they give. A great dining hit was Grandma Eleanor Kretsch's grabrie (horseradish gravy) and dumplings. The Honorable Mayor Arnold Koelpin during his remarks to those in attendance mentioned the grabrie and dumplings. The Mayor also made a great comment during his opening remarks: "New Ulm was settled by three immigrant groups and that reminded him of the three legs on a milking stool that provide stability to it and much like the immigrants did to the town." The comment was foreshadowed by the many immigrant foods found on the communal table at the picnic.

I received a number of questions and recipes, actually more than I had anticipated to my request in our newsletter for food related items. The foods we ate when we grew up linger in our minds long after forgotten customs and language.

A letter from Walter L. Vogl from Two Rivers, Wisconsin was received in response to a mention of "Blutz Und Dunkel"

Walter writes: "In your "Küche Korner" March 2002 you spoke of "Blutz Und Dunkel". I don't know what that is but we enjoyed a dish similar in name - "Butzle und Dunk." I have been attempting to obtain the complete recipe from relatives and will keep trying. But I am sending this on to the newsletter in hopes that others would know of this."

He describes it as: Flat round loaves of dough were placed in the oven as is and not in a pan. It was not bread dough. These loaves would bake and were crispy over the entire surface. He then describes the way they were eaten: "These were broken up on your plate and you poured gravy over this. The gravy was of chicken base and seasoned with Spanish saffron (in early days obtained in a drug store). It was a bright yellow color. It was delicious. I will continue to try to get a better recipe but wonder if anyone other than the Vogl's knew of this?"

A little Vogl history followed: The Vogl's came to Two

Rivers from Wiessen and Grosssuppen in Bohemia and bought a farm there in 1868. Walter is still on the farm and ownership will stay in the family for another generation after him. He is happy about that fact. He calls the farm "Bohmerwald" from his grandmothers favorite song "Tief Im Bohmerwald". Her maiden name was "Neiner" and came from the Sudetenland also. You can write him directly at P.O. Box 141, Two Rivers, WI, 54241-0141 or to Küche Korner at the GBHS address.

From : John Leonard Berg at bergjo@uwplatt.edu

John Berg asked the following question on the internet at GERMAN-BOHEMIAN-L@rootsweb.com:

"This may be a strange request on a genealogy list serve but it is related to our comprehensive mission. My mother was fond of making a dish of heart in a white sauce. The heart was cubed and cooked in the sauce before being served. The word she used for the meal was "schling bree" or some variant of that sound ...I'm only guessing at the spelling."

He is sharing a couple of responses with our Küche Korner. One from Mirwald of Rochester, New York who forwarded a copy of the recipe from her handwritten cookbook.

Sling

Boil heart and tongue until tender but not mushy. Add chunk liver to water that has the heart and tongue. Bring to a boil and add onions, all spice (whole), bay leaves, salt and pepper. Liver will not take long to get done. Strain soup, cut up meat in very small pieces. Trim all the meat real good and also take the skin off. Add meat to strained broth and bring to a boil. Meantime brown a lot of flour under broiler. Watch or it will burn. Stir often so all will get brown. Add some soup stock, whisk until all lumps are out. It helps if you sift flour first. When all done simmer it, add vinegar to taste, add one pint sweet cream. Shut off heat after adding cream.

John said it sounds like my mother's recipe.

Gloria also dropped John an e-mail regarding her thoughts as follows:

Hello Mr. Berg, I do know what you are talking about. My mother made heart and tongue all the time. Since I do not need such a large quantity I now only make one beef heart. I am sure you could also use calf heart.

Cut the heart in four pieces lengthwise. Carefully remove the membrane inside so that you do not waste too much of the meat of the heart. Bring the pieces to a boil. After it boils you will most likely have to skim and remove what accumulates on the top. Then add some chopped onion and a few peppercorns and salt. The heart when pierced with a pointy knife will be soft but still a little solid, it never gets very soft. The lung on the other hand would get very soft. Remove the meat from the broth saving the broth.

Cut the heart into small pieces and set aside. In a small pan put some butter and let it get ever so slightly brown, sprinkle flour into the butter mixing well. Remove from heat. Into a pot put enough of your broth that you would want for a sauce, bring to a boil, and slowly mixing all the while, gradually add the butter and flour to thicken the broth. Season to taste and add to this your cut up heart and heat through. My mother served it only with boiled potatoes and with this dish we never had a vegetable although it is up to you. The butter and flour is called einbrenne, and the heart geschlung. Enjoy!
Gloria.

From: colleen kastanek at cakastanek@juno.com

As usual, I read the Heimatbrief in one sitting from cover to cover. This month there was a grand finale of dessert! Jerry Gulden is editing a Küche Korner on the last page and put a call for questions and recipes.

I do not know if the cake recipe I am seeking is Bohemian but all my other search avenues (including my mother's cookbooks) have failed. During the winters of the 1950's and 1960's Mom would make a scratch white cake (was there any other kind?). It was snow white with bright orange specks throughout, and a coconut taste. Usually made in two layers, but occasionally in a 9 X 13 pan. I recall that she iced it with a white frosting, which was usually sprinkled with toasted coconut. It was light, but filling, and stood on its own. She never served it with ice cream or whipped cream.

Char (my sister) and I asked Mom (Cathryn Gulden Kastanek) repeatedly in the 1990's for the recipe, but all she could think of was a "Wartime Tomato Soup Cake" which does not have those chewy orange specks. Evidently this speckled cake was a budget item in the 1950's since Mom threw the recipe hard and far when times got better. Now I would love to surprise my family with that taste one more time. Any ideas?

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Memories of the Heimat

How I Used to Get a Christmas Tree

One of the many old customs of our former homeland was cutting a Christmas tree and hauling it home every year. There were no Christmas markets in the rural areas and even in the larger cities it was not possible to simply buy a Christmas tree. I was beyond imagination to think of giving money for a Christmas tree when there were so many very beautiful firs in the forest very near to our

giving money for a Christmas tree when there were so many very beautiful firs in the forest very near to our village and they virtually invited us to steal them. In fact participating in the "Stehlen" (stealing) or "Christbaumholen" was something the young lads considered to be a daring "rite of passage" every year and they even went so far as to compete with each other.

As Christmas drew near and mothers completed their first Weihnacht preparations the young lads made arrangements to get Christmas trees. Although most places had their own forest land the boys usually sought their trees in forests belonging to other villages -- especially when there was a nice stand with a big selection of young trees. They wanted to keep their own forest beautiful so they would cut their trees in someone else's forest. They preferred to take Tannenbaum over the spruce but they sometimes would travel a little farther and lug back a tree from a 'Christbaumwald'.

Warmly clothed, with pants-legs stuffed securely into high Schnärschuhes and with warm Pudelmütze on our heads we tramped off towards Eigelstein (522 m. high) on the other side of the Bavarian border a few days before Christmas. Often there was already so much snow that wading through it over that four kilometers was quite a nuisance. However, we understood well that this was truly a pre-Christmas necessity and that gave us the strength to go on. By the time we reached Eigelstein we were very tired.

There we found the beautiful Christbaume, every one of them more beautiful than the next. Each of us picked out a mature-looking little tree, counted the layers of branches, checked the trunk and estimated the height. When one met our expectations we reached and for the saw that one fellow always carried hidden in his jacket and cut down the fir. We would then lace the branches close to the trunk with a thin rope in order to carry our trees more easily and hoisted them up on our shoulders. By the time everyone had his "Christbaum" darkness was already gathering.

A longer route home lay before us because we left clear tracks in the snow and we had to take constant care that we were not caught with our contraband. Back then some of the forest owners were already putting guards in their forests precisely before Christmas in order to protect their Christbaumchen (little Christmas trees). Forest supervisors were constantly surprising us, putting us to flight. Sometimes one of the fellows might have to drop his tree in order to run faster. Then all the day's effort and bother aimed at providing the necessary tree during the next few days came to nothing.

As soon as we had crossed over the border all danger was past but steps became ever shorter and heavier the closer we approached our home village. Sweat glistened on our

foreheads while our faces were red from exertion and cold and any exposed mop of hair would take on a covering of hoar frost. We looked like very tired "Weihnachtsmänner" when we reached our parents' houses but we were happy and elated that we had found a beautiful Christbaum. Our parents were always glad to have us safely at home after a Christbaum Stehlen expedition. Father would put the little fir tree in the loft so that it would already be warm when the holy eve arrived.

Today, 50 years later, that old Heimat custom of stealing a Christmas tree has nearly disappeared into oblivion. It is still practiced only in the most secluded places lying on the border between the Bohemian Forest and Bavaria. Today most Christmas trees are simply purchased at the Weihnachts market weeks before festivities require them. Because the various conifers are already cut in November they are no longer fresh when they reach their buyers and after a few days inside in the warm air they begin to lose their leaves and dry up. Just the same every Christmas tree serves to recall memories of the Christmas trees of our past.

Christbaumholen ging - pp 19-20 Glaub und Heimat
December 1993.

By Josef Bohmann

Translated by Karen Hobbs

Membership Dues

by Jerry Gulden

It is time again to continue your membership in the ever-growing German-Bohemian Heritage Society now approaching 600 families. Your membership ceases on the date above your name on the address label of this newsletter. Family membership dues for year 2003 are \$15 for each family.

Consider giving a Society membership to a brother, sister, aunt, uncle, son, daughter, grandchildren or good friend as a Christmas gift. The newsletter may put a spark into one of these people and they may be the people who put together your families' genealogy tree for future generations. What a great present!

The dues help the society maintain its rich heritage by sponsoring activities throughout the year. These activities are two general meetings - May and November, a spring dance, summer picnic, maintain a web-site and research center along with a fully packed quarterly newsletter considered to be one of the best.

Along with the membership you can include a monetary donation toward a memorial to a loved one or friend, or ask that the donation be used to purchase spring flowers

that surround the German-Bohemian monument in German Park. Those donations will be noted in the newsletter.

Children and Christmas Traditions

By Colleen Kastanek from an interview with her Dad December 6, 2001

My Dad grew up in a German Bohemian community Morrison County, MN. He enjoyed telling me this story yesterday that probably happened in the 1930's.

St. Nicholas day was celebrated in that farming neighborhood with all the neighbors gathering at a preselected neighbor's home on the evening of December 5. This incident happened at the Jake Girtz home.

Imagine a small farmhouse packed with children (families of 17 children were not uncommon) and adults from the neighboring farms. No electricity of course, so the wood stove along the wall of the kitchen was the main source of heat and some light. A long stove pipe ran along the ceiling of the kitchen to the far end of the house, offering a sort of centralized radiant heat benefit. A dangerous practice by today's standards, but common in those days, and this point is important later in Dad's story.

It was tradition that the family hosting the get-together supplied sausage and bread and butter for the meal that was served at midnight. (the GBHS Cookbook tells about sausage making, so you can imagine that the host family had made extra sausage in late fall just for this occasion, and this sausage, bread and butter would have been the host family's best, for it would be discussed and analyzed for weeks to follow, as also is mentioned in the cookbook). The food would be served at midnight (remember the fasting that the Catholic Church required) so the little wood stove was pumping out the BTU's as the hostess moved sausage from burner to burner and from pans in the oven to sear it, cook it, and then keep it warm. Imagine the kitchen table and the small counter area filled with pans and plates of cakes and cookies that the guest families had brought. No saran wrap in those days, but the white flour sack towels that lay over the baked goods lightened the kitchen considerably.

The revelry was on, heightened by some beer, which was considered a liquid refreshment, and probably not under the same fasting rules as meat, bread and sweets. There were usually four or five Santa's who traveled and arrived together just as the party was "really starting to roll." The women of the neighborhood had put quite a lot of effort into the homemade costumes that young men, (usually in their early twenties) portraying the Santa's

wore. The idea was that the children would not recognize who the Santa's were.

First there were "White Santa's." They dressed in a white Santa suit, and were very nice. White Santa,s were meant mostly for the very little children, and gave out bags of candy to the two and three year olds with no questions. All the children loved "White Santa" and followed him around and it was an honor to be able to sit with him or get a hug from him.

Then there were Santa's dressed much like the Santa we know today. Santa asked catechism questions or made the children kneel down and say a prayer before he gave a bag of candy. Children who did not know their catechism would not get a bag of candy and woe to the youngster who smarted off to him. Santa could whack a good one with his cane.

"Black Santa, well he represented the devil," my Dad said, "and he could do anything. Black Santa was dressed all in black and carried whips and had a logging chain attached to his leg. The black Santa's would run around and chase people, especially older kids who were known to have a smart mouth or be troublemakers and of course the "troublemakers" were well known, since the Santa,s were the young uncles to the children at the party. Everybody was scared of Black Santa and the Black Santa's would try to lure or pull people out of the house and then they would really have fun giving them snow face washings and doing other nasty things.

Well, Black Santa was running around Jake Girtz' kitchen, dragging his logging chain, swinging his whip and grabbing at the bigger children and trying to wrestle them outside with all the children screaming and crying and the mothers trying to protect their children who had been good and push their children who had been nasty towards Black Santa when the hook of his logging chain got caught on the stove leg! It pulled the stove away from the stove pipe, the pipes came down and there was soot from one end of the house to the other, with children running through it trying to get away and housewives now putting their efforts towards trying to save the food.

Everyone pitched in to clean it up and the party continued, but at a much lower pitch of excitement and revelry.

Query

Searching for information on the **Dobner** surname, sometimes spelled **Dobener** or **Doebner**

Margaretha Dobner was born in Kostelsen, Bohemia in October 1843 and married **Joseph Seifert** from Gibian, Bohemia. They came to America and settled in Milford Township in 1867. They had 6 children survive; **Peter (Lamberton, MN)**, **Mrs Wilt (Katie, Lamberton, MN)**, **Mrs John Ubl (Theresa, New Ulm, MN)**, **John (Milford)**, **Mrs. Joseph Goblirsch (Mary, New Ulm, MN)**, and **Mrs Herman Koop (Sophie, New Ulm, MN)**.

Margaretha's obituary from November 1916 says that a brother was still living in Germany. If anyone has any information on the **Dobner** name please contact me. Thank you.

Duane Piere
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L to R; Unknown, unknown, Mary Seifert Goblirsch
Circa 1895

The Shepherd

Taken from the book "The Reunion" by Tom Fisher and submitted by Rosemary Tauer. The following is the forward from the book. The story follows the forward.

The chapters of this book, *The Emigrant*, *The Immigrant*, *The Resident*, and *The Family*, are fictional writings. Some of the incidents are true and are embellishments of the life of my father, George Fischer, who came to America at the age of fifteen, from the Bohemian village of Trohatin.

It is believed that an uncle who lived in America paid for his ticket to America. The 1900 census lists George Fischer, servant in the household of Franz Fischer. To my knowledge, he never talked about this period of his life.

Some of my insights into my father's life came from listening as he and Joseph Tauer talked of his early life in Bohemia. Joseph Tauer lived in the village of Berg as a child. He and my father attended the same church, and knew each other from the "Old Country". Oddly enough, Mr. Tauer lived across the highway from us and visited every Sunday. I have tried to portray living conditions in Bohemia from what I recall of their stories.

Names of characters in the stories are for the most part fictional. Family members of my father are true names. Other names of characters in Trohatin were selected at random from names of Bohemian families from Trohatin.

Ship's names are correct names of ships used by emigrants,

although I am not sure which ship my father used in coming to America. My father did enter America at Castle Gardens. Ellis Island opened a few years after my father arrived.

Information about customs and holidays was taken from the book, *German Bohemians: The Quiet Immigrants*, by Ripley and Paulson. Information about conditions of ships coming to America was taken from *German-Bohemia Society Newsletters*.

Much research has gone into these writings in hopes that they truthfully portray the conditions that existed in the late 1800's and early 1900's.

The main purpose of the book is to show the courage that my father, George Fischer, demonstrated at such a young age in making such a trip, and to show the dedication of an entire family in pursuing their dream of life in America.

Tom Fischer

George was the shepherd to his family, just as the Lord is our shepherd, and they would follow him to America.

For the voyage each person could have one large chest. And so the preparations began. George was only fifteen.

There had to be food to last up to eight weeks. Papa Wenzel was able to barter for a piglet even if it was only half grown it would be butchered just before George's departure. Mama began baking unraised salted bread. This bread would not mold if it was kept in a dry place. Grandpa Fischer gave George a bottle of his best wine. He was instructed to use it only if he became ill. Other things

included sulfur powder and ointment for the "itch". The cobbler made George a pair of shoes and papa said "Make them plenty big. Remember he is still growing." When the captain of the ship saw George he said "You have to realize there will be no crying, no screaming out. Are you a cry baby son?" George said "I know all the hardships I will face and I am ready to go."

And so it was that George would leave on May 5th, 1891 from Hamburg, Germany.

"But we must have a party, mama said." It was a big party with kraut, dumplings and sausages, schmierkuhen and beer, concertina music and dancing. Sad goodbyes were said. I will send for you as soon as I have saved enough money.

During their journey they encountered two storms, many people were sick and two older folks died. They were buried at sea. George had found a friend named Alex and they shared their food. They were the Bruckbauer family who had five children. They were running short on food. they agreed to do the cooking and George would share his food. He hated to see those hungry children.

On the day after the storm the children had a high fever. George found some dried prunes and cooked them until they formed a thick syrup. It was fed to the children. The only fruit or vegetable they had in four weeks. George's magic elixir did the trick. Everyone who had someone ill came to get some of the magic medicine.

The sea was calm again and they were making good progress. The captain said they were close to the coast of America and they were over some good fishing area. He passed out large hooks. They caught lots of cod. For the first time in four weeks they had a good meal. As the boat entered the dock George thanked God for the safe trip. He thought of his mama and papa and his brothers and sisters and all his friends he left behind in Bohemia. Would he ever see them again?

George now saw ships of all sizes. Some without sails, some had side paddles and engines. With one of those he thought "We could have made it in 10 days." Those ships are only for the rich people." George said goodbye to his friend Alex. He was now alone.

"Your name please," the man said. George Fisher he replied. "And are you indentured to Franz Fischer in Minnesota?" George had his train ticket and papers in order. George had to wait eight hours. A feeling of loneliness swept over him and he sat on the bench and cried.

George could not understand English. "Is there anyone who can understand German?", the conductor shouted. An older man with a white beard said "sprecehn sie

deutsch?" George nodded. The man helped George to the correct seat. And he was by himself - very lonely and very hungry. What little food he had was left in his chest in the storage place. If only he had put some food in his pocket.

George did not sleep very well that first night. But in the morning he met the man who could speak Bohemian again. He helped him find the hard bread he had left. George then told the old man his story. He told him how he was the oldest in his family from Trohatin. His mama and papa are farmers and for two years in a row our crops were wiped out. Too many people and not enough land. A captain (we will call him the good shepherd too) came to our town and told us about emigrating to America. I signed up to indenture myself as a servant for seven years. I will save all my money to send back so my family can come to America too.

As George looked out the train window he saw farms bigger than any he had ever seen back home. These farmers must all be so rich he thought. Everything was so new and different. I hope the old man would let him know when I get to St. James he thought.

When he got off at St. James he was all alone. The station was deserted. Where are my sponsors? Had they gotten the telegram he thought?

I will just wait here for my sponsors. They will be here soon. George stretched out using his coat as a pillow. Soon he was asleep. In the morning when the station master came he found someone who could speak German. George told him his sponsor was Franz Fischer. They gave him a piece of white bread. All these people must be very rich eating white bread!

It was late in the afternoon when a buggy arrived. It was Franz. I thought you would be bigger, Franz said." "Well I am fifteen and a hard worker!" I lost a lot of weight in the crossing." "Mama will fatten you up, Franz said."

George was introduced to his new family. He was taken to the barn where he was to sleep in the harness room on a raised bunk with a mattress of straw. George uttered a prayer. "Lord give me strength to bear the coming hardships. Be with my family in Bohemia. I miss them very much."

It was spring time in Minnesota and George was eager to learn of Minnesota farm life. He was told not to pay any attention to the girls. He helped with the chores and grandpa Fischer and mama would always tell him what work he had to do. He helped with the hay and he shocked grain, milked cows, and fed pigs and chickens.

Summers in Minnesota seemed hot and humid compared to

Trohatin. When it was hot and humid grandpa would let them go for a swim in the river.

One day a letter came from mama. She told how they missed him and prayed he was well and safe. She said a new brother arrived and they named him Peter. George longed to be back in his homeland. How different he thought his Bohemian family was. Warm, caring and poor. His American family was rich but less loving.

On Sunday morning they put on their best clothes and boarded the buckboard to head for church. In Trohatin everyone always walked. It took an hour until they could see the two tall spires of St. Marys church in Sleepy Eye.

And so the first summer passed quickly. The potatoes were dug, the other vegetables were stored for the winter and the corn was harvested just before the first snow fall. When the first storm came mama Fischer gave him two feather beds. One for sleeping on and one for cover as he was still sleeping in the barn. In January they cut ice for the ice house. When spring arrived the crops were planted again. News arrived from home. The crop had not been good last year and does not look too good for this year either.

One of the exciting events for George was the raising of a neighbors barn. George and two others did the cement mixing. The days were filled with friends and much food like fried chicken wursts, kraut, bread and cold beer.

Back in Trohatin Papa Wenzel and Mama Francheska busied themselves for the emigration of Mary and Josef. They had been skimping and saving and with the little bit that George could send them they put together enough money to purchase two stowage tickets to America. A sponsorship program had begun and now all that was needed was a farmer to be responsible if the emigrant could not take care of himself financially. He would be obligated to feed, house, and care for him. Papa Wenzel's sister Elizabeth Frank was sponsoring Mary and Josef. She had come to America ten years earlier and owned a large farm near Wabasso and had lost contact with the family. George did not remember her. He was only 5 when he saw her last. If I had known things were that bad in the old country I would have sent for her myself. So she was happy to sponsor Mary and Josef. It now has been almost six years and George would see two family members.

They arrived in only eight days at Ellis Island on a newer ship not dependent on the wind. Josef who was only eleven stayed at the Franz Fischer farm. Mary who was fifteen would serve as a house keeper to a family who had lost their mother. Papa and mama in Trohatin thought that in two or three years they would be together again. But the depression had hit America and Franz was not able to pay George or Josef. And now there were five mouths to feed in

Trohatin. Jake, Frank, Wenzel and twins Anna and Kathryn. But finally after 10 years a letter to Trohatin with enough money arrived. With the little money the parents had saved, by selling all they could and giving away treasured possessions, they were able to leave their homeland.

Passage was on the ship Fredrich Der Grosse. After that they took the train to New Ulm, Minnesota. What a reunion it was! Finally they were all together again. George breathed a sigh of relief. The vow he made as a fourteen year old had now come true. He truly was The Shepherd Who Led His Family To America!

In 1897 George became a citizen of the United States and today this wonderful reunion is the result of the Shepherd George. But many others here today may have a similar story as told by their grandmother or grandfather. All of them have already left this earth --- but we are truly grateful for their sacrifices as the true shepherds responsible for most of us here today. GOD BLESS YOU ALL!

Memorials In Memory of . . .

Lila Bauman

from Horst & Cindy Eisen

Louie Stadick

from Paul & Janice Kretsch

Marilyn Rewitzer

from Paul & Janice Kretsch,
George & Angie Portner

Gladys Ries

from Marlene Domeier, Harvey & Ruth Fruhwirth,
Mr. & Mrs. Harold Olson, Roland & Elaine Dauer,
Ruth Mowan, Don & Myrtle Brand, Frances Brandel,
George & Angie Portner, Benny & Darlene Seifert,
Pat & Colleen Kretsch, Tony & Harriet Eckstein,
Mariann Tremel, Pat & Nicole Eckstein

Query

Looking for information regarding the **Schiel** family name about 1875-1935 in **Adlersdorf (Orlichky)** Bohemia, Czech Republic.

Many **Schiel** families lived in Orlichky, possibly related to each other. My father was born **Franz Karl Schiel** in Vienna in 1894. His mother was **Franziska Schiel** daughter of **Jan Schiel**, house #37, Orlichky. After 1945 the Sudeten Germans left Bohemia for Bavaria. Where in Bavaria? I would be most grateful for any information about relatives who lived in Orlichky and might have known the Schiel name. Please contact me if you have any information.

Elsa Schiel Hill
937 Old Mail Lane
Sanford, FL 32773-8154

Our Readers Write . . .

A Success Story

Dear Mr. Lindmeyer:

I'm writing to tell you of a success story in genealogy research and to thank you and Robert Paulson for helping me with my project.

I knew from immigration records that one of my mother's ancestors, Lorenz Haselbauer, was born in Steinbach, Bohemia, and I had his date of birth. But there were several villages by that name in the 19th century, and I didn't know where to begin looking.

The two of you helped me with the current Czech names of the various "Steinbachs," and also suggested I contact T & P Research in the Czech Republic. I did so, and last week I received their Ancestral Research Report indicating that Lorenz Hasselbauer was born in what is now the village of Kamenice. The researcher was also able to identify the parents of Lorenz:

Father: Joseph Hasselbauer, son of Adam Hasselbauer and his wife, Anna Maria nee Fischer;

Mother: Anna Catharina nee Rossmeisl, daughter of David Rossmeisl and his wife Catharina nee Pleyer. All of these people were from the Falkenau manor.

I had never run across the term "manor" in this context before. But the June issue of *The Heimatbrief* had a fascinating article by Karen Hobbs on the "Effects of War, Economic Depression, and Famine 1815-1820." Ms. Hobbs' article described the social organization in the Bohemian countryside, which helped me better understand the material in the research report I just received.

And if any readers of *The Heimatbrief* recognize any of the names above as also being their ancestors, I invite them to contact me.

One last note. Ms. Hobbs' article talks about the terrible summer weather in 1816, when crops failed leading to starvation. The July 2002 issue of *Smithsonian* magazine has an article by Robert Evans entitled "Blast from the Past." It's about the eruption of Mount Tambora in Indonesia in 1815 which sent tons of ash and dust into the atmosphere, contributing to the cold summer of 1816. Anyone who found Ms. Hobbs' article interesting will also want to read the *Smithsonian* magazine article.

Sincerely,
Don Niemi
Metamora, Illinois
Niemi <niemi@bwsys.net>

From Rootsweb

Occupational Terms

(previously published at *Rootsweb.com*)

I have been working through a list of various occupations of my ancestors and thought that others are also trying to determine the occupational translation. Even though I have used some on-line translation help (AltaVista Babelfish) not all the terms seem to translate.

Does anyone know of a site or can help with these type of terms translated from German to English?

Examples are:

Bauer (farmer)

Inwohner

Hauptschulrektor

Chalupner

Landwirt

Holzmacher

Tischlermeister

Kaminbauer

Braugehilfe

Dienstmagd

Hausbesitzer

Richter

Maurer and Hausler

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Occupations are as follows:

Bauer - Farmer

Inwohner - Resident

Hauptschulrektor - Headmaster of Secondary School.

Landwirt - Farmer, more formal than Bauer.

Holzmacher - Woodcutter

Tischlermeister - Master Carpenter

Kaminbauer - Chimney Builder

Braugehilfe - Brewers Apprentice (note, Brau is Brew, Bau is Build)

Dienstmagd - Female Servant
Hausgesitzer - Home Owner
Richter - Judge
Maurer and Hausler - Bricklayer and Smallholder

Herb Schwarz
Ontario, Canada

From the GBHS Electronic Mailing List:

Mine, Industry and Farmland Recruiters

Query:

In your "Tailor in Austria Army" writing, you mention that Bohemians would sign up to work in American mines or manufacturing. For some time now, I have suspected that my Grand-Uncle Frank Peissig from Leitmeritz did just that. He and his family were the first of my Peissig ancestors to immigrate to the US. Our family tradition has it that Frank went to Trenton, Clinton Co, Illinois and worked in a coal mine for a year before heading to north-central Wisconsin where he bought wild land from the RR and pioneered a farm. His parents and siblings all eventually came over from Bohemia and settled near him. I have often wondered if possibly Frank signed up for a year's labor in a coal mine in exchange for passage to US. To your knowledge, was this a common practice? Thank you for any help you can give on this.

Answer to Query

During the second quarter of the 19th century there were recruiters who traveled about Europe looking for people to fill the berths on passenger ships to America. They probably had their greatest success after the revolution of 1848 when the serfs were freed.

The writer, Christopher Post, says that around 1820 there were only about 20,000 passenger berths from Dutch ports for passage to America. Not only were the "Clipper Ships" of that time relatively small, there were not all that many of them. I doubt that they had much trouble finding as many passengers as they wanted without a lot of effort. The Clippers were replaced by steam-assisted sail by the 1830's. The new ships were much larger and every decade saw them grow until they became the large "liners" that sailed after 1880. They could maximize their space for passengers by developing "steerage" class that kept people who paid about \$33 each for passage in an airless hold with 4 x 6 foot wooden bunks (one bunk for a whole family).

The ships' recruiters who appeared after the larger ships

developed would organize meetings where they would talk about all the wonderful free land in America and the streets literally "paved with gold." Sometimes they had a witness with them - someone who presented himself as a emigrant who had succeeded very well in America and encouraged everyone to do the same. Whether or not the witness was really who he said he was is a good question.

They would recruit people to go to America even if they had no money for passage by having them agree to a labor contract that could bind an entire family to work for up to three years or until their contract for passage was satisfied. The labor contracts were sold by the ship's captain to people who wanted servants, farm laborers or other workers. The ship's captains could often make a lot more money with labor contracts on passengers than they could from passengers who paid for their berths and the recruiters got a nice commission for every passenger they rounded up.

The people who made it to America under those terms looked at their years of work as an opportunity. They knew they had guaranteed employment and they had the term of their contracts to learn English and get their feet on the ground financially before settling down as farmers on some of that free land.

Those who did not have to hire out under a contract for passage would still seek temporary work before they settled down. They usually went to a place where they knew from the "grapevine" that there were high-paying jobs available. One of the favorite jobs that many Bohemians took before they settled down as farmers was as loggers in the forests of Wisconsin. My German-Bohemian great grandparents spent some time at Prairie du Chein, WI, where I understand there was a substantial logging and sawmill enterprise in the 1860's and 1870's. They were already in that town in 1872. They did not settle on their Minnesota farm until after 1875.

The meetings to recruit emigrants for ships' captains to fill their passenger berths were so successful in some parts of Europe that the authorities began to fear they would have an impact on the local economy if too many working people left. The meetings became illegal but that did not stop the recruiters. They no longer posted notices of meetings and they kept them more or less secret but they were still well enough attended to make them worth the risk.

Those meetings that recruited passengers for transatlantic ships were one way that Americans found the workers they needed, but by the middle of the century that type of contract labor was not enough and American mines and industries began to send their own recruiters. They would set up booths at fairs and markets throughout Eastern Europe and sign up men to work as miners or in certain industries for a given wage plus their passage. They

began to attract so many young men that Austrian army recruiters feared the best potential soldiers were all going to America so Austria outlawed their recruiting. The recruiters merely paid off local officials so they would look the other way while the recruiting still went on openly at fairs and markets everywhere. They were always able to obtain the necessary travel documents for anyone they signed up regardless of his draft status. They offered young men of draft age who had the courage to leave a very easy way to get out of serving in the Austrian army. They probably also offered men who were trying to avoid the police a way to escape and men who faced financial ruin or a poor future a chance to start over.

American glass industries would recruit workers in the glass-producing areas of Bohemia, lumber industries would recruit loggers and sawmill workers in the areas where there was a good supply of men with that experience, tool and die makers would recruit blacksmiths, mines would recruit experienced miners, etc. Learn what trades were the most common in an ancestors home area when considering the possibility that someone might have arrived in America on a work contract.

Many of the first workers in the iron mines of northern Minnesota were recruited in Eastern Europe and arrived on ships that docked at Superior. A lot of Poles and Slovaks were recruited to work in the coal mines of Schuylkill County, PA, displacing the Germans and German-Bohemians who had arrived earlier and were now the crew bosses in the mines.

Sometimes the recruits would stay with the job that brought them to America for the rest of their lives. That was especially true of glass workers who settled in Ohio and Pennsylvania. Many of the miners who settled in Pennsylvania also remained there. During the nineteenth century it was especially difficult for Pennsylvania coal miners to ever save enough money to leave mining and go into a business or buy a farm. The many stories of the Molly Macguires of Schuylkill County tell of the miner's futile struggle for fair wages and labor practices during the second half of the century.

The Minnesota Historical Society has copies of notices of land available for immigrants. It is full of superlatives designed to make the prairie sound like an ideal place to settle. These notices were sometimes printed in various languages and used by the same people who recruited European workers to attract land-hungry farmers and field hands. Typical East European farms were very small with the largest seldom being 30-40 acres. As extended families grew the ancestral farmstead could no longer provide a decent living for everyone. Someone had to pack up and leave for the good of the rest and the huge tracts of "free land" in America created a lure that was hard to resist under those circumstances.

Other states also advertised as they opened up farm and ranchland for settlement. The immigrants who were farmers and who first worked at other jobs would always know where the best land deal was offered at a given time. Those who had the means to quit a job and buy a farm would do so as soon as they fulfilled their contract to work.

Some waited until they had enough money to send for their families. Some waited to have enough money to buy the wagon load of tools and supplies and the chickens and livestock they would need to start farming. Single men would also have to find a woman to marry as soon as possible.

The railroad reached Fairfax, MN, in 1872 and travel from the US port cities by train was cheap, safe and fast. Minnesota land was also cheap and the 80-acre railroad parcels in the areas along the Minnesota River went fairly fast. Men who did not have the cash (up to \$125) to buy the land got a very fair mortgage and they could start to farm right away.

A Minnesota farmer could also get another grant -- up to another 80 acres -- just for planting a certain number of acres of trees. Those old trees that were parts of "tree claims" are almost all gone now as farms grow bigger and those old trees have become a nuisance occupying good crop land.

Karen Hobbs

Newsletter Deadline

The next issue of the "Heimatbrief" will be published in March 2003. Deadline for articles and other submissions will be February 1, 2003.

History For Sale

German-Bohemians - The Quiet

Immigrants by La Vern Rippley & Robert Paulson

A "must have" book for researchers. Over ten years in the making. Fully researched. Nine chapters describing our German-Bohemian ancestors life in the homeland, the journey to America and life in their new-found homes. Customs, traditions, music, heritage and more. Over 150 photographs. Hard cover, 279 pages **\$25.90**

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One hundred folk tales (fairy tales) translated from the original German text *Hundert Sagen aus den Sudetenländern* by Josef Rotter, 1952. A wonderful insight into the stories our ancestors told for generations. Ghosts, goblins, magic, witches, giants, dragons, and more. The only published collection of German-Bohemian folklore in English. Soft cover, 197 pages. **\$14.00**

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A German-Bohemian Cookbook. Dozens of authentic German and German-Bohemian recipes.

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by LaVern J. Rippley. **\$6.00**

German-Bohemian Immigrant Monument Book

A souvenir booklet of the monument dedication by the GBHS with early history of the organization. . . **\$5.00**

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All prices (U.S. Funds Only Please) include sales tax and postage . If you wish to order any of these items, send a check payable to GBHS and mail it with your request to: GBHS, P.O. Box 822, New Ulm, MN, 56073-0822

Dear Robert and Louis,

Query

For some time I have been looking for information that described the housing, clothing and basic food and how it was prepared (not necessarily recipes) of our ancestors. I would like to know how these subjects changed from about 1620 to perhaps 1870's, specifically in the area of western Bohemia. I would settle for Bohemia or even central Europe. I have not been very successful in finding information on this subject.

The reason I picked 1620 to 1870's is that many of us have ancestors going back to those times. It would be nice to know how their life style in this regard progressed.

Since I live in San Diego can anyone suggest any books on these items that I might find in a university library such as San Diego State or UCLA?.

Sincerely,

Glenn J. Stangel

4725 Pauling Ave.

San Diego, Ca. 92122-2725

Gjs332@wmconnect.com

The board of directors wish to send you their warmest holidaa greeting and a sincere thank you for supporting th German-Bohemian Heritage Society. We hope you have a joyous Christmas Holiday and a safe and prosperous New Year.

A Very Special Holiday Offer

The German-Bohemian Heritage Society takes pride in offering a special Holiday dual book offer at a very special price.

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German-Bohemians - The Quiet Immigrants by La Vern Rippley & Robert Paulson
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