

 **German-Bohemian
Heritage Society
Newsletter**

**the
Heimatbrief** P.O. Box 822

New Ulm, Minnesota, 56073-0822

 Email: Society & Newsletter - lal@mnic.net
Research Info - rpaulgb@skypoint.com

Vol X No. 2 June 1999 Louis Lindmeyer, Editor



Coming Events

**June 12, 1999
Board of Directors Meeting
GBHS Research Center**

**August 14, 1999
GBHS Annual Picnic
Herman Heights Park
New Ulm, MN**

**September 18, 1999
Board of Directors Meeting
GBHS Research Center**

**October 23, 1999
GBHS General Meeting
New Ulm Public Library
New Ulm, MN**



Expulsion: The Hardest Time For Trohatin

Submitted by Don Zwach

With all the Kosovo ethnic/depopulation news we see daily on TV, I thought you would be interested in a section of a book that tells about the expulsion of Germans from Czechoslovakia after WWII. What s happening in Kosovo today is exactly what happened to our Zwach and Hammerschmidt relatives 53 years ago!

After WWI when the borders for the new country called Czechoslovakia were drawn (formerly part of the Austrian/Hungarian Empire), many German speaking people were by chance included on the Czech side of the border of this new country. The Zwachs and Hammerschmidts lived about four miles from the border.

I have a 320 page book of written history on the Berg Catholic church parish that included the villages of Schilligkau (Hammerschmidts) and Trohatin (Zwachs).



It is written in German, however David Zwach (great grandson of Peter Zwach of New Ulm, MN) had the chapters involving Trohatin and the Zwachs translated into English.

The depopulation of Kosovo with the Serbs taking all valuables and land/buildings from the Albanians (and also happened a few years ago in Bosnia and Coatia) is exactly what happened to Grandpa Joseph Zwach and Grandma Barbara Harnmerschmidt Zwach relatives after WWII in 1946! The Czechs ruthlessly kicked out over 3 1/2 million ethnic Germans who lived along the outer rim of then Czechoslovakia - often referred to as the Sudetenland. These Germans had lived for over 700 years in this part of Germany/Bohemia. I have visited with many of Zwach and Hammerschmidt relatives in Germany and Toronto, Canada who were kicked out of their homeland in 1946. The article below is written by a person in Trohatin where the Zwachs lived and it was the exact same story told to me by these relatives. Grandpa's brother Andreas lived in Trohatin and lost everything and was relocated in the former East Germany - against his wishes. Grandma Zwach's brother, Wenzl, lived with his family in Schilligkau at this time. Grandpa's sister Marie Zwach Ubl lived in a nearby village called Wasserau. These Hammerschmidt and Zwach relatives were lucky to be relocated in the former West Germany where most of them live today.

Here is their story written by the then Mayor of Trohatin.

The first part gives a little history and the last part tells of the horrifying experience these people (our relatives) went through

The expulsion (so called humane resettlement) in the year 1945-46. (Written down according to the sketches of the last mayor of Trohatin, the late Mr. Alois Kiefner No. 38).

It is known today that Mr. Edward Benesch when he became the first Czech foreign minister in the year 1919 after the first world war, could have agreed to the evacuation of the Sudeten ethnic group if the Western powers had agreed to this. The head of the Sudeten - German Social Democrats, Mr. Wenzel Jaksch, published a study in the year 1939 before he went abroad with the title : "What comes after Hitler?". President Benesch also went into exile and a Czechoslovakian Government in exile was formed in England with Benesch as the President. The expulsion plans of Benesch grew up in exile and right in the beginning of the year 1942 he had announced his expulsion plans in a speech before the British Press Association. An important role in cooperation with Benesch was played by the Agriculture Minister appointed in the protectorate Government, Mr.

Ladislav Feirabend, in the year 1939. This man, who saw the post-war consequences of the Bensch politics in a certain political farsightedness right in the years 1941 to 1945, namely the communist revolt of February 1948, the death of Jan Masaryk and the degradation of the CSSR into a colony of the Soviet Imperialism, acquired a special importance with the exile politics of President Benesch.

Bensch's credibility was doubted not only due to his behavior towards the Sudeten-German Social Democrats but also due to the way he treated his own Czech followers. When the Munich Agreement was negotiated in the year 1938, Benesch agreed at that time to this agreement. At that time he was happy that a CSSR (Protectorate) existed. When Benesch went to Moscow to meet Stalin from his exile in England, he came back with an economic agreement for 20 years and brought a number of promises from Stalin as: revisions of borders, expulsion of the people, non-interference in the internal matters and many others. The expulsion of the Sudeten-German ethnic group was therefore a decided fact.

With his proclamation in Tabor in May 1945 Benesch declared compulsory evacuation of all Sudeten-Germans. Thus a start of the so called, "humane resettlement" was made. The Sudeten-Germans were defenseless because all the weapons had to be handed over. The Czechs, even the Czech youth, were well equipped with weapons.

So the hardest time broke out also over Trohatin and our village was also not spared although there was not even a single Czech in Trohatin and the inhabitants of Trohatin had nothing to do with Czechs. The Americans withdrew a short time after the occupation of Trohatin, only a command post remained in Ronsperg (3 miles from Trohatin) for a longer time. The gendarmerie post in Ronsperg was occupied by the Czech gendarms. The expulsion of the refugees from Silesia came as the first order. There were about 200 people in Trohatin mostly from Silesia, and these people were brought to the border point of Schwarzach via Schilligkau by the farmers of Trohatin on their carts driven by horses and were handed over to the Americans. With tears in their eyes these refugees left our native country and they said it would be better if we also came along right now. None of us had even dreamt at that time that we would have to follow them in a short while. The school rooms which were occupied by the German army at the end of the war were cleaned after their withdrawal, but however, there was no beginning of the school for German children.

During the war, workers from the East were working at the Meierhof Wellowitz. At the end of the war they had joined in bigger groups in St. George, had acquired arms and were shooting around in the area with the result that a pedestrian who was going from Schaltin towards the West in direction of Trohatin was killed on the meadow of the Wellowitz mill. He could not be identified by anybody. Then it was quiet in Trohatin for some time and the inhabitants of the village were left in peace by the Czech gendarmes. However, there was a feeling of insecurity and mental depression and dejection in every house.

One fine morning of May a strict order came from the Czech genarmerie in Ronsperg that all motorcycles, radio sets and German military goods should be handed over to the Mayor. By evening everything had to be deposited. A horde of Czech soldiers plundered the houses in Trohatin and the people had to bring these robbed things themselves to the Council house. There they were also beaten up and hit by the Czech soldiers with rifle butts. The harassments started now in the worst way. Even the fire brigade jackets had to be handed over.

It was nice and warm in the beginning of June 1945 and the hay harvest had started early, one day the Commissioners for Berg, Trohatin, Natschetin and Schilligkau arrived. They had their headquarters and administrative office in Berg. A strict order was issued and as soon as something was done against these commissioners fifteen men and fifteen women are shot dead. The municipality had to place at the disposal of the commissioners everything what they required; furnishing articles and also food. Two of them were married men along with their wives and three were bachelors. The three bachelor commissioners were living in Ronsperg and were coming every day to Trohatin.

Later on all seven Czechs were living in Berg in a newly built house and had their office also there. The Commissioner's office was under the Narodni Vybor. None of the commissioners knew German and so a lady interpreter from Trohatin who had a command of the written and spoken Czech was appointed for the commissioner's office in Berg. All the money of the municipality cashier had also to be handed over to the commissioners. The money of different societies had also to be deposited at the commissioners office. During the summer of 1945 the road from Ronsperg to Trohatin was upgraded and for this road work all the men of Trohatin were called in. The stone for this road was brought from Hostau. A former German named Heger was reemployed for messenger service and for the supervision of the forest, he was however armed with one stick only. The commissioners had to be brought to Bischofteinitz for official meetings in a coach by the farmers of Trohatin. At that time Germans were not allowed to travel by train in the socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia.

At the end of June the hay harvest was over. One day all the cycles had to be handed over. They were collected in the school and were then transported to Ronsperg. Then one day the order came that all Germans should wear a white armband and he who went with a hand bag on the road was checked by the Czechs and valuable articles were taken away. When the food was in short supply the ration cards were issued, for the Germans however without meat or fat. Other things entered in the cards were not available anywhere else. The residents of Trohatin were dependent on their own stocks.

The harassments went on increasing. One day all the houses, attics and barns were searched through and everything suitable was taken along. Flour stocks, meat and also the filled meat cans were taken away and sent to Berg.

One Sunday funds were also collected for the destroyed Czech village Lidice, and it became a considerable amount. As the harassments became more and more unbearable, a few women in Ronsperg complained to the American command office about the bad treatment. The success was that they were punished by the commissioners with a fine. It became known soon to Narodni Vybor in Ronsperg that the Czech commissioner in Berg had appointed a German lady as an interpreter. He should dismiss her and he did not do so, he was transferred to Klentsch near Taus. A new Commissioner came to Berg whose behavior with Germans was much worse than the first one. He always threatened lock up. As he didn't speak a single word of German, the German lady interpreter was allowed to stay on.

One day two Czechs came to the village, selected the most beautiful farms and appointed themselves as administrators. The one Czech went to the Friedl farm (Johann Baier No. 36). Hardly any day passed without harassments. In case of illness one had to get a certificate from the commissioner in order to get medicine from the chemist.

One day a cattle requisition was carried out. Every farmer had to hand over a cow. They went from stable to stable and when an owner did not want to give a cow, one was simply taken without any argument. The cattle were transported to Ronsperg. No one received any money for these cattle.

All the money in Imperial German Bank notes had to be handed over to the commissioner. Every household received 200KC per head; the Czech money had only domestic value.

The month of July 1945 came to an end and the harvest began. In the meanwhile the Potsdam Agreement was signed by the victorious powers. The policy of the Czechs against the Sudeten Germans was recognized by the super powers and the evacuation was a decided fact. As nobody had a radio set the news of the signing of Potsdam Agreement leaked only slowly among the residents of that place. As the harvest was still in full swing and the Commissioner checked the progress of the harvest work a momentary evacuation was not taken up immediately. The summer of 1945 was nice and warm and the harvest work had finished by mid August.

One day people came to know that in the whole area all former SA members had been arrested. The very first arrests were made in Ronsperg. Trohatin was still spared. But soon it was different. A returnee of the German armed forces was arrested for his brother. All objections were useless.

The biggest horror for the village Trohatin came on the 11th September 1945. On this day a Czech Sergeant came with a troupe of gendarmes and took the mayor. The sergeant took out a list with names of all SA-members of Trohatin. The mayor had to go along with them and on this day seventeen persons, twelve men and five women, were arrested. At the end the mayor was also taken into custody, he was however, not taken away. He was allowed to stay at home because they needed him time and again. The seventeen arrested persons were taken into a hall of the inn Haas, and then were brought in trucks into the notorious camp in Kraslowitz near Taus. There they were admitted into the camp with scorn and derision and with the German military marches (over the loudspeaker). But there was fear, grief and tears in Trohatin on that day. One day the sign board of Trohatin in German also disappeared and a Czech sign board with the name Drahotin was put up there. The people went to their work very hesitatingly. Everything was disheartening and weary. The wives of the arrested men ventured at their own risk and did not shun the four hours walk to Taus just to meet their arrested husband there.

Everyday Czech farmers and workers were coming through the village and looking at the farms from the road. It was already Autumn and many residents utilized the nights and brought clothing and other articles across the border to Bavaria.

In October 1945 the owners had to hand over to the commissioners lists of their property and the commissioners verified the properties and the persons on the basis of these records. The commissioners also had the whole food ration card file with them so that they knew all the names of the residents of Trohatin. There was frightening calmness and a big insecurity over the village of Trohatin. The residents did not know whether they should leave their hometown or should bring only their articles across the border. There were again the old custom officials at the border crossing points and they had some more soldiers as reinforcement. A watch was kept on the border also during nights. The cultivation work for the autumn had also to be carried out under these troubles. This work was carried out only superficially.

Fleeing across the border was at any rate a dangerous thing because it meant that one had to starve in Germany. There were allegedly no food ration cards there and the refugees were sent back again. But in Trohatin the harassment became more and more intolerable and the residents were attacked more and more.

One morning a troupe of Czechs in civil, gendarmes and soldiers turned up in Trohatin and moved in the upper inn of Franz Saffert.

All the property owners in the village had come there. First of all a scornful speech was made which it was told that the Germans wanted to go home in the Reich. Now the day has come when all German will go home to the German Reich. After that the Czech national anthem was sung. Then the property owners had to come forward on their name being called and everyone was introduced to his new farm owner. They had to go home with him and hand over the property after making the inventory. Everything in house from this day onward belonged to the Czechs, the German were allowed to take only that what the Czechs gave them back. The German owners received only one room for the whole family, the other rooms were occupied by the Czechs.

On the 16th October 1945 most of the 30 farms were taken over by the Czechs. The village was constantly checked by the Czechs during night and light was not allowed in any house. Nobody was allowed to leave the house in the evening. It was very difficult to get out of the village. Even then some people could manage sometimes to escape from the Czech authorities at the dead of night. Now evacuations also started in the village from homes where there was little space. Then several families were put together in other houses, but they had to go to their former farms to work for the Czechs. With these constant shiftings of the residents in the village different furniture articles often got lost.

On 30th October 1945 a number of German families were evacuated as they were allegedly too many. It was a horrible day for some families. Early morning at 5 o'clock gendarmes and soldiers came in the flats and the German families were ordered to leave the house within 10 minutes. They were allowed to take only some clothes and a set of underwear. There were also women with small children and older people. They were expelled from their houses by force. So twelve families were abducted on this day (30th October 1945) into the Czech territory near Pilsen.

They were brought to Ronsperg in big haycarts and from there they were taken further to Pilsen by rail. They were spread out on the main railway station in Pilsen. Czech farmers came there and selected German families for the work. The families without men were left over. They were brought to an estate near Pilsen. All abducted farmers had to work the whole day in the fields. They got bad food. In the beginning they received only potatoes and bread to eat only later some could manage to get hold of a saucepan in order to be able to cook some more potatoes. The abducted families had to stand by their place of work so long till for them the time of evacuation came. For some this time of relief came in June 1946 and others had to wait till July/August 1946. With this abduction into the interior of the state of Bohemia some families were evacuated to the Eastern Zone.

There were also small farmers (villagers with small houses and small agricultural land) and a few newly constructed workhouses in Trohatin. Even such estates were gradually occupied by the Czechs. It happened very often that complete families left their native country at dead of night. They tried to carry their last belongings across the border under quite dangerous conditions. And there were always stricter checks at the border and strict vigil was kept over the border. At some points, even in the forest it was almost impossible to cross the border. If such frontier crossers were caught by the Czech security personnel, they were brought to the command office of the gendarmerie in Waier where everything was taken away from them. Often they were also beaten up and sent home. When the winter set in, then the fleeing had to be stopped. It was almost impossible to leave the village and to escape across the border.

During the spring of 1946 again some families could flee again. Till now 28 families from Trohatin had left their homeland at dead of night under the most difficult conditions and in danger along with their children and with their belongings. They had fled across the border to Bavaria.

The new farm owners in the village, the Czechs, were not farmers by profession and did not know anything about managing a farm. They milked cows only whenever they required milk or only once a day and the spring sowing of 1946 was neglected. The Czechs were therefore very much dependent upon the German in the agriculture. Naturally the Germans went to their work only to alleviate their worst poverty. The food was scarce and so they could earn some crowns through their work and could get milk, bread and potatoes with that. During the spring of 1946 the Czechs could now prove their diligence for farming by doing spring sowing.

Spring had set in and it was blooming and there was nice smell all over in the fields and in the forest. And the day for evacuation for Trohatin had come. It was 24th July 1946. Everybody had to leave his flat early at 6 o'clock, and one could take along only 50kg luggage per person. They went to Ronsperg on horse-drawn carts. The elder people could sit in the carts and the younger ones had to walk down on foot. They made a stopover in the big hall of the inn "Hubertus". Luggage check was carried out there once again. The personal check was also done to find out whether they had any money or other valuables with them. At noon the people with their belongings were loaded in open trucks and brought to the Czech evacuation camp at Holleischen near Staab. After two days everything was loaded once again and the first transport to Bavaria rolled off. Before that everybody received a small sum of money.

The residents of Trohatin had reached the Czech - German border in Furth Im Wald at 7 o'clock in the morning on 26-07-1946 in cattle-driven carts, 30 people with luggage in each cart. The transport moved further and reached Nordbaden in Buchen district. A small portion of the transport was diverted to Bruchsal and spread in that area.

Now the major portion of the residents of Trohatin had been expelled. Six families were retained there as workers and had reached Germany only on 2nd November 1947. They were declared by Czechs as anti-fascist and were therefore permitted to stay there longer. The last family to leave its homeland was the blacksmith of Trohatin who could leave only in March 1948 at dead of night. The whole German population of Trohatin had now left their hometown, not a single person remained there. Four families had to go from the Wellowitz estate which was located in Trohatin County.

The much loved homeland where we were once born, where our forefathers and ancestors fulfilled their life work, where once there were beautiful farms, beautiful open fields, meadows and woods, the Germans had to leave everything forever. It was a difficult time for the people of Trohatin and for all Sudeten - Germans. Even then the people were happy that they could at least escape with their life. They let everything simply wash over them and often abandoned all their belongings. They were happy and had a sigh of relief as the day had come on which they were relieved of the harassments of the Czechs.

The time is marching on and injustice is not progressing well. It has already come to be known that most of the Czech farmers who were given former German farms were not anymore on these farms. They had left the German estates again on their own authority, some of them even landed up in a punishment camp.

The people of Trohatin are scattered today all over in the Federal Republic of Germany; some families are also living in East Germany. All met the same lot of refugees, but still all the people of Trohatin have kept themselves alive with the hope that one day better time would dawn once again and this hope was carried with great patience.

Donald Zwach
608 10th Ave. SE
Waseca, MN 56093
zwachd@platec.net

Rootsweb Email

Taken from the GBHS Rootsweb Electronic Mailing List

Ports and Emigration

by Karen Hobbs

There will be a world expo commemorating all the emigration from German ports during the year 2000. The Germans have been working on collecting information about people who went to America for several years and will have an emigration museum set up which will probably be a permanent exhibit.

After 1820 the Clipper ships were the fastest but they could not accommodate a lot of passengers. According to "Merchant Sail" the steam-assisted larger passenger ships began to appear after the Clippers had been in service for about a decade. When steam came in the Clippers' demise began.

A possible reason for popularity of Dutch ports before there were railroads was easy travel up the Rhine by boat to Holland. By the 1860s the RR network was pretty efficient and getting to the German ports became very easy and quite cheap.

By 1872 Bremen was a popular port for German emigrants. Most of the ships sailing then had steam-driven paddlewheels or stern screws along with sail. The sail pretty much disappeared during the next decade.

The last of the wars of German Unification ended in 1871, making the Prussians the rulers of all of Germany. At that time the Austrians may have still been dreaming of a war of revenge against Prussia for the defeat at Koniggratz in 1866 but within a few years of 1866 the Austro-Hungarian Empire (including Bohemia) and the Prussians were in a treaty alliance. I don't know for sure if there was any effort on the part of the Prussians to find Austrian deserters and draft dodgers trying to get out of Prussian ports but there is evidence that was the case.

That alliance between Prussia and Austria held the seeds of WW I.

The people who left from Bremen and other German ports: 1) had already done military service and had a passport or discharge certificate; 2) were exempt from military service and had a passport; 2) were not yet eligible for



military service -- under age 19-20 -- and had a passport or were on a whole-family passport; 3) had phony papers that lied about their draft status; 4) were falsely listed as members of someone else's family with draft-exempt age or other lies about draft status; 5) traveled as married couples -- married men were exempt from draft -- when in fact they were not; 6) stowed away or deserted from a ship's crew -- were not on the departure manifest of any ship docking on the day they cleared US immigration.

There are probably some other possibilities. The people who wanted to leave for whatever reason were pretty creative about finding ways to do so without attracting the attention of the authorities who might otherwise detain them. My g-grandfather Grosam is said to have disguised himself as a priest to get out of Bohemia (priests were exempt from the draft) while he was still in the army reserves after having served over 7 years of active duty in the army. He had no discharge certificate since he was mustered out into the reserves and that may be why he had to sneak out of Bohemia.

After 1868 the term of active duty was reduced from 8 years to 2-3 years but there was reserve duty necessary for up to 12 years total service. Depending on the kind of reserve duty a man faced he was free to come and go or he could not leave the country without having first fulfilled all the the annual weeks of training (ersatz Reserve) required for up to 12 years. Most men of means found ways to get out of serving at all and the burden fell on the poorest classes even though, in theory, there was a universal obligation to serve.

Emigrant Records

by Brian Bonner Mavrogeorge <Brian_Mavrogeorge@broder.com>

The Learning Company

Between 1820 and 1860, 20 percent of America's immigrant population was from Germany, and in the same period the largest group of new immigrants was Irish. Every step of the way through the process of immigrating to the United States, and in some instances to Canada, these people left records and documents. So, if you know where your gateway ancestor lived before emigrating, check for information in the "old country" localities.

--At the national level. In order to emigrate, the person may have had to prove he was released from service to a nobleman (letter of manumission) or that his military service was completed. Then he would have to apply for a passport or "permit to emigrate." These

records might have information about birth, residence, parentage, spouse, and children of the emigrant.

--At the local level. Many people emigrating had to use baptismal records to prove their identity. The local minister would issue a certified copy of their baptismal entry with their name, birth date/place, baptism date, and their parents' names. Often the minister entered into the register something like "went to the New World in 1740" next to their baptismal entry. Sometimes the emigrants simply received a letter that identified them as a member of a specific congregation. Estate and property settlement records in the "old countries" may give information regarding an emigrant's departure.

English court records include names of people who committed misdemeanor crimes and were sentenced to serve as the indentured servants of plantation owners and businessmen in the colonies. These owners and businessmen paid for the servants' passage. Many of those court records have been abstracted and published.

--At the ports. North American researchers often check passenger lists for arrivals at U.S. and Canadian ports. But remember that such lists were created at both ends of the journey. While not all lists have survived, a search for both can be worthwhile. In some instances government agents and real estate companies recruited workers, and they maintained lists and recorded the location of the lands they would settle. The lists sometimes contain the emigrant's residence at time of departure, the cost of the ticket, the name of the person who paid the fare, and the final destination.

According to the Immigration and Naturalization Tutor that accompanies Ultimate Family Tree <<http://www.uftree.com>>, there are more than 3,500 printed emigration sources (and some on CD-ROM). Use those indices as finding aids and to establish where your ancestors came from. Then systematically search that location for the records the emigrants left behind.

Previously published by RootsWeb Genealogical Data Cooperative, RootsWeb Review, Vol. 2, No. 5, 3 February 1999. You may visit RootsWeb's main Web page at <<http://www.rootsweb.com>>.

The Imperial Robotpatent of 1680

Das kaiserliche Robotpatent von 1680, Karl Stich, Ph.D., Heimat im B hmen, pp 45-46.
Translated by Karen Hobbs

The peasant uprising made it necessary to deal with the complaints of the rural population and the subject cities at the highest level. The result was the Imperial Robotpatent issued in Pardubitz on June 28, 1680. The emperor was staying in Pardubitz at the time because of the danger of plague elsewhere.

The Robotpatent is also known as the Pardubitzer Pragmatica (Pardubitz ordinance). It first expresses the emperor's great displeasure because of the extremely dangerous sundry mischief-makers and drum-beaters (agitators) among the subject Burgers and peasants against their local authorities. He had to resort to using official high royal channels to nip this mischief in the bud with armed force. Next he notes the example of the foremost ringleaders and other instigators and that their disregard for life and limb really deserved punishment and called on the respective Herrschaft (noble landlords) to administer such punishments even though Christian love, justice and natural fairness may make it seem too hard and severe.

He disposed of the main complaints of the subjects as follows:

1. Local authorities may not tax their subjects at a higher rate than that set by the Landtag (legislature). Any remainder should come from the authorities' (landlords') own purses.
2. Robot is limited to three days a week so that the subjects will have three days free to manage their own food and farm production. Exception is made -- and thus the door for abuse is left open -- for harvesting, haymaking, draining ponds and other unforeseen or dangerous situations which demand immediate action, and to such times that the authorities find it necessary to require robot for the stability of the dominion.
3. The subjects may not demand higher prices than usual for agricultural products such as beer, brandy, cheese, butter, lard, fish, cattle, poultry and such.
4. Inheritances may not be confiscated, especially when there are children left behind.

5. The authorities are not forbidden to require subjects to haul loads over distances greater than one day's travel but that time should be deducted from the required total of days of Robot.
6. Rents and fees will be based on and checked against the old Urbarien lists (Abgaben-verzeichnissen - delivery registers).
7. Discipline, prison and other punishments are not forbidden, however health should not suffer damage. Capital crimes should be punished according to the renewed ordinance of the supreme court.
8. The subject does not need to contribute more (anything extra) to guarantee the salaries of high officials and bureaucrats.
9. Robot on newly-purchased remote Herrschafts is forbidden except during harvest or other unforeseen situations when the dominion authority (landlord) deems help from the subjects to be necessary.
10. Because in many instances no general rule can be specified the emperor expects that the authorities will treat their subjects in a Christian and compassionate manner.
11. All that applies only to subjects who remain faithful and obedient, to those who demonstrate their true obedience by the manner in which they comply with their obligations and by behaving as obedient subjects of their local authorities.
12. The Royal Prokuratur will prosecute offenders lawfully and will administer punishment according to the circumstances given in the judicial finding.

At best, this Robotpatent eliminated excesses and pointed out the limits to authority but it did nothing to improve the peasants' situation. Unrest flared up again in many places before the end of 1680.

Oral, Written Histories Wanted

The GBHS is nearing completion of its work to open a research library in its home town of New Ulm, MN. Space has been rented, tables, chairs, bookcases, file cabinets, and other paraphernalia has been purchased. A copy machine has been generously donated by Patrick and Colleen Kretsch.

The GBHS has been accumulating research information in the form of family histories, Heimat books from the homeland, maps, periodicals, photos etc. Recently president Paul Kretsch recorded the first in a series of family histories with four members of the Haala/Seidl family which included the German-Bohemian dialect in word and song. These oral histories will be available at the research library for anyone wishing information contained on these tapes. A boom box and headphones will be provided.

I would like to ask that anyone who has family histories in any form on their German-Bohemian families to please send them to us for inclusion in the library. Written or oral histories, family group sheets, family trees, stories, tales, ships passenger lists, or photos. Anyone wishing to donate books pertaining to the history, culture, immigration, etc, of our ancestors that they believe would be of interest to our members are encouraged to do so. If your books have a dollar value they would be tax deductible.

Marriage

by Karen Hobbs

I found a review of a new book about the restrictions on marriage in Austria during the 19th century. The book only made a study of the Tirol and Vorarlberg regions but it seemed to indicate that the measures taken there were promoted by the Habsburg court to some extent and it is quite possible that something similar was going on in Bohemia because there is so much evidence that people delayed marriage until they could afford it.

The local authorities required a Gemeinde Ehekonsens before people could marry. Before 1848 the authority was the local nobleman and his agents. After 1848 there were other community authorities who took over this responsibility. The restrictions outlined in

this book continued in effect until 1920.

Anyone whose income did not seem to be predictable or secure would not be eligible to obtain the legal consent (marriage license). That included servants, journeymen and day laborers -- the least-affluent members of the community. The general population accepted the legal restrictions because they were already accustomed to social restrictions on marriage -- traditionally a couple would not marry until they knew they had a secure economic future.

During the 18th and 19th century weddings were comparatively few in number and took place at a fairly late age for both bride and groom -- many women were well over 30 before they married. Marriage also seemed to be restricted to the more affluent folk, the prosperous farmers who owned their own land or master craftsmen who were self-employed in a small business, or those who otherwise owned property or stood to inherit some and made a good living. Thus property brought social status and it also gave the owner of that property a better chance to marry.

Contradicting what one would expect when people marry relatively late in life, the book cites complaints of local authorities concerned with a rising population that includes too many poor people. During this period there was no coordinated community effort to assist needy people on a regular basis. There would be emergency assistance but it was generally up to their relatives and closest neighbors to care for the needy. The authorities attributed the growth of the numbers of poor to the fact that rising factory employment led many to think they could marry when those same people would have remained single before. Legal marriage restrictions were imposed as a means to control the growth of the population, particularly of the poorer classes.

The data for Tirol and Vorarlberg show that about 50% of all marriage petitions were denied by the local authorities. The couples involved usually accepted that as final because only about 10% ever applied again -- some of them as many as 8 times, always unsuccessfully. The few who appealed to a higher authority (Statthalterei) usually succeeded in overturning the finding (up to 90% of those who appealed won the appeal).

The word got around and after a while those who knew their application would be denied -- the disabled, journeymen and needy folk -- did not even bother to apply. The author of the book assumes that these people found "alternate" forms of marriage.

The earning power of a couple was the most significant factor and many of those who had a steady job (but were not self employed) as a journeyman, a skilled or semi-skilled worker or a lower level bureaucrat tried to qualify for marriage on the basis of the combined earning power of both husband and wife. Others would spend two or more years before making application for a consent trying to establish that they were eligible. They would announce that they were independent (self-employed) and would try to make it widely known that they had a house and other property or would soon inherit some. Sometimes they resorted to outright fakery to set themselves up as eligible for marriage.

Independent income from self employment was very important because the local authorities had the opinion that, by comparison, employment in a factory was not any guarantee of constant employment or stable income. The "elite" were also traditionally against modern innovation and they thought that a requirement for a legal consent that excluded the masses from the marriage privilege was a "bullwark against any change." Sometimes a father might use the legal standard to prevent his own son from taking a wife by informing the community authorities that he could not afford to marry -- and the father did not want to have to support his son and a daughter-in-law, too.

So marriage in Austria was a privilege, it was not a right. There were legal restrictions in place through 1920. There is a possibility that the applications for marriage consent are archived in local (county) archives.

When I recall how many unmarried hired hands and housemaids there were living with the farmers of southern Minnesota where I grew up, it seems that the tradition that only people with property or guaranteed income could marry was one that the immigrants brought with them when they came to America. However, once they were here, those who did marry seemed to marry at a much younger age than they would have in Bohemia (a man needed a woman to help him get a farm started).

The book is: Elisabeth Mantl: Heirat als Privileg. Wien: Verlag fuer Geschichte und Politik (Ph.D dissertation), Muenchen: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1997; 266 pages; ISBN: 3-486-56315-7

My comments above are based translation of extracts from a review of the book on the Habsburg list. I have not read the book itself and cannot guarantee that the information above is accurate.

Synopsis of the German-Bohemian Heritage Society

Board of Directors Meeting March 13, 1999

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m. in the basement of the South New Ulm Office Building, by president Paul Kretsch.

Discussion about the budget, and moving ahead with the cookbook project followed. A projected completion on the cookbook would be Fall of 1999, so that the cookbooks would be available for the October General Meeting and the Christmas selling season. The board committed to producing the new cookbook, with an October deadline. Funds will be allocated for marketing the cookbook and a first order of at least 1000 cookbooks will be made.

The board reviewed the membership cancellation list. Discussion regarding raising dues and developing a promotional membership drive followed. It was brought to the board's attention that mailing meeting announcements is costly. However, they produce a reasonable amount of people at the meetings. Cost and labor in the extra mailing is a concern. Therefore GBHS will only mail a postcard reminder for the Spring General meeting with a cost limit of \$50.

The Board worked on ways to make the Research Center needs accessible to the membership. Program ideas were discussed along with the possibility of having a Grand Opening. Paul would like to conduct oral interviews for historical information gathering one night a month. Shelley Gulden will start cataloging publications for the society. Don Brand will establish a schedule for library availability. Beginning in April the library will be open two Wednesdays and a Saturday morning per month. Peggy Tauer will write an article for the newspapers, promoting the Research Center.

Bob Paulson requested funds from the library budget to purchase three books, A Dictionary of Parishes in Czechoslovakia, Vital Statistics of the Western Border Area, and the Oberpfalzer, Bayerischer and German-Bohemian Translated History.

Respectfully Submitted by
Charlotte Kastanek

GBHS Officers and Board Members

1999 Officers

President

Paul Kretsch
311 Linden Street
New Ulm, Minnesota 56073-1519
Telephone: (507) 354-2763

Vice President

Gerald Gulden

Treasurer

George Portner

Secretary

Charlotte Kastanek

GBHS Board of Directors

Board Member Emeritus

LaVern J. Rippley

Social Activities

Don Brand

Social Activities Chair, Budget Committee

Pat Kretsch

Newsletter Editor, Library Chair, Research, Membership

Louis Lindmeyer

Research Chair, Internet Chair, Program Chair, Education, Library

Robert Paulson

Sales Chair, Membership Chair, Treasurer Asst., Budget

Angeline Portner

Publicity Chair

Peggy Tauer

Hospitality Chair, Social Activities

Adeline Wilfahrt

Education Chair

Don Zwach

Budget Committee

Patrick Eckstein

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

One Hundred Tales from Sudetenland

Translated and Edited by Karen Hobbs

One hundred folk tales (fairy tales) translated from the original German text *Hundert Sagen aus den Sudetenl ndern* 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

Duetsch-B hmische K che

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

Ring bound, soft cover, 88 pages of recipes. \$9.00

The Whoopee John Wilfahrt Dance Band, His Bohemian-German Roots

by LaVern J. Rippley. \$6.00

German-Bohemian Immigrant Monument Book - A souvenir booklet of the monument dedication by the GBHS. \$5.00

Music

German-Bohemian Heritage Singers, Preserving the Heritage cassette tape. A wonderful array of German and German-Bohemian dialect songs \$9.00

Preserving the Heritage II cassette tape. An encore performance features even more toe tapping and heart warming songs in the German and German-Bohemian flavor. Add it to your collection today. . \$10.00

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

**Oberpfalzer, Bayerischer
and German-Bohemian Translated History**

Recently discovered history, and now translated into English, about the border villages of Furth-im-Wald, Vollmau, Taus, Tachau, Pfraumberg Neumark, Ceska Kubice, Eschlkam, Heiligen Blut, Dangelsried, Klopffleinried, Ferner Warzenried, Stachesried, Ritzenried, Grafenried, Kleinaign, Cham ,Kleinaign, Eschlkam, Neukirchen,Pilsen, Prag, Warzenried, Atzlern, Eisenhammer, Eisenstein, Prenath and Prant is now available. The general history of this region covers a time period from the 6th Century AD to 1989 and is good background information with many family names mentioned. Included in the package are the original German documents with the English translation. A map of the researched area is also included with the package. If you're interested and would like a copy of this translated history please send your \$25.00 check to:

Thomas H. Semelbauer
4786 Thistle Mill Court
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49006
Tsemelbaue@aol.com

Addresses

German-Bohemian Heritage Society
P.O. Box 822, New Ulm, MN 56073-0822

E-Mail

Society & Newsletter:
lal@mnlic.net

Research Information:

rpaulgb@skypoint.com

GBHS Home Page On The World Wide Web:

http: //www.rootsweb.com/~gbhs/

Newsletter Deadline

The next issue of the *Heimatbrief* will be published in September. Deadline for articles is August 1, 1999.

Magicians, Sorcerers and Alchemists in the Bohemian Forest.

Taken from the Glaube und Heimat, Jan 1993

Over the ages there have been those who took shameless advantage of the basic beliefs of different peoples. Whoever thinks that only the lower classes would be victimized are badly mistaken.

Personal power and greed for wealth blinded many to the facts of reality. Making "noble" metals from base material was the greatest desire of many people. Accordingly, the business of alchemists took on an unscientific and improbable importance.

During the 16th century Alchemy was so widespread in the Bohemian countryside that there were very few castles or manors without a smoke-blackened alchemy laboratory within. The house of Rosenberg was one of the customers of alchemists seeking the manufacture of artificial gold. In 1563, Wilhelm von Rosenberg, was already allied with the Italian architect, Antonio Michele, who practiced alchemy and had his eye on the well-filled Krummau [Czesky Krumlov?] treasury. A laboratory was built for him in the rear enclosure of the Krummau castle. Soon one of his comrades appeared, Doctor Leonhard Bychperger from Erbach, and Wilhelm von Rosenberg made another alchemy laboratory available for him in Prachatiz in 1566. Eventually there was a third laboratory in the Wittingzau Monastery. In 1574 the alchemist Christoph from Hirschberg came to Krummau in 1574. He seemed to know how to succeed, but it was not too long before he was found out as a cheat. A Roman, Claudius Syrrus, reports that he had the recommendation of a Bohemian baron, a W. von Rosenberg. He was followed by Daniel Prandtner, Doctor Dee who was an Englishman, Edward Kelley, a sorcerer named Jeremias, & Bawor Rodowsky von Hustiran. The latter lost his entire personal fortune on alchemy experiments and now sought to make a living as a teacher of the secret arts of manufacturing gold.

The sorceress Salomena Schleinpflug was working actively in Wittingau for a long time. The above-mentioned Christoph von Hirschberg baited Baron von Rosenberg with the statement that he possessed two great secrets. Within a month he could transform silver into gold and for each silver Mark he could produce three pieces of pure gold. The regent immediately gave him 6000 Dukats to purchase the secret formula. Von Rosenberg also believed his assurances that manufactured gold would grow when planted like agricultural crops and gave him an additional 80 Dukats. Hirschberg immediately planted the 80 Dukats in the gardens of Krummau and watered them daily with a fluid concoction. However, during one of the subsequent nights, Hirschberg "harvested the crop" and disappeared, never to be seen again. His credulity also lost von Rosenberg 300,000 gold gulden (a large coin) paid to the Englishman, Kelley. In the end the house of Rosenberg was robbed of a total of about 8 million [guilders] by various alchemists.

After the Regent's death all that remained of their formerly immense wealth was about 1,600,000 gulden. His heir and successor, Peter Wok von Rosenberg, for lack of money was ultimately forced to sell the Herrschaft to Kaiser Rudolf II for 1,000,000 gulden.

German-Bohemian Heritage Singers Dates of Performances

June 14, 1999
Concert in German Park
New Ulm, MN

July 10, 11, 16, 17, 1999
Heritagefest
New Ulm, MN

July 26, 1999
Concert in the Park
Hutchinson, MN

July 31, 1999
Centennial
Searles, MN

August 14, 1999
GBHS Picnic

August 22, 1999
George Portner Jr. Reception
New Ulm, MN

August 28, 1999
Stiftungsfest
Young America, MN

September 24, 1999
Minnesota Business Educators
New Ulm, MN

October 2, 3, 9, 10, 1999
Oktoberfest
New Ulm, MN

Memorials In Memory of

Veronica Schneider
from Eleanor Kretsch

Burton Olson
from Mr. & Mrs. Howard Binder

Rose Paulson
from Paul & Janice Kretsch, Raymond & Peggy Tauer,
George & Angie Portner

Margaret Bastian
from Darrell & Donna Asleson, Elaine & Edwin Stueber

Edward Frank
from Jerry & Carol Waibel, Paul & Janice Kretsch

Avona Domeier

from Mariann Treml, Paul & Janice Kretsch

Janet Helget

from Randy & Monica Wenninger

Wendolin Helget

from Eleanor Kretsch

Selma Rose Tietel

from Mary Ann & Ron Kaezmarek, Mrs. Viola Johnson,
Herb & Linda Tietel, Alice & Gary Bates,
Suzanne & Steve Sampsell, Stephanie Johnson,
David & Nancy Michaels

Oleta Tauer

from Randy & Monica Wenninger

Herbert Altmann

from Roger & Ann Poss

Stanley Wiltscheck

from Eleanor Kretsch

Joseph Portner

from Eleanor Kretsch

Recorded by Angie Portner

German-Bohemian Heritage Society Non-Profit Org.
P.O. Box 822 U.S. Postage Paid
New Ulm, MN 56073-0822 Permit No. 54
New Ulm, MN
56073-0822

Join Us
Membership Form For The German-Bohemian Heritage Society
Family Membership \$10.00 per Year in the U.S. or \$15.00 Foreign

Name _____ **Phone #** _____

Address _____ **Email Address** _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Please list surnames you are researching including geographical locations. (Optional)

#