

# *German-Bohemian Heritage Society Newsletter*

## The Heimatbrief

Vol XI No. 2 June 2000

**Celebrating the GBHS' 15th Anniversary**

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### **Coming Events**

**June 10, 2000**

**Board of Directors Meeting  
GBHS Research Center**

**July 15, 16, 22**

**German-Bohemian Heritage Singers  
Perform at Heritagefest 2000**

**August 19, 2000**

**GBHS Pot Luck Picnic  
Herman Heights Park, New Ulm  
Eat at 12:00 noon  
Performance by GBHS Singers**

# GBHS Officers and Board Members

## 2000 Officers

### President

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Don Zwach

### Budget Committee

Patrick Eckstein

Front cover screened photo of the German-Bohemian Immigrant Monument located in German Park, New Ulm.

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We encourage contributions to the "Heimatbrief" in the form of articles, letters, notices, or free queries. Advertising is not accepted. Preferred formats for articles are Mac or PC word processing files with disc and hard copy, email, or typed pages. Short letters or queries may be neatly handwritten. The editor reserves the right to edit contributions for length, substance, and grammar. The German-Bohemian Heritage Society is not responsible for accuracy, errors, or omissions in articles submitted by others. Send contributions to Louis Lindmeyer, GBHS, P.O. Box 822, New Ulm, MN, 56073-0822. Or email to [lal@mnic.net](mailto:lal@mnic.net).

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# Anniversary Celebration Huge Success

The GBHS celebrated its 15th anniversary on April 9th, 2000 with over 250 people in attendance at the Holiday Inn German Rivers Room beautifully decorated by Colleen Kretsch and LuAnn Lindmeyer. One of the busiest corners in the room seemed to be the "culture corner" coordinated by Gerald Gulden and Robert Paulson. The display included books, maps, research information, photographs, and continual video viewing of historical information produced by Robert Paulson, and videos of trips to the homeland.

A very talented Michael Cwach from Yankton, SD, played accordion and dudlsack to the delight of the audience. Robert Paulson joined in with his dudlsack for a dudlsack duo.

Continual concertina music was provided by seven different concertina players including John E. Gag, Lynda Schroeder, 14 year old Dane Moldan, George Maha, Denis Domeier, Allen Mohr, and Hilary Mohr. Accompanying them was drummer Mike Moldan and bass player Alan Saffert. The musical entertainment was coordinated by Patrick Kretsch and Hilary Mohr with Hilary acting as M.C. John E. Gag gave a brief presentation about the history and make-up of the concertina and then dazzled the crowd with his masterful playing techniques. A huge thank you to all the musicians who put on a wonderful performance and to Pat Kretsch and Hilary Mohr for their efforts in putting together a great musical afternoon.

President Paul Kretsch and GBHS founder Robert Paulson each gave a presentation detailing the history and accomplishments of the organization including the German-Bohemian Immigrant Monument, the GBHS newsletter "The Heimatbrief", four trips to the homeland, and the GBHS Heritage Singers. Many thank-you's went out to past and present board of directors as well as to our Bohemian King and Queen, Kurt and Ella Eisen. Past board of director and current president of the New Ulm City Council, Daniel Beranek, also gave a talk praising the work of the GBHS including the fund raising and erecting of the German-Bohemian Immigrant Monument in 1991. The afternoon concluded with a performance by the German-Bohemian Heritage Singers.

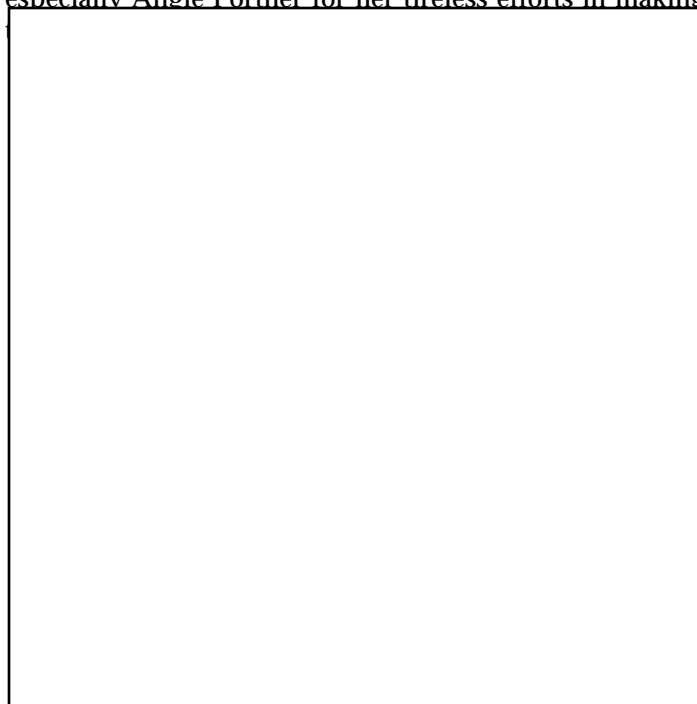
A thank you goes out to all of those who helped with preparations for the event including the staff of the Holiday Inn. It was truly an grand day celebration for the GBHS. One that will not be soon forgotten.

# Family History Conference A Grand Achievement

If a Grand Achievement Award were to be handed out it should be placed directly in the hands of GBHS founder Robert Paulson for his efforts in spearheading the GBHS Family History Conference.

A packed house would be an understatement when describing the turnout for the conference held April 8th. Participants from as far away as California flooded the conference rooms at the Brown County Historical Society and the New Ulm Public Library for a day filled with fifteen presentations on German-Bohemian, German, and Norwegian family history research, genealogy, and computer and internet research information.

The event was co-sponsored by the Brown County Historical Society, the Germanic Genealogical Society, Martin Luther College of New Ulm, and the New Ulm Public Library. The GBHS would like to thank all of those who worked for the success of the conference especially Angie Portner for her tireless efforts in making



GBHS Founder Robert Paulson (L) and Robert Froetschl

(R) from Germany pose during the 15th Anniversary Celebration.

## Our Readers Write

I hope everyone in the GBHS read Susan Muehlhans-Karides' article on the German-Bohemians in Milwaukee which came out in the March edition of the GBHS newsletter "Heimatbrief". All I can say is WOW. A few years ago she told me she was going to list all of the GB names she could find in the Milwaukee Parishes. I thought that is an undertaking that I would like to take but I couldn't imagine looking through all those records. Susan did. What a genealogical resource she put together.

THANKS  
Bob Liebl

---

Dear Paul, I read your article in the March edition of the "Heimatbrief" about the nuances and the differences between "the dialect," German, and English with interest and enjoyment. You put into words what I have come to understand about the three languages, but did not know how to express, even to myself! I write short, light hearted articles that I email to the younger generation: articles about everyday occurrences, memories, history, and values. Your article has given me an idea for another topic that I have touched on occasionally: that of our linguist heritage. May I quote your well-put statement, (with credit, of course!) .. Out of these three the dialect.....does not use words that can be easily used in that manner."

What a perfect explanation of the humor and the whining aspects of these languages! (now I know why English is the language of the work place!) In your opinion, does my Uncle Leroy Gulden speak "the dialect?" Would my Aunt Melvina Janski or my Dad, Jrwin Kastanek? Is it proper to call it, "Bamish?" You don't use that word in your article, but that is what my mom called it. And finally, how would you say this sentence in the dialect, "Will you behave yourself if you sit here?" (next to me) Thank you so much! I look forward to hearing the singers at the GBHS picnic this summer....I get two weekends off each summer...and that will be one of them....that is how much I have enjoyed those picnics. Oh, and I am going on the heritage tour in June 2001.

Colleen Kastanek

### Paul Kretsch Responds

Dear Colleen,  
I'm delighted that you found my article enjoyable and I have no problem with you quoting the statement you described.

I have met your father a couple of times, but I have no idea what languages besides English he speaks. I really don't know your Uncle LeRoy or your Aunt Melvina and therefore can't answer your question as to what dialect they may be speaking. They should all come with you to the GBHS picnic and that would give us an opportunity to visit some more. Not only would it answer this dialect question, but it would also give me the chance to know all of you better.

You asked if it was proper to call the dialect "Bamish". In German this word is written Böhmisches and would be pronounced the same as what you wrote if you used a long sounding a. I don't feel it's my place to be telling people what they should be calling the dialect, but I do feel it is important that I try and explain why this language does have different titles and then you can decide what you would like to have it called. I think you may discover that what it is called depends on who is saying it or who you are talking to. For example, our friends and relatives who were expelled from their homeland and now live in different parts of Germany don't like to use Böhmisches or any words relating to Bohemia when referring to their homeland. They refer to it as the Egerland or when saying it in the dialect its called Egerländ. When they are speaking in German and are referring to the dialect they use words like Egerländisch and when speaking in the dialect it would be pronounced Egerländisch.

As You know, after the First World War, names like Egerland and Sudetenland were introduced into the area that was earlier known only as Bohemia. Let's just say this was one way of distinguishing where the Germanic type people lived in the newly formed country called Czechoslovakia. When our German-Bohemian ancestors came to this country it was before there was a Czechoslovakia, and also before those areas called the Sudetenland and the Egerland existed. They knew their homeland as the Böhmalnd and they called their language Böhmisches. The dialect speakers in this area still call it that to this day. Those who didn't speak the dialect called it Böhmisches and that also remains fairly much the way it is today. Remind me the next time I see you in person and I'll pronounce these different titles for you.

Both the titles Böhmisches and Böhmisches translated into English mean Bohemian and most of our English dictionaries describe Bohemian as a Czech language. This is the reason I like calling the dialect the German-Bohemian dialect. It isn't a Czech language and shouldn't be mistaken as representing one. It is a German dialect that was developed and spoken by Germanic type people living in an area known as Bohemia. This same reasoning was used when we chose the title for our organization. I'm sure you were not expecting this dissertation when you asked the question, but it appeared you may not be aware of some of these things and I felt it was important you

heard about them.

The sentence you want me to say in the dialect reads: "Will you behave yourself if you sit here?" (next to me). I will write my answer in the dialect and the next time we meet we can compare notes. You won't find a lot of the words in any German dictionary. It will be interesting to find out how you are going to go about deciphering what it is I'm writing. As a matter of fact I'm going to give you two sentences instead of one. I interpret your sentence as being said by a mother who is asking her child for some reassurance. This is how the mother could say it in the dialect.. *Wiaist Du schöi(n) brav sa, wennst dau neba Mie sietzt?* If the father would be saying this he would probably be a little more demanding and it could be said like this: *Du mousst ja brav sa wennst dau neba Mie sietz'n wüllst!*

I think I have covered everything. Maybe I raised more questions than I answered, but if that is the case please write and I'll try it again. See you at the picnic Colleen!

Sincerely,  
Paul Kretsch

-----  
Dear GBHS,  
Thank you for making so much history available to the membership. Enclosed you will find a donation to the GBHS Research Library.

Phil & Lee Leonard  
New Ulm, MN

## German-Bohemian Heritage Tour June 9 - 23, 2001

**A Chance Of A Lifetime.....**

**Don't Miss It!!!!**

The German-Bohemian Heritage Society (GBHS) is sponsoring a tour to your "Heimatland" in Bohemia. Special features include visiting the birth place of your ancestors in the beautiful Böhmerwald and celebrating at the Bischofteinitz Heimattreffen (Homeland Reunion of the County Bischofteinitz), where fellow German-Bohemians gather in the German border village of Furth im Wald to renew friendships and talk about old times in the Heimat.

Reservations are already coming in at a brisk pace. Space is limited, so don't miss this chance of a lifetime. Complete details are contained in the brochure included with this newsletter. Come join us in an adventure!

Bob Paulson, Tour Leader & GBHS Founder

## The Market Community of Weißensulz

*Originally written by H. Herzog . Translated by Bob  
Liebl and Karen Hobbs 1/1/2000*

Weißensulz with almost 2000 inhabitants was the second largest settlement in the County of Bischofteinitz and it was under the jurisdiction of Hostau. As time passed the place developed into a sort of moderate municipal and economic mid-point on the upper Radbusa River. In more modern times it became the center of education for the surrounding vicinity following the construction of a public school at Nuebau. This helped in the general development of the area.

The main street ran almost 2km in a northwesterly direction through the wide valley of the old Wald and Weiß branches of the Radbusa River. The town covered 38.68 hectares, and had 352 dwellings, a large manor house, 42 farms of varied sizes, a large Meierhof with the Manor House, a modern brewery and malt house, a needle point factory and sewing school, a town square, gardens, streets and lanes. The farmland belonging to the town of Weißensulz included 720 hectares of fertile fields, 268 Hektar of community meadows and small pastures, and 192 Hektar of damp forests.

Weißensulz lies on the County Road between Eisendorf and Heiligenkreuz at the point where the stream flowing south from Possigkau joins the Radbusa River. The local railroad line Tachau-Taus provides another mode of transport. The highest elevations are the *Galgenberg* (a mountain) in the north and the *Kirchenberg* in the southeast. The community-owned land is bordered by open fields that belong to Possigkau and Zemschen in the north, to Pabelsdorf, Zetschin and Heiligenkreuz in the east, to Wistersitz in the south, and to Schmolau in the west. On the west there is a portion bordering another section of land belonging to the market community of Possigkau.

**Weißensulz has Three Bridges** 1. A bridge built in 1703-1723, which the villagers thought was very

expensive at the time, was a customs-collection point. It is 44 meters long and 7 meters wide. It represents a rare old example of bridge-building technique and is protected as a historical monument.

2. The Pfraumbach bridge (over a stream named the Pfraumbach) with its *Bleier über*. (Could mean lead roof or lead covered). The first bridge was built over a ford in the stream in 1820. It was a part of the county road system and was first built with stone pylons and a wooden superstructure. The stone walls on today's bridge were constructed in 1875. It carries the inscription: "WBK MDCCXXT" which means that it was named for: Wenzel Baron Kotz 1820. (The Baron of the area).

3. The site of the bridge near Fuchsn was first used as a ford after 1810. In 1877 a footbridge was built and the present bridge was constructed in 1810. The earliest mention of the place-name of Weißensulz is in a document from the Kladrau monastery dated 1121. It reads: *Quidam Teutonici infra terrnicos Boemorum in silva, ad quam itur per villam Bela, in praerupta rupe aedificabant castrum*. It means: "A German constructed a castle on a high rock (Pfraumberg) which can be reached by way of the village of Bela".

The chronicler (history scribe) Cosmas, mentions that the way to the Pfraumberg castle would pass through the village of Bela. It should also be mentioned here that an ancient cart road led from Regensburg, past the Schönthal monastery and through the valley of the Schwarzach (a stream which has its source in Bohemia). It then proceeded past Rötz into the Weißbachtal (that stream is called the Radbusa today), and on past Weißensulz where it became the *Burgweg* (road to the castle) to Pfraumberg castle. The same route was exactly described by Bishop Otto von Bamberg, who took that way to the Kladrau monastery in order to give the Sacrament of the Dead to King Wratislav.

The town belonged to the Bishopric of Bamberg during the earliest Christian period. Later it was under the Bishopric of Regensburg and became a part of the Prague Bishopric in 1073. The village of Bela is first mentioned in the year 1121, and becomes Weißensulz before the end of the twelfth century. It appears as Weiß-Sulz and Weißensultz. In a document dated 1331 it is named Weißensultz. Other documents dated 1436, 1487, and 1596 call it Weißensulz, and after 1600 it is always referred to as Wei ensulz or Czech Bela. Since both Bela and Weiss mean "white" both place-names point to the same origin. The Radbusa was often referred to as *Weissenwasser* (white water) or *Weisbach* (white brook) and that name is still sometimes used by local dialect today. The name derives from the numerous glistening small stones that lie along the ground. Thus the place on the Weissbach known as Weissensulz and the Czech place-name Bela are one and the same. Biela comes from bily, i.e. weiss - white. Sulz comes from the word sulzen, which means marshy.

One old document cites the marshy ground there. It says: "The ditch has filled with slow-moving water and has become marshy". The *Ursiedlung*, the oldest part of the town settled during the 11th century, is located near the school and is recognized today by the *Geibelseiten rudum* (round cattle barns) in the ten oldest farmyards.

Weißensulz was a forest frontier station for the royal castle, Pfraumberg. It belonged to the Choden district, with special rights and privileges, along with 8 other villages that were under protection of Pfraumberg -- Heiligenkreuz, Zetschin, Zemschen, Pössigkau, Molgau, Wonetitz, Wusleben and Hesseldorf. The king ordered this arrangement because he felt it would strengthen the Pfraumberg castle garrison and make it easier to defend. The *Galgenberg* (gallows mountain) near Weißensulz still has traces of the *Richtstaat* (a place of executions) ordered by Choden the courts. These eight villages belonging to the community of Weißensulz had a population of 1000 whose main task was to protect the border. Because of this, they held a special position with special rights and privileges and were considered to be free farmers.

Weißensulz first expanded around 1340 under Count Frenzlin of Luxemburg who occupied the castle at that time. At that time, groups of Germans from the Oberpfalz built 10 new farmsteads near the present upper marketplace. Following that they built five additional farmsteads in an area they had previously avoided, the Weissbach flood plain on the lower edge of the market place. They cleared the area for their fields to the north in the direction of Pabelsdorf. Weißensulz was already an important settlement of 25 farmsteads back when there was only a chapel there and before the present church was built. The wooden houses with thatched roofs built during this period of expansion suffered the furies of the Hussite wars of 1429-1435. During those wars Weißensulz and all the Choden villages were burned down and the people and cattle were driven away. The need and misery in the Pfraumberg area was so great that 13 villages joined together in a plea for assistance from Kaiser Sigismund on 13 May 1437.

In a letter dated February 10, 1436 the Kaiser expanded the hereditary rights and privileges to all the villages in the community of Weißensulz as compensation for their loyalty, suffering and frequent losses from fires during the Hussite wars. From that date their farms held the status of "freeholdings" and were not subject to any fees or other compensation payable to the occupant of Pfraumberg Castle and their wives and children could inherit the land.

As far back as 1331 King Johann of Luxemburg cited both the Germans and Chodens living in the area in a "*Freiheitsbrief*" (Declaration of Freedom) saying that

both were loyal servants of the Holy Roman Emperor.

The Choden people of the *Grenzwald* (the frontier forestlands) were subjects of the Counts of Pfraumberg who, with the King's permission, occupied Pfraumberg castle and the royal *Kammergut* (a large estate owned by the King and administered by the court chamberlain -- Kammerer -- or his agents) until 1596. A different noble family ruled the area between 1454 and 1596. The people and farmers of Weißensulz suffered under the oppressive rule of the Schwamberg family during that period while the *Herrschaft* (noble estate) of Pfraumberg castle was deeply in debt. For 142 years they were treated as hereditary serfs without regard for their hereditary rights and privileges as free men. The worst years under the rule of the Schwambergs were 1560-1592 when there were episodes of violence and riots. They finally won freedom from servitude and restoration of earlier rights and privileges in 1596 after the sub-division and sale of the huge royal *Kammergut*.

The patronymic period during which the estate was known by the name of the noble family to whom it belonged followed. The first *Besitzer* (owner), who purchased the villages of Weißensulz, Wistersitz, Fuchsberg, and Hammersbrunn (today's Neubau), was named Hyronimus Buchfelder von Hennersdorf. He built 13 small wooden houses for those who would work new farms in a clearing known as "Schmale Aue". That settlement later became known as Schmolau and another cluster of seven wooden houses in the Rosengarten meadow became today's Rosendorf.

Wolf Joachim Laminger of Albenreut, who already owned Heiligenkreuz, bought the villages of Weißensulz, Bistritz-Wistersitz, Fuchsberg, and Hammersbrunn-Neubäu including 28,904 *Sail* (an old measure of unknown value) of trees for wood products in the *Grenzwald* (frontier forest) for about 7500 Taler, in 1596.

According to documents found in the archives of the



Heiligenkreuz and the above-mentioned villages were owned by the citizen of Prague, Buchfelderin von Hennersdorf (a woman) and first passed to ownership by the noble Laminger family in 1600.

Because of the great difficulties that preceded that sale the once-royal subjects and free farmers became serfs subject to the *Herrschaft* of the Lamigers and liable for *Robot* duties (compulsory labor), deliveries of produce and other payments to the landlord. The frontier forest, which they had previously guarded so faithfully, was divided into sections and much of it became the private property of the *Herrschaft*. Wolf Joachim von Laminger took away the fields the farmers had cleared for the *Meierhof* (large farm) which he built for himself in 1614.

The *Meierhof* deprived the farmers of easy access to their more-remote fields. They were not allowed to pass through the noble lord's farmland. Von Lamiger also demolished five small farmhouses in the middle of the village and built a huge *Herrenhaus* (manor) there called "Burggrafenhaus" along with a brewery and other necessary buildings for the *Meierhof*. The manor house still bears an inscription for the year 1614 and the crest of the von Lamingers.

The people of Weißensulz had to provide compulsory labor for construction of these buildings and at that point in time, they were bound to provide *Robot* in the Laminger's fields. The Lamigers turned Protestant during the Reformation and compelled their subjects to take up the same faith. In 1624 they became Catholic once again.

A new owner/landlord, Count Zucker von Tamfeld, arrived in Heiligenkreuz in 1684 and took over the *Gut* (a type of *Herrschaft* that is used specifically for production of crops lumber, etc.) and managed the property in Heiligenkreuz and Weißensulz between 1684-1792. The

first woman landlord was the Countess Anna Theresia Zucker von Tamfeld, a just and industrious woman who expanded the chapel so the monks of the *Kladrau* monastery could say Holy Mass there. She also enlarged the old school house

Heiligenkreuz *Schloss* (manorhouse of a nobleman), and took care of the teacher's salary.

The road was often threatened by floods during the spring so the Countess undertook construction of a bridge over the Radbusa in 1703. It was designed to resemble the *Karlsbrücke* (Charles Bridge in Prague). The countess married a Count Metternich in her 3rd marriage (1678-1713). She died childless after which the estate passed to Count von Zucker (1713-1781).

Kaiserin (Empress) Maria Theresa ordered that all houses receive numbers in 1770. As a result Weißensulz ended up with 138 house numbers. Franziska Katharina Zucker von Tamfeld was married to Kotz von Dobrz, the *Oberbeamter* (highest civil authority) of the Klattau Court district. Thus the descendants of the Barons Kotz von Dobrz became owners of our Herrschaft. The (new) Countess took an active and unselfish interest in the property. Under her patronage was set up a community threshing floor and built an oil mill. Weißensulz became a parish. Her son, Baron Wenzel Kotz (1799-1857) took over the Herrschaft from his mother. He used hand- and *Zug-Robot* (compulsory labor with draft animals) from the villages of the Herrschaft to construct the road from Eisendorf to Heiligenkreuz between 1818 and 1820. A second stone bridge also arose. The Barons Kotz were devout Catholics and provided faithful patronage to their subjects and acted as financial supporters of the school. They were progressive lords of the manor and taught progressive methods, and ways to improve livestock, etc. to the farmers of their dominion, on how to improve production.

His Excellence Wenzel Kotz (1883-1912) followed Baron Christian Kotz (1857-1883) and the last Baron Kotz von Dobrz occupied the estate from 1912 until the expulsion. The records of what the people of Weißensulz paid or how much compulsory labor they served during one year under the old Robot system is still in the archives of the Herrschaft. Innkeepers, millers and Jews did not have to provide any form of Robot; they had to pay cash instead. In 1848 Robot was abolished. It was replaced by a system of land, business, and income taxes payable to the tax authority.

The trade traffic between Bohemia and Bavaria was significant; most of it by high covered wagons with two teams of draft animals, which could only take certain routes past Pfraumberg or Klentsch to cross the border. Other routes were too difficult or they were obstructed (too narrow for the large wagons). The von Lamiger men sought more commercial traffic by improving the roads between Heiligenkreuz, Weißensulz, and Eisendorf. This also sent more customs collections to Weißensulz and they built a customs house there for both small and large customs transactions.

In the 1678 there was a declaration naming Herren Maut as the oldest man in the village of Weißensulz!

The first letter carriers were regular cart drivers. In 1775 the first Post Wagons carried mail between Pilsen and Klentsch by way of Teinitz. Bishofteinitz had a Post Office after that date while prior to that the nearest Post was in Pilsen. A runner collected the mail along a given route every day and delivered all letters to the office of the *Herrschaftliche Amt* (manorial office) in Heiligenkreuz and Weißensulz. On Sundays the *Amtsdiener* (manorial clerk) called those who received letters to come to the office to pick them up. The old teacher of Weißensulz, Stelzer (from 1806-1843), read many of the letters and also wrote the answers because many of the inhabitants could not read.

The first official mail carrier who went to Teinitz daily was Joseph Lessner (1789-1831) from Heiligenkreuz. About 1850 Hostau became the Post Office for Weißensulz. Daily the elderly Herr Lang (nicknamed *Grobnschuster* or known as Grobnschuster to local folk) carried the mail and delivered it to Hostau. Upon the recommendation of Lord Kanonikus Zenefels (who was born in house number 59 in the Schlögelgasse) established a Post Office in Weißensulz and Eisendorf on January 1, 1872. The first Postmaster was Andreas Martinka (and the first Post Office was in his residence).

A two-horse wagon carried the mail back and forth between Hostau, Weißensulz, Eisendorf, Eslarn. A rural mail carrier from Weißensulz Post Office began to serve surrounding villages in 1873. He had different routes on different days of the week. A telegraph office opened on December 14, 1891 and a telephone office with ten lines opened on September 11, 1911. The Post Office was transferred from the Martinka private residence to the mayor's office during 1925.

There was already an ambitious effort to build a railroad system since 1865 but negotiations to build the Taus, Weißensulz, Tachau line (Taus - Tachau by way of Weißensulz) that is still in use today, first began in 1905. The first train arrived in Weißensulz on August 1, 1910. It was all decorated for the occasion and was cause for a big celebration. Weißensulz contributed 55000 kronen as its capital share for railroad track construction. The state required a quit-claim deed for that sum when the railroad became a state-owned enterprise in 1924. Weißensulz already had a community school in 1673. There was a little wooden schoolhouse next to the church. In 1780 the children in attendance came from:

Weißensulz	145 children
Schmolau	39 children
Barbtanz	2 children
Abdeclerei	
Neuhof	
Schafhültte	10 children
Schleifen	
Zetschin	8 children

Czernahora 14 children  
218 Children

In 1790 the countess Zucker-von Tamfeld built a new wooden schoolhouse from the ground up at the site of the old one. That schoolhouse burned during the big fire on September 1, 1826, and the Herrschaft then built a larger school of masonry on the same site. That building served as an einklassige (one-class school) with teacher and assistant until 1892. In 1800 there were 216 children attending the school, and there were 330 in 1857.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The Austrian schools system had one-class, (*einklassige*), two-class (*zweiklassige*) and three-class (*dreiklassige*) schools. This passage refers to a "*funfkassige*" school in 1892 -- first time I have seen that

reference and I wonder if it represents change in how the schools were organized over time. I have never learned what distinguished one from the other except that the more "classes" the higher the level of teaching, i.e., an einklassig school may be an elementary school while a dreikassig one includes the upper grades

similar to high school. The word "Class" may translate as "category" meaning a school is in a given category for the level its pupils reach. It is hard to believe that a single teacher and assistant could handle 330 pupils! I know that if a school had two or three classes it also had more teachers. I believe I have read somewhere that students were "promoted" between the first class and the second class so I assume that going into the third class also required some sort of promotion. The text uses "mit Lehrer" not "ein Lehrer" so there is a possibility there was more than one teacher depending on how you want to interpret that word. ) KH

Pupils from Schmolau, Barentanz, Neuhof and Schleffen no longer attended the school at Weißensulz after 1803 and the same is true for pupils from Zetschin and Czernahoras between 1880-1881. A schoolmaster named Weber wrote to the authorities in 1850 requesting that a second class be established at the school because it was no longer possible for only two teachers to instruct 315 students. At first they wanted to add a second story to the schoolhouse but they decided to rent the big wooden building that was formerly used as the manorial customs

house instead. A forest owned by the Baron was involved in the negotiations and required a prolonged legal action against him before Weissensulz was finally able to dedicate the school with the second class on May 8, 1871.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: It is hard to believe they waited almost 70 years. Also can't believe the old customs house just stood there unused all that time. I wonder if it was still a customs house until the rebellion of 1848 and what they are trying to say here is that they could not agree on building a second story onto the old schoolhouse prior to 1848 and when the customs house became available after 1848 they decided to try to get that.) KH

In 1878 the school added a third class. The second class section used the remodeled teacher's residence and the

third class took over the old school building near the church. A new school building erected in 1892 on the same site as the old one had five classes. In 1886 they received the first industrial teacher

(sewing/handi-craft teacher). She was Barbara Gröbner and later Frau Axmann taught until June 28, 1925 teaching almost 40 years.

The various teachers who taught at Weißensulz school were: Johann Mayer 1673-1721; Franz Steinsdörfer 1721-1746; Andreas Martinka 1746-1806; Christoph Purkholzer -1785; Franz Stelzer 1806-1843; Peter Weber 1843-1885; Max Weber, Beichel, Abel, Fränzel, Kribek Schwarz, Travnicek 1880-1881; Stefan Lang 1882-1886; Georg Kuttner 1886, Peter Baar, Stefan Lang, Georg Kuttner, Barbara Gröbner until 1889.

In the years 1890-1905 Axmann, Gröbner, Spörl, Zenefels, Stöger, Andr. Steinsdörfer, Barbara Gröbner, Peter Steinbach, Anton Egerer, Lenk, Feil.

On January 1, 1905 came Peter Axmann; 1905 - 1912 Axmann, Spörl, Steinbach, Adam, Waiz, Peter Axmann, Barbara Axmann, Stich, Antonie Klika, Albert Axmann, Johann Gröbner; 1913-1914 Axmann, Spörl, Steinbach, Alb. Axmann, Johann Gröbner, Guldán. On January 3, 1914, Axmann becomes Director, Steinbach, Axmann, Mahal,

Guldan joined the military with the call for general mobilization.

Weißensulz belonged to the parish of Heiligenkreuz from earliest times. Heiligenkreuz was once the seat of a noble family line and the Church was originally established at a site with the ruins (remains) of an old hermitage. Only a small *Ortskapelle* (local chapel) located where the present tower and choir are found, stood in Weißensulz.

vaults or a roof (1826-1840). The local people were very poor and could hardly afford to rebuild their own houses. The church vaults and roof were not finished until 1840. The new choir and organ were added in 1842 along with an addition to the Sacristy. The floor was paved and furnishings provided in 1845 and the church was finally consecrated on May 15, 1846. The six *Stockstäbe der Zünfte* (Guild Staffs) were old friends from the older churches along with two old pews along the wall and the paving



daily Mass, but was not allowed to carry out any other ministry (i.e. baptisms, burials, etc.). He was also known as *Frühmesser* (early Mass reader). One chaplain, Frühmesser A. Schuster erected a beautiful church tower on the west side of the chapel in 1721. It had a shingled roof, two bells and a clock. It burned during the big fire of September 1, 1826, and renovated to its present shape. The parish and school buildings, 38 residences and 21 barns fell victim to the fire.

On January 1, 1786, matriculation in the Heiligenkreuz parish ended and a priest named Rauscher began to serve the new parish in Weißensulz. The cemetery was laid out in January, 1786 but the existing church was too small. The Rectory was torn down and on July 17, 1826, the cornerstone of the present church was laid. The church was damaged by the big fire and it stood for fourteen years without

From the year 1596 Weißensulz was not a possession of a *Herrschaft*. First Anna Buchfelderin bought Neuhof and the Neuhöfer mill. Laminger erected the Meierhof, the *Schäferei* (sheeps shed) in Weißensulz and Neuhof, *Herrenmühle* (lord's mill) with three wheels. The mill residence was also a brewery with its *Lagerkeller* (storage vats) in the cellar of the local manor house.

The Meierhof itself was rebuilt often. The current manager's house was a brandy distillery once. Besides acting as the patron to the church and school, the *herrschaft* (noble lord) also was responsible for the courts and collection of taxes. In 1850 the *herrschafts* office in Weißensulz had to transfer all the books concerning it to the newly established district courthouse in Hostau where they were kept until 1945. (EDITOR'S NOTE: This was after the nobility lost their power to administer the

land in 1848) The Meierhof served to advance local society and as a model for the farmer in many things. So in 1880, the first Göpel-driven tractor and threshing machine appeared at Luxen. (EDITOR'S NOTE: Luxen may have been the name of the Meierhof. A Göpel is a winch or a lever or it is the turnstile to which animals were harnessed for threshing grain by trodding on it in a circle. In some cases it was people walking in a circle holding onto a turnstile lever. In some other cases the animals or people walking in a circle while leaning on levers attached to a turnstile provided the power to drive a machine -- a mechanical thresher. I would think that they just used the Göpel first (long before 1880) when it replaced flails. Then, by 1880 they adapted the Göpel to work a threshing machine). HK

### **Weißensulz Had Five Mills**

1. The Preisenmühle is the oldest and named after the owner. Before 1595 it was designated an outpost for fully armed horseman in case war against the Castle Pfraumberg should break out.
2. The Herrenmühle was converted to a sawmill in 1610 and by 1614 it had three running gears for different work.
3. The Müldickenmühle belonged to the noble landlord. It was built in 1786 by Franziska Kotz, of Heiligenkreuz parish, on land owned by her and was named after the first miller who was a short, fat man.
4. The Sichernmühle in Hundsschwanz was built about 1780. After the *Neuweiher* (dam to create a pond) proved able to provide only a weak source of water power it was reopened. It was never a grist mill, only an oil mill. It produced rape seed oil and this was used to make lubricants for wooden axles on wagons drawn by the numerous teams on the manor.
5. There is a saga of a mill that sank deep underground in Weißensulz. It was located near the pond opposite the Müldickenmühle. There actually once was a mill there but after the Herrenmühle was built it had little business because the noble lord made sure that all grain went only to his own mill.

Until 1596 all the local people were simply called farmers. After that all *Robot* rosters required that the farms and farmers be divided by size of land-holding -- half-manor, three-quarter manor, quarter and eighth manor -- because that was what determined the amount of *Robot* due the noble lord. Smaller landholders and cottagers were also on Robot rosters at first during the *herrschaftlichen* period (period of serfdom). Although the first duty in the area was work and service for the noble lord, the glassworks, polishing works (probably for making mirrors), hammermills, breweries, and *Breitnereien* (a metal stamping facility that made sheets of metal for metal-craftsmen -- similar to a modern rolling

mill) established by the nobles became regular places of employment. The granary was built in 1795 -- under the Contributions rules of *Robot* -- to stockpile as a reserve in case of shortages caused by war. Each farmer had to deliver a certain quantity of grain that had a given value against his total payments due. The balance was paid in cash. The granary was the forerunner of modern storehouses and the building served that purpose until 1867 when Josef Deitz's father purchased it and converted it to an inn with a dance hall.

A man named Wild, the great grandfather of Ferdinand Wild, married the daughter of Spörl, the butcher. They managed the butcher shop in a low wooden house and in 1864 they began to handle fine lace. In 1870 they built a new single-story building and in 1892 expanded it to a building with two stories. In 1896 they did a final expansion to the building's present size. The Wild's lace factory and *Nähschule* (sewing school) gave many people the means to earn a living.

Weißensulz was elevated to a Market Town on March 25, 1875 after long negotiations to obtain the consent of all the surrounding communities. The *Marktordnung* (Market Ordinance) of 1877 authorized four annual markets:

1. On the Monday after Okuli (This should be sometime in late Feb. or early March).
2. On the Monday before *Pfingsten* (Pentecost-- usually in May).
3. On the Monday before *Maria Himmelfahrt* (The Assumption of Mary into Heaven)
4. On the first Monday in Advent.

The ordinance also authorized weekly markets but when they proved unprofitable because of poor attendance that permission was withdrawn. In 1878 Ferdinand Wild built a poor-house as a residence for local poor people on the site of the old Hülthaus (Wooden House).

Weißensulz has two mineral springs with water quality that is probably equal to that of Eger but they have never been tested.

Weißensulz is the birthplace of the *Erzdechanten* (Dean) of Bishofteinitz, Valentin Pöhl, a Canon Cenfels. It is also the birthplace of the *Erzpriester* (the ranking priest in a cathedral or Bishop's church), vicar (a substitute or deputy of the Bishop) and parish priest Karl Pöhl of Heiligenkreuz.

Herr Lange led an effort to establish a *Bürgerschule* (public high school) in Weißensulz. The *Landesschulrat* (State School Board) finally approved a school in 1931. The building cost 667,000 Czech Kronen and although the shell went up in 1933, harsh economic conditions delayed completion until 1938. Before 1931 all upper-level instruction took place in private rooms and in free

classrooms in the grade school.

### **The Men Who Served Weißensulz as Mayors**

The emancipation of 1849-50 brought about political reorganization and creation of the *Bezirkshauptmannschaften* (main county offices/authorities = captaincies) along with the district courts, tax-offices, and land register-offices. Each community had the freedom to make its own Community statutes. Weißensulz held its first election in 1850, electing Andreas Martinka the first mayor. He was the schoolteacher's son and only a *Hausmann* (had only a very small cottage) but the residents of the *oberen Ortsteiles* (upper town -- probably refers to a detached section of the town located on heights above the main town KH) refused to accept him. Nonetheless he proved to be a circumspect director who fought vigorously for the community. The big *Waldprozeß* (forest lawsuit referred to above) began during his term of office. The first case was lost but the intrepid schoolteacher's son had an audience with Kaiser Franz during which he presented the case with the result that Weißensulz ultimately won the case in 1870. The lawsuit gave Weißensulz a cooperative-forest of 315 yokes or 182 hectares. Andreas Martinka also was responsible for erection of the post office and he became the first postmaster.

Franz Wolfgang Pöhnl from house number 132 (called the Luchsenhaus) was the second mayor from 1862 to 1865. From 1865 to 1870 Johann Tschada house number 135 was mayor. The terms of these two mayors was filled with the arguments and excitement associated with the *Waldprozeß*.

Andreas Stich from house No. 103 in the *oberen Ortsteil* governed the fate of the town from 1870-75 as director (*Ortsversteher*) and from 1875-92 as mayor. Johann Pöhnl from house No. 29 who served from 1892-95 secured the market rights and rights for a *dreiklassig* (three-class) school. The grade school became a five-class school under Johann Martinka from house No. 52, son of the first mayor. Peter Helfensdörfer, a merchant from house No. 136 was in office 1898-1901 and the term of Adam Pöhnl, a farmer from house No. 45 (called Farber house) was mayor from 1901-04. During that period Weißensulz suffered from catastrophic floods and storms and Pöhnl and his successor, Michael Dietz from house No. 14 had to deal with those disasters. Mayor Dietz successfully solicited emergency financial aid from the State. It was also during the terms of those same two mayors that negotiations began concerning construction of a railroad line Taus-Tachau. Many varied projects and concerns about the railroad construction, partial mobilization and the beginning of World War I lay heavy upon the communities of the Weißensulz area. The railroad was built between 1900-1920 and the Bahnhof Hotel in Weißensulz appeared in 1910.

The heaviest work-load dealing with railroad construction lay on the shoulders of the next mayor, Franz Kuttner -- a farmer from house No. 29 who served from 1907-1918. While the railroad was under construction the wooden bridge over the Radbusa near house No. 129 was replaced with a concrete bridge and the work was done by master mason Johann Pöhnl of house No. 182. In addition the community acquired the Glauberhaus at No. 202 on the market place and undertook expansion of the south side of the cemetery towards the Kirchberg in 1912. Acquisition of the Glauberhaus provided a remedy to a situation which was no longer tenable. From 1850 until 1912 the town offices were always located in the various houses of each town director (*Vorsteher*) or mayor and all of the files had to be transferred every time a new mayor was elected. The Glauberhaus provided permanent town offices and archives. Herr Franz Schwantner, house No. 81, resigned as mayor (1918) but led the community until the next election -- the first under the Republic of Czechoslovakia. Josef Richter, master tailor residing at No. 19 won that vote and served until 1922. Application for the new *Bürgerschule* (high school) was made during his term in office. Carrying out much-needed public works involved considerable difficulties. Peter Spörl from house No. 125 vigorously undertook getting the school built and bringing electricity to the town and his efforts finally met with success. As mayor he conducted the town business with prudence and energy from 1923-1927.

### **Summary**

The oldest documents in the Weißensulz archives show that the hereditary holdings of castle Pfraumberg included the town of Weißensulz after 1596 when it had 24 farmsteads, 16 *Chaluppner* (small holders) and 12 *Tripfhäusel* (?) with a total of 500 residents. When the first school was built in 1678 there were 112 houses and 896 residents and in 1770 when houses received numbers for the first time there were 138 houses and 1000 residents in Weißensulz. The parish house went up in 1786 when there were 151 houses and 1080 residents; at the time of a catastrophic fire in 1826 there were 163 houses and 1100 residents and by 1836 Weißensulz had 167 houses and 1438 residents. In 1848 Weißensulz was a free community (no longer enserfed). In 1860 there were 175 houses and 1700 inhabitants. Community growth continued until there were 217 houses and 1836 residents in 1886. By 1900 there were still 217 houses with a total of 1860 residents. In 1945-46, at the time of the expulsion, the town of Weißensulz included about 2000 residents.

Thus, in its 830 year history Weißensulz grew from a small but free *Chodendorf* to a lively manorial cultural center with a busy customs and duty station, to an extensive school and parish center for a hard-working primarily agricultural community. Ultimately it became a significant market center which saw busy traffic related to industry that developed in the area.

Weißensulz had its own high school and an elementary school as well as a kindergarten. There was a railway station along with *Reichsbahnausbesserungsamt* (offices for railroad maintenance), a telegraph and telephone office and a post office. The town had 1 brewery, a Meierhof, 1 lace factory, 1 savings and loan, 1 branch bank, 1 cinema, 2 *Kunstmühlen* (perhaps a tapestry mill), 1 sawmill, 10 restaurants three of which had dancehalls, 8 butcher shops, 3 bakeries, 1 soda-ash production facility, 1 pastry shop, 1 fruit and vegetable business, 4 bigger and several smaller food and dry-goods (textile) businesses, 1 shoe store as well as building contractors, tailors, saddlers, upholsterers, painters, carpenters, glaziers, oven-designer/builders (for the tile-covered stoves in local farmhouses) and butter, eggs and poultry-dealers that created jobs and income for the people.

Social clubs included the regular Fire Brigade as well as a special fire brigade for the railroad. Veterans had a club as there was a book reading and discussion club, an agricultural organization, casino, the German *Böhmerwaldbund*, the *Bund der Deutschen* (probably a political group), the *German Sängerrunde* (singing group) called Edelweiß along with another *Gesang und Musikverein* (song and music society). There was also a club for the school, for the savings and loan association, a club for agriculture and forestry and others for those who raised beef cattle, kept bees, *Sportverein* (interested in sports), *Verschönerungsverein* (interested in community beautification). There was also a *Kriegerverein* (local militia or national guard). The two World Wars decimated the male population of Weißensulz and the expulsions scattered citizens of the town to the four winds.

Emil Reimer who served as a teacher all year in Weißensulz was the first *Kreisbetreuer* (coordinator of information about the district) for the Bishofteinetz district after the expulsion. He remained the honorary *Kreisbetreuer* after he gave up the position because of age until his death.

Herr Herzog

## Queries

I am researching the family history of John Anton Kabat, born in Krekovic, Bohemia, in 1861, son of John Kabat and Francinia Hermaneh. His wife was Carolyne (Carolina) Jelinek, born in Malina, Bohemia in 1862, daughter of Francis Jelenik and Maria Ceigerschmidt (Leigerschmidt).

Anyone having information on any of these people or any possible relatives, I would greatly appreciate receiving whatever you have.

Robin Kabat Dickson

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## Memorials In Memory of . . .

### **Veronica Becker Saldecki**

from Patricia Stoneberg, Charles Becker, Kay Hall,  
Judith Kiefer, Joan Stimpert, Marilyn Hall,  
Jeannette & Paul Krause, Barbara & Jerry Hirsch,  
Joseph & Ethel Haas

### **Floyd Guldan**

from Jim & Luverne Meyer

### **Leona Stadick**

from Eleanor Kretsch

### **Francis Beranek**

from Mariann Tremel, Kurt & Eleanor Eisen,  
Cecelia Beranek

### **Anton Schroepfer**

from Eleanor Kretsch

### **Eva (Tietel) Roberts**

from Ronald & Mary Ann Kaczmarek & family

### **Veronica Becker Saldecki**

from Bud & Lillian Stimpert

### **Norbert Deml**

from Debra Schaefer

### **Agatha Stadick**

from Paul & Janice Kretsch, Eleanor Kretsch

but I really do not specifically know what I am seeking. I also do not know where to start searching for the something I can not define. We are standing in front of the

former school. It is in the immediate vicinity of the home where my mother had grown up. She had been born and raised in Dwelling #44. The structure had been demolished by the Czechs immediately after the deportation. A cousin, Adolf Scholz, had explained to me that the house had been "left of the school". That, of course, depends upon which way one faces. So I am unsure of precisely where #44 had stood. Yet, I can easily sense a "presence" of something outside of

myself as I stand here where my mother had spent all of her early life, as had our forebears for prior centuries. As I stand here in the brisk air, my mind fills with the images of the past. I sense the coming of each new generation and

its universal hope. I imagine its unabiding optimism being transformed into life's crass reality, and a denouement as each older and wiser generation is again slowly overtaken by its successor. I "see" these events sandwiched around unfolding daily lives consisting of illnesses, disappointments, accomplishments, Christmas celebrations, family reunions and deaths. I am painfully aware of the fact that this slow march of time and events came to an abrupt, swift end on a single day in 1946. The Benesch Decree, an act of the post-World War II Czechoslovakian government, mandated the deportation of all

Sudetens. The self-righteous racism of the act is made even more absurd because the Czechoslovakian government, that carried it out, itself no longer exists. The Czech and Slovak Republics are now independent of each

# Older and Wiser Plus Olga and Weiser

*By Frank Koerner*

We are oblivious to the fact that three pairs of eyes are following our every move.

Playful wagers concerning us are being made. I am standing just west of the major intersection in Habartice, Czech Republic in 1992. This town is where my mother, Otilie Scholz Koerner, was born and raised. In her youth, the town had been known as Ebersdorf, as it had been for centuries. Ebersdorf is in Moravia and lies about 10 miles south of what is today the province of Silesia in Poland. In my mother's youth Silesia was a province within Germany. Ebersdorf was in the Austrian Empire.

It is mid-afternoon. The still bright daylight on a blue sky day belies the biting raw and chilly November air as the afternoon shadows lengthen. My wife, Elke, and I arrived in Ebersdorf just a short while ago. She is tolerantly accompanying me while I explore my heritage. I am searching for something in Ebersdorf,

other. The now separate, cousin countries were unable to effect a workable union. Yet, the Benesch Decree has done its evil deed. 3,500,000 Sudetens were deported in an instance of the human rights violation now termed ethnic cleansing. When my mother lived here, Ebersdorf was 100% Sudeten. As a result of that expulsion nearly fifty years ago, Ebersdorf is now exclusively ethnic Czech. That is, ...almost.

Elke and I have been in the Czech Republic a few days and are experiencing a severe language problem. We have traveled extensively in Europe, but have always been able to get by with English or German. In the Czech Republic, neither language works very well and I am bemoaning that fact. What could I possibly accomplish in Habartice without the remotest Czech language capability? Earlier, we had had the identical problem when we visited Benke, my father's hometown. There, by an almost miraculous

From my vantage point in front of the former school, I can clearly see the church down the road a bit and off to my right. My cousin Adolf had said that his family's former house, Dwelling #103, was also in the immediate vicinity of the school. His father, who was my mother's brother and my Uncle Josef, had built the house in 1935. I can see a small, unnumbered house off to our right. Is that house #103? I can not be certain.

There is no "downtown" in the Habartice farm community. Structures are far apart. I see no people at all. Since I do not have a detail map of the hamlet, I stand here now befuddled. I am not sure what to do next. I peer to my right. I notice that a portly woman, perhaps in her late thirties, has come out of the small house and is sitting on its front stoop. As I glance that way, she notices my eye and head movement and waves to us. She beckons to us as she shouts in noticeably Czech-accented German, "Kommen



happstance, we had met Otto Körner. He is a remaining Sudeten of engaging, gregarious personality peppered with a fine sense of humor, who coincidentally speaks fluent German.

Meeting and talking with Otto had been a marvelous experience. Without him, our trip to Benke would probably have bordered on meaningless, except to be able to say that we had been there. What a joy that day with Otto had been! The odds of meeting him had been infinitesimal. The odds of such a happen-stance occurring a second time and meeting someone like that in Ebersdorf were so minuscule as to be immediately dismissed as an absurd possibility. In the real world a person does not win TWO lotteries in a single week.

hier!....Fahren..... Fahren," (Come here!...Drive... Drive) as she points to a parking place along the dirt road in front of her home.

We hop into our car and move it the fifty or so yards to the location she indicates. She animatedly directs us via hand motions into the parking space much as would a parking lot attendant. I turn off the engine, but before we are able to get out, she bounds over to the car and introduces herself. "Mein Name Olga." Surprisingly, the more than highly improbable was occurring. This cheerful, ebullient Czech chatterbox, Olga Veverkova, was to be our second "winning lottery ticket" this week. As we begin to converse, we notice Olga's quite understandable, but broken German. She invites us into her home to escape the rather nippy weather. We readily accept her

invitation.

At the front door we are introduced to her Significant Other, Pavel, and step into the tiny house. We are immediately ushered into the kitchen area where Olga's mother is sitting at the kitchen table. We are introduced to Berta Weiser. Berta is the *only* remaining Sudeten in Habartice. In addition to her fluency in Czech, she still speaks the Ebersdorfer German dialect of my mother! This happenstance is almost unbelievable! I am absolutely floored by this second revelation of good fortune. However, even bigger surprises are yet to come.

They have noticed our rented car's German registration and want to know if we are German citizens. No, I reply, Elke is, but I am an American. My mother grew up in Ebersdorf and had emigrated to the United States in 1931. Her name was Otilie Scholz. I am her third child and only son. I could see Frau Weiser's powers of recollection whirl into gear and then watched the unmistakable sparkle of remembrance appear in her eyes as she uttered, "Was? Der Sohn *von der Otti*? Das gibts doch nicht!" (What? The son of Otti? It is not possible!). I must mention that in my American lifetime nobody ever called my mother Otti except my father. *Frau Weiser remembered my mother*. Absolutely unbelievable. This was too much. Tears welled in my eyes.

It seems that Frau Weiser is the daughter of Ebersdorf's former innkeeper. Her parents operated the Gasthaus. When Fr. Weiser was a very little girl, her parents often needed a Kinder-mädchen (baby-sitter) for their youngster, Berta. The very accessible teenage baby-sitter, who lived just around the corner, was my mother! This would have been in a time frame of 1916 or so. Berta was 6, my mother was 14. Fr. Weiser was in her early twenties when my mother emigrated. Not only did Fr. Weiser remember my mother, but she remembered the names of all twelve of the Scholz children. She remembered which of the male siblings had served in the military in the two wars and who had not returned. Her own first husband had been killed in action on the Russian front in WW II. Her since divorced second husband, Olga's father, was an ethnic Czech. That was how she escaped the 1946 deportation. She mentioned that my Uncle Josef had built the house, #103, in which we were standing. Olga and Berta had purchased the tiny, thus very affordable, house many years ago. Until fairly recently, Berta had continued living in the house that adjoined the now defunct inn just around the nearby main intersection's corner. Recently, an increasing difficulty with her mobility because of aging knees had dictated that she move in with Olga. Physically, she no longer could live alone. However, her mental faculties remained exceedingly sharp.

The trio had watched our auto's slow approach through their kitchen window. As they sat there, they had made friendly bets that we were Sudetens returning to Ebersdorf,

an increasingly common sight in recent years. However, November is not exactly the height of the tourist season in these parts. We had stopped at the town sign and had taken a few photographs. Their curiosity was peaking. Only someone from this town would be interested in such a photo, they reasoned. We must originally be from Ebersdorf. Olga was dispatched as their emissary to find out who we were. In recent years, Frau Weiser and Olga have acted as unofficial greeters to occasional tour busses from Germany and Austria. Now that the Iron Curtain is gone, ex-pelled Su-detens have begun to come back on visits to their old home-land. On those occasions, Berta and Olga temporarily reopen the inn and provide food and drink for their momentary paying guests. In this self-defined role, Olga had instituted a guest book, as well. Later, we made our contributions to her guest register, explaining briefly who we were and why we had come. I composed a contribution in German and English. Since Elke grew up in Mexico City, she composed a short paragraph in German and Spanish. Elke's entry was the first in Spanish. I was the first American to sign Olga's guest book.

Olga gave us a copy of a sketched map of the Kurzer Ort (the short part of town), circa 1945. It had not been drawn by Olga, but was a contribution of one of her expatriate guests. Fr. Weiser showed us where the Scholz homestead, #44 had stood. She pointed out the location on the map, as well as out her window. We spent the rest of the day with Olga and her mother. It was an intriguing experience. In a matter of a few hours we flitted back and forth across the events and times of passed decades. Towards late afternoon, Olga graciously prepared a sausage and cheese food platter for us, concluding with cake and coffee. After enjoying her offering, Olga served as our tour guide on a stroll around Ebersdorf. She arranged a rendezvous with the Church's keeper of the keys. The townswoman came post haste via bicycle at Olga's behest and opened up the church for us to behold. For decades, the church had been a storage building under godless Communism. Its interior smelled a bit musty, but it was back in limited use again. An itinerant Catholic priest comes once a month and conducts Sunday services in Czech. The Church's exterior has recently been replastered. The funds for this activity have come from the expelled Sudeten Germans from Ebersdorf. They had seen the sad shape of the church building on their increasingly frequent tour trips back to their homeland and hometown. They formed a donation committee. It is a mystery as to why they do it. They and their successors are forbidden by the human rights' violative Benesch Decree to permanently return or to make any legal claim on their uncompensated, confiscated homes and property. Nevertheless, they were aghast at the disrepair of the church. I suppose their desire to repair it is in response to their inability to "let go" of their birthright homeland.....even after now more than fifty years of exile.

Olga steered us through the entire length of both the Kurzer Ort and the Langer Ort (the long part of town). She filled in town trivia. Olga herself was born after the deportation, so she didn't know the town when it was exclusively Sudeten. She pointed out farmhouses and dwellings that were presently not in use and for sale. Most houses, although dirt cheap by American standards, are far, far out of reach economically for most Czechs. She pointed out one small house with a nice plot of land that was going for the equivalent of only \$5,000 US. Still, there were no takers. The long part of town is aptly named. By the time we got back to Olga's house, it was dark and well into evening. We presented Olga with a small cash offering to defray her day's incurred food costs. She accepted graciously. We parted company as the trio stood at their open, front doorway silhouetted in its frame by the interior lighting. We waved good-bye and began our return to our lodgings in Schönberg.

I contemplated what I had experienced and learned today. I felt quite warmly satisfied. It isn't often that one achieves success at anything without first defining the goal, that when attained, determines success. Yet, that is precisely what happened today. Earlier today, as I had stood in front of the school, I had been unable to articulate what I was seeking in Ebersdorf. Now I understood the reason for my difficulty. The town my mother remembered died 15 years after she left its friendly confines. I had sought to establish a meaningful connection to something... *anything*...in the current village whose own Sudeten history came to abrupt end nearly 50 years ago. I could not intellectualize my way through the dilemma. Somehow, I had to "feel" my way through to a remedy. I have roots in this town via my mother. Yet, a heritage that had been nurtured over centuries had been uprooted and expelled in a single day in 1946. What I had been seeking today had truly *disappeared*. It no longer existed.

Nevertheless, in this sparsely populated town and with absolutely no ties to anyone, we had immediately stumbled upon the *only* persons left in Ebersdorf, who could have helped me. There must have been an angel over my head today, I reasoned. Through pure happenstance, I had discovered what I had been blindly seeking in Ebersdorf. That was the meaningful *connection* to the homeland of my mother, which has not existed as she had known it since 1946. In spite of that, I had found an authentic connection to Ebersdorf by way of Olga and Frau Weiser.

It had been another most interesting and rewarding heritage experience on the most interesting and rewarding journey of my life.

# Rootsweb

*(Taken from the GBHS Rootsweb Electronic Mailing List.)*  
Recently we stayed at Bohemia for familysearching. I would like to tell everybody from the list a short story about our trip.

My uncle has had his yearly meeting from all people who were born at a small Bohemian village, so more than 60 people stayed at the same hotel. Every evening we have had meetings where old Bohemian songs were singing and stories were told. For me, the next generation it was really an experience to see, that tradition still lives in the soul of these people.

Next day we visited all the places where the people lived, also the house of my grandfather and my great grandfather. We stand in front of the house and took pictures. It was the first time that I felt bad, because the relatives who went with us spoke in a way to the people which made me feeling bad. They told the new owners that this house was themselves. Also in Czech new people bought the houses and lived there for a few years. Most of them are well educated people from Prague. The lady of the owner explained me, that it is really strange when every year 10 people stand in front of the house, took photos and told her, that this house was yours. From this day on, my husband and I went alone to all the other houses we were looking for our documentation.

As most of you know there didn't exist street names but house numbers, so we drove around to find all house numbers in each small village which I found at the parishes. We took more than 400 photos. All people were very friendly to us, because we asked with a little bit of humility for to take a picture. It happened more than one time that we were invited to have a coffee and I have to tell you that we have had really good discussions free from prejudice. Most of them speak German and some made us a present with old stuff from the house. I don't want to miss these contacts. We changed our addresses and I'm sure that we will stay in touch. We visited all places and houses from where the ancestors are coming from. We found more than 70%, the others were destroyed. We checked about 4 cemeteries with no results. The others were destroyed. We asked at an old house where the churchman lived in former times (don't know the English word).

We met the people who rented the house 20 years ago. They told us, that 3 month ago happened a robbery and a few old expensive furnitures were stolen. In one wardrobe there were founded 2 old books, nobody had known before that they were lying there. They are the complete diaries of the whole centuries, beginning about 1680 and ending in 1945 of the history of the parish. We were able to photograph all 200 pages and we hope we will be able to read. First is written in Latin, rest in German.

An older man, who searched with me since many years (I

am - 10 years, he 40 years ) told me that he knows that there must exist these books, but they were never founded, so it's a real great thing! He promised to speak all the text into a microphone and I will type. We are all very excited!

We meet each other with a very nice young man who found my ancestors at the internet. He and I are related 10 generations ago and it was good time we have had together! I mustn't forget the delicious meals with Böhmisches Knödel for only \$2 a whole meal!

But also some bad news happened. Our car Grand Cherokee was stolen on Monday, so we were sitting the whole day at the police station and lost the day at the archive. We tried to find a rent-a-car, but around 60 miles there wasn't any. The old people told us all the time that the Bohemian watches are going slower and in another way. Now we understand what they mean.

We decided to take a yellow cab to Leiermütz late in the afternoon and on the next day we stayed from 8 a.m. till 6 p.m. at the archive. Not time enough to get all the information we need, so it wasn't possible to look after all facts. The next day we planned a trip to Prague, but without a car! We ordered a car from the automobile club and they send us one, but only for to drive home directly. So what can I do, nothing. In September I plan another trip but by airplane to Prague.

I think, when we will go to Czech next time, we will stay in a small private bed and breakfast. I think the story with the car won't happen when we stayed in a private place.

Brigitte from Mannheim

# What Gemuetlichkeit Was Had by All!

Ramblings by Jerry Gulden

The German-Bohemian Heritage Society's celebration of its 15th year since its formation was truly a sight to behold. The doors opened at 1p.m. Sunday, April 9th, and from that time forward people continued to stream into the German Rivers Room at the New Ulm Holiday Inn. Colleen Kretsch and LuAnn Lindmeyer decorated the hall and table area, this added a festive atmosphere for conversation to all that attended. Pat Kretsch lined up an old fashion Hoolerie that consists of a concertina, tuba and drum player. Hillary Mohr called some of his

concertina friends, who took turns playing and demonstrating their art throughout the afternoon. John Gag, Six Fat Dutchman fame, presented a short biography of his love of the concertina along with some fine music.

The "Culture Corner" was a focal point for many. The Societies Founder, Bob Paulson, shared many research books, maps and conversation with those who attended. He also put together videos of the homeland villages that were of continued interest by those who visited the corner. Three ladies, Mrs. Marge Saffert, Mrs. Rita Sabatino, and Mrs. Shirleen Gulden exhibited their klöppelsacks, lace, patterns and history. The placards for their exhibit are included later. A cigar-cutting instrument and spice-grinding device from the GBHS library were also on exhibit. A splendid grouping of society publications was available for review and can be purchased as indicated through the quarterly newsletter. John Gag had two old concertinas for people to see, along with his fine conversation explaining the history of the instrument. A wooden wheelbarrow made by Artie Dietz for a Christmas exhibit was on display. Artie was eulogized a number of times that afternoon, as he was Böhmisches from the word go and would have partied with us had he not been called to the Lords side to tell Him fun filled stories! Bob Paulson and Mike Cwach had their dudlsocks for all to see and graced us with the music that our forefathers would have heard in Bohemia and early southern Minnesota.

Many dignitaries spoke of the accomplishments of many of the fine people that helped found, nurture, and feed the Societies needs. The former and current publicists of the newsletter, by far one of the best genealogy newsletters in the nation, are LuAnn and Louie Lindmeyer a round of well deserved applause echoed throughout the room.

To close the afternoon the German Bohemian Heritage Singers in Tracht (Bohemian dress) sang to all with strains of German Bohemian song and language. The final song of the day was three stanzas of 'Böhmerwald Lied', it was noticed that there were moist eyes in the audience. What an ending to end a successful day. We all would like to thank those who spent countless hours pulling this activity together. Bitte Shönen!

A first time meeting between the German visitor Mr. Robert Froetschl and his cousins (a brother and sister) whom had traveled from California to meet with him. Many other relationships and meetings took place, too numerous to chronicle.

## 'Culture Corner' Activities

The people who exhibited and the history surrounding the items.

**Three Ladies exhibited their Klöppelsack and Laces:**

### **Mrs. Leo (Marge Groebner) Saffert of New Ulm**

She is the proud owner of three klöppelsacks that belonged to her mother Mary Bartl Groebner wife of Baptiste Groebner. She can still see her mother sitting at the kitchen table at night klöppeling. The lace and patterns are from her collection. The lace pattern she remembers best was Crab Eyes - 'grepsen eigla schpitzen'. The laces she remembers her mother making were much heavier and more durable than the type seen now a day. The newer laces are finer.

Mrs. Marge Saffert's home is decorated with her mother's laces. The china cabinet shelves edges are trimmed with a 2 inch round lace sewed to a flat piece of linen that the china sits on. Her kitchen curtains have a half inch lace boarder sewn six inches from the bottom of the curtain and she had remarked and wondered how often she had removed and re-sewn them onto another set of kitchen curtains. She decorates her home with the tablecloths and napkins that her mother had klöppeled. They are ornate with klöppeled hearts on each of the corners, the heart you see on the table was used when making the tablecloth corners and two inch hearts were on the corner of the napkins.

Her grandmother (Barbara Ubl Groebner) had klöppeled the edging pattern on the three altars in the old Saint Mary's Church in New Ulm. The designs on the edging were alternating 14-inch high cross and heart on the front edge of each altar cloth. When the church came out of the school, she went over to find the linen and they were no where to be found.

### **Mrs. Shirleen Franta Gulden of North Mankato**

The klöppelsack and laces were made by her husbands Aunt, Lauretta (Mike Klinkhammer - Wilhelmine Groebner) Hamann. The stand was made by his father, Dennis A. Gulden. The klöppelsacks and stand were presented in the Schell's Light beer case adorned with the many lace patterns.

An interesting sidelight is that Lauretta Hamann's mother, Whilhelmine Groebner and Rita Sabatino's grandmother Anna Groebner, were sisters.

### **Mrs. Rita M. (Stadick - Groebner) Sabatino of Sleepy Eye**

This was her grandmothers Mrs. Joseph A. (Anna Groebner) Stadick's klöppelsack. She was born in Muttersdorf, Bohemia, Austria to Franz and Anna Grau Groebner. They came to America in 1885. Mrs. Rita Stadick's father was Hugo Stadick.

### **Concertina History presented by John E. Gag**

The concertina was invented in 1829 by Sir Charles Wheatstone, a British physicist, and was probably six sided as seen in many western movies. From this derived many varieties such as Bandoneon and Chemnitzer, which

is more like a German concertina, as we know it in the Midwest.

The instrument basically has from 76 to 104 keys and 2, 3, or 4 reeds per note. The concertina is played by pushing and pulling air produced by bellows and forced through steel reeds, with the melody produced on the right side and rhythm on the left.

The earliest players around New Ulm include 'Whoopee' John Wilfahrt who reached national acclaim and firmly entrenched the heritage of the instrument in our region.

The instrument on display was made in Chemnitz Germany (Saxony) about 1900.

### **History of Sheepshead**

Sheepshead, or Schafkopf in German, is an old Middle European game played and developed by shepherds sometime in the late 1700's. Its play is similar to that of pinochle and euchre, and has been incorporated into the game of Skat. While Skat was codified (official rule making) by the German congress in 1886, Sheepshead has continued to be played under a variety of rules. Sheepshead has such a strange order of cards because the peasants in Europe were disgruntled with the kings, so in their card games they gave the kings a lower rank. They made Queens, Jacks, and diamonds (a symbol of wealth) trump.

This event was truly Böhemian in nature, as it had a lot of conversation, activity, and music, accompanied with food and beer a flowing! Thanks to all that attended and especially to those who put their time, talent and energy into setting it up.

## **GBHS Picnic**

The GBHS will be holding it's annual summer potluck picnic on August 19, 2000 at Herman Heights Park in New Ulm, MN.

### **11 a.m. - Social time begins**

### **12 noon - Feast on homemade German-Bohemian, German and American foods and desserts.**

Bring a dish to pass, lawn chairs, and your own eating utensils. Coffee and juice will be provided. Beer and pop will be available for sale.

Bring your musical instrument. You can play before, during, or after the meal or come together for a jam session. Whatever you like.

You will also be entertained by the German-Bohemian Heritage Singers about mid-afternoon.

Don't miss it and bring a friend.

recipes, or your observations to:

GBHS Newsletter  
P.O. Box 822  
New Ulm, MN 56073-0822

Email: [lal@mnic.net](mailto:lal@mnic.net)

## Newsletter Deadline

The next issue of this newsletter will be mailed in September. Deadline for articles will be July 24, 2000. Please send us your free queries, letters, articles, favorite

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

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## Join Us

**Membership Form For The German-Bohemian Heritage Society**  
**Family Membership \$10.00 per Year in the U.S. or \$15.00 Foreign**  
**(Family membership includes those living in the same household)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone# \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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