

# German-Bohemian Heritage Society Newsletter

## the Heimatbrief

P.O. Box 822  
New Ulm, Minnesota, 56073-0822



Email: Society & Newsletter - lalgbhs@newulmtnet.net  
Research Info - rpaulgb@pioneerplanet.infi.net

Vol. IX No. 1 March 1998 Louis Lindmeyer, Editor

### A Letter From Our President

It is usually around this time of the year that I give a report on who our officers are for the new year and who was elected to the board of directors.

I would like to call this a State of the Union report but that might be a bit much. Calling it a message, referring to the state our society is in, may be more fitting. Well, I can tell you that right now, we are in a very good state and darn near everything seems to be coming up roses. All the people who are still willing to volunteer their time and talents are the ones keeping us in this favorable condition.

Those serving as officers and board of directors surely are among the people sharing their time and talents. The four people who were elected to the board have been on the board since 1990. They are Louie Lindmeyer, Robert Paulson, Angie Portner, and Adeline Wilfahrt. If the time these people spent working for this organization would have been kept, the total figure would be staggering. We were incorporated in 1990, but all four of them were involved before then. For some, it goes back to 1984 when this organization was founded. I think the members present at the October meeting showed their appreciation and approval when they reelected them.

The officers for 1998 are the same people that served in 1997. At our November 8th meeting the board reelected Charlotte Kastanek Hoppe as secretary, George Portner as treasurer, Gerald Gulden as vice president, and I once again am your president. Not only are the other three officers nice, but I want all of you to know that I consider it a privilege to be working with such talented people.

I ask that you check the section of this newsletter that lists the names of all thirteen board of directors. Also listed are the directors' committee assignments. This shows you who is in charge and gives you an idea as to what it takes to keep things going.

I want to point out that there are many other members, besides our board of directors, that volunteer their time and talents. I would like to mention each of them but this report is already long enough. I would rather write a separate article that would include their names and explain just what they do to help.

For now, I will close. If we can learn anything from this report,



it is that our organization needs caring people to make it work.

Paul Kretsch, President

### Spring Meeting May 16

This years GBHS Spring General Meeting will encompass a Family History Conference. The May 16th meeting will be held in the downstairs dining room of Turner Hall located at 102 So. State St., New Ulm. The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. with a few short business reports followed by four speakers. The speakers will be:

**Mary Bakeman** - Editor of the Minnesota Genealogical Journal and owner of Park Genealogical Books. Mary will speak on "Organizing Your Family History Research"

**Joachim Reppmann** - Professor of German at Carlton College in Northfield, MN. Dr. Reppmann has done extensive research in the field of German Immigration. He will speak on "The Changing Face of Germany and Eastern Europe in the 19th Century , Problems in Finding your Ancestors and Historic Influences on Germanic Emigration".

**Ruth Bauer Anderson** - Research Librarian at the Minnesota History Center with special interest in family history research. Ruth will speak on "Unique Genealogical Resources at the MHS for Persons from the New Ulm Area".

**Darla Gebhard** - Research Librarian at the Brown County Historical Society. Darla has a fantastic knowledge of the family histories of the New Ulm area. She will talk on "Family History Research Resources at the BCHS".  
She will also give



a tour of the BCHS Resource Library at the conclusion of the conference.

As stated the meeting will begin at 9 a.m. and conclude in the early afternoon. A soup, salad, and sandwich bar will be available for our lunch break for \$7.00. There is no cost for this meeting, but a free will offering will be accepted. The conference is open to the public.

A great deal of work has gone into organizing this conference to make it one of the best we have had. Don't miss out and bring a friend!

### Spring Dance April 17

The annual GBHS Spring Dance will be held on Friday evening, April 17, at Turner Hall in New Ulm. Dance music will be provided by Johnny Helget and Dave and Sandy Suess as well as performances by the German-Bohemian Heritage Singers.

## Last Chance

The October 1998 Heritage Tour to Germany, Austria, and Bohemia sponsored by the G.B.H.S. is filling quickly. Bob Paulson, tour leader and founder of our society, stated that, "this will probably be the last tour that I will lead to the Heimatland". There is still limited space available. Reservations can be accepted until April 17th. For more information and a reservation brochure, contact Bob Paulson at 800 W. Idaho Ave. St. Paul, MN 55117, 612-488-0405, e-mail: rpaulgb@PioneerPlanet.infi.net

## Our Readers Write

In the September issue of the Heimatbrief under German Bohemian Heritage Yesteryears Cookbook the question came up regarding the spelling of the word Gra bree. It most likely means *Kren Bruehe*. The n in Kren and the he in Bruehe is silent. Kren is the Bohemian-Austrian word for horseradish and Bruehe means sauce. My grandmother used to make it quite often. Also the report about the village of Zemschen, by Georg Warta was very interesting for me because my great-grandfather Johann Georg Zischka was born there on 7/15/1837 in house #22. Furthermore my great-great-grandmother's maiden name was Elisabeth Warta born in Possigkau house #14 on 12/5/1813. Maybe there is a connection between Georg Warta's forebears and mine.

I am always looking forward to the next issue of your newsletter. Thank you.

Ernst Zischka  
2030 Helena Way  
Redwood City, CA 94061

## Recipe Needed

Could you help my mother find this recipe. As far as she remembers it was called Klump, or sounding more like Kah-lump. It was a sweet type of dumpling dough wrapped in a dish towel and steamed in a colander. It was served sliced with a raisin sauce. She doesn't know if it had yeast in it or not, or if it was raised in the dish towel and then set over a colander, or steamed or boiled.

If anyone recognizes this recipe please contact me. Thank you.

Lynn Griffith  
8995 Division Street East  
Buffalo, MN 55313

## Queries

Southwest Bohemia. The Prachatice - Volary - Horni Vltavice - Vimperk area. 1700s - 1800s. Families: **Sippl, Wallisch, Wachfeitl, Paulus, Steydl, Robl, Mauritz, Koller, Hoffman, Tomasko, Hradni, Dubis, Schwarz, Schrfheleuter**. Immigrated primarily to Wisconsin. Have considerable data but need considerably more. Will gladly exchange data. Contact:

Tom Umhoefer  
3481 Greenbriar Ct.  
LaCrosse, WI 54601  
Email: Umlax@Juno.com

or

Joan Littlefield  
18822 Via Palatino  
Irvine, CA 92612  
Email: JoanLit@AOL.COM

Western Bohemia - Faulkenau (Solokov in Czech) County, Maria Chlum Parish. Family names: **Maier, Sappert, Hacker, Rubner, Gorlin, Werner**.

I have a lot of information I would be happy to share. I have pictures I took of the following villages: Katzengrun (Kacerov), U and O Schosenreith (Dolni and Horni Castkov) and the church (interior and exterior views) and graveyard at Maria Chlum.

I would like to make contact with anyone else who has ancestors from this area and exchange information. I have the Faulkenau book (in German) and could xerox information about your village.

Joan Kohler Littlefield  
18822 Via Palatino  
Irvine, CA 92612  
Phone: 714-854-3303 Fax: 714-854-3304  
email: JoanLit@AOL.COM

It is always gratifying for an author to receive comments and additional information concerning an article he has published. Such was the case for me after my article on the "Stadtherr Families from the Honositz Area" appeared in this newsletter last summer (Vol VIII, No. 2).

The first phone call and letter was from Fred Pruento of Sonora, CA. In the article I had wondered if there might have been other German Bohemian families living in the Cole Camp, Missouri area in the late 1800's. Mr. Pruento confirmed that there were and gives some of their surnames. To quote his letter: "...My great-grandfather, Simon Jirik, from Honositz #21 emigrated in 1871 with his 3rd wife Anna Remiger, b. Gibian, Mies, to Verona, Lawrence Co., Mo., where other Bohemians had settled. Simon's son, John Jirik, had emigrated previously to Cole Camp where other Bohemians were settling. He married Anna Schuber at Sts. Peter & Paul at Cole Camp in 1881, and subsequently moved to Verona. There were other Jiriks who settled in the New Prague, MN area, and Remigers also settled in the New Ulm area.

The Bohemian families at Verona comprised a considerable portion of the original membership of Sacred Heart Parish which was organized in 1874. Their petition to have a Bohemian priest assigned to Sacred Heart was denied, and a number of Bohemian families from Verona moved to Cole Camp and to Karlin, Mo. where the Bohemians had their own priest at St. Wenceslaus Parish.

Following are some of the Bohemian families from Sacred Heart Church, Verona, Mo., who may have had relatives at Cole Camp or Karlin: Benneviess, Birkenbach, Cepelak, Francka, Jirik, Knoblauch, Korba, Korn, Leitl, Opravil, Otrodovec, Pfitzner, Remiger, Riedl, Schuber, Strake, Smyrcka.

I'm just beginning research on my Jirik, Riedl, and Remiger family lines, and am interested in making contact with anyone knowledgeable in securing information via correspondence or who may have visited the Bischoffeinitz or Mies areas to conduct genealogical research. Your story is very interesting, and so typical of other Bohemian immigrants.

Yours very truly,  
Fred and Kate Pruento

21534 American River Drive  
 Sonora, CA 95370  
 E-Mail: [thegenic@sonnet.com](mailto:thegenic@sonnet.com)

Please contact Fred if you share an interest in any of his families.

Certainly this is new information for our society. I'm sure most society members had no previous knowledge of a group of German-Bohemians in Missouri. Probably the only exceptions would be those members related to the Remiger family.

The other letter I received was from Brian J. Lenius, he of the East European Genealogical Society in Manitoba, Canada. Mr. Lenius pointed out that he had done the research into the Stadtherr family that settled in Stearns County, Minnesota in 1867 or 1868. The information I had on this family passed through a number of people before I received it and I did not know Brian had done the research and therefore I failed to give him credit for his work.

About the time I wrote my article Brian was again in Bohemia doing research into the Stadtherr family from Nemlowitz -- parish of Mogelzen -and the Stadtherr families in Honositz - parish of Hradzen. From this recent research it now appears that Honositz was not the village of origin of the various Stadtherr families discussed in my 1997 article. Brian thinks it might be Messhals but further research needs to be done to confirm this.

Brian's 1997 research does add to the information in my article. The father of the George Stadtherr (1846-1932) who settled in West Newton Township in 1867 was Johann Baptiste Stadtherr (1816-? ). Johann was married twice, first to Maria Beranek in 1846 (children George, Anna, and Maria) and then to Margaretha Manlik in 1853 (Wenzel, Johann, Barbara, Josef, Peter, and another girl). He also has found proof for some of the other guesses and or assumptions I made when writing the article.

Finally, due to space limitations, only 1 of 2 figures were used in my article and a table was left out. The figure and the table did not really add much to the article but readers may have noticed and wondered what was missing from the article.

Leon G. Stadtherr  
 Gibbon, MN 55335

## Sledding on the "Spabaun-Berg" at Sch nau

by **Anna Ammermiller-Kloiber**

I still think about how much fun it was for us children at home [back in Bohemia] to go sledding. If we didn't have to go straightaway to help with "Federschliessln" after school we went up the Spabaun-Berg with our sleds. The "Jakschl-Berg" outside near "Kraumer" wasn't much in favor because it was so rocky. The little "Auntaun-Berg" was for the smaller children and for those who still didn't have much experience with the toboggan. But the "Spabaun-Berg" next to it was very popular with the older children.

From below by the "Bohschneider" house the mountain appeared to be nice and high. Today it is different. We have learned that a road was built and this popular mountain with its wooded grove is not as high as it used to be. B



ut for us it was always a pleasure to climb its slopes and listen to our calls of "Hallo" echo back to us.

Back then we didn't have fur boots or leather shoes -- no, only wooden shoes. The hand-knit stockings that we wore were covered with what we called "Tscherken" or "Duridel." Thus these stockings and socks kept us pleasantly warm. We girls had no long trousers to wear for this. But that did not put us out even on the coldest days. When we came home our mother always had some tea made from linden-tree blossoms ready for us.

When we went to Gabriel Heger's house for "Federschliessln" we always took our sleds with us so we could ride them on the downhill road. Sometimes it got dark while we were sledding --when we were enticed to go high on the other side of the mountain and take one more run down the slope. One time Maria Nachlinger was with us. I can still recall her little "Bockschlitten" [a kind of sled]. As she was running downhill on it in the darkness, too late she noticed a ditch in her path. The sled overturned with a crack and her "B ckl" was broken apart in the center. She wpt out loud and said: "My sister will scold me terribly because now we have no sled."

Such things were not simple back then. There were two in my family also and we only had one sled and there were often quarrels over using it. Often we would put something on top of the sled to make it longer but that was very dangerous. But we were too "cocky" to believe that anything bad could ever happen as we rode down the mountain.

In the evening, under the light of the moon, when the snow crunched underfoot, the teenagers would go sledding. They had a long toboggan with room for many riders. It was a real treat for everyone. Sometimes the teenage boys were pretty brazen and they didn't do what they should. So, during their nightly sledding expeditions they would remove their wooden shoes and stockings and ride barefooted as a joke. That caused a lot of laughter and shouting under the starry evening skies.

Many of the young men who fortunately returned home after the war still gladly recall these wintertime amusements.

*Inset: Skiing in the B hmerwald*

Later, when I had my own family, I was often sad for my children because there were no hills or little mountains in our area where they would have been able to romp and play. I often think about the quiet blissful childhood we experienced back home, even though were were not blessed with many material things. Those were unforgettable experiences that still bring us happiness when we remember them today.

## Winter Work

by **Josef Pscheidl**

*About "Federschliessen" and other winter occupations on the farms around Eisenstein.*

Long winter evenings used to be filled with all sorts of work that could be done in the house. Now, when the days grow short and the winter evening closes in very early, one is automatically reminded again of a time long since past when one sat with the dim light of a kerosene lamp on the oven bench and basted the long evening with conversation and storytelling while engaged in various home crafts like spinning, weaving, broom binding and other similar activities. It was not rare to pass that time with singing and playing music. Many folksongs had their origins in such evenings and today they are still valued as genuine expressions of the culture of the homeland.

On such evenings folktales, fairy tales and dances were passed on as well as some new stories. The "Hoazlbnk" stood near the spinning wheel or weaving loom in the big room of the house. Spinning and weaving were almost exclusively the activities of the women on the farms. The farmers also engaged in handiwork that required more or less skill. They made [carved, shaped] rake and scythe handles, they produced shingles and they made wooden shoes. The grandfathers who were living more or less retired had the jobs of broombinding, and repairing or refinishing tote-baskets reserved for them. From time to time larger repairs or refurbishing jobs on wagons, wooden sleds or other machinery was necessary, this was assigned to the "St rhand Werker" -- the professional wagonmaker or carpenter. While doing this work these men generally made the farmer's ware "Stube" his workshop. Likewise, the "St chneiderin" [seamstress] also did most of her work at the farmer's home. The shoemaker, too, sometimes came to the farmer's home to do necessary repairs. During these evenings the farmer's wife served her home-made special delicacies and home-produced wine.

Another type of work-at-home evening, no less attractive, was the "Federschliessen" or removing the quills from goose feathers. This was the means to make the fine down that was used by farmer's wives to fill the household beds -- something of which they were particularly proud. But all of the processed feathers did not always find their way into the household bedding, sometimes they were made more widely available when there were more than were needed at home.

When the farmer's wife had finished spinning all of the last summer's flax, the "Federschliessen" began. They invited neighbor women and children as well as acquaintances and relatives from the village circle. It was common for as many as a dozen women to be seated around a large round table with fingers flying over this tedious work. When there were so many women around a table, naturally there

was always plenty to talk about. They told funny stories and exchanged local gossip and news. Each one had something to tell. Telling ghost stories also played a large role in these evenings. The fluffy feathers they worked with meant there could be no singing, not to mention that dancing was also forbidden.

The hours spent in a joint project of "Federnschliessen" passed quickly. But the final evening of "Federnschliessen" had a festive beginning. In the Bohemian Forest it was the custom that the completion of any project was celebrated with a small party and merriment. The farmer's wife would entertain the industrious "quill-pickers" with coffee, cakes, "K icheln" and other special "rewards." If the farmer had already slaughtered livestock there would be wurst, salted meats and home-made wine. The "quill-pickers" were never paid for their work -- it was considered to be no more than neighborly help. If there were young girls among the helpers, then some local boys who knew how to play a musical instrument would come to spend a couple of happy hours with music and song. An accordion would accompany the dancing couples.

The dance did not go on too long. Soon another dancer and then another had a turn until all of the helpers had been given a spin.

These and a list of other activities what took place during the long evenings of late fall and winter -- the so-called rural "work-at-home" evenings. Today, our prosperity has put a television in every household and such work-evenings are almost unthinkable. The more or less good conversation of former times requires a television-free house. And no one wants to mar or ruin a carpet or parquet floors with "Hobelspanen" and goosefeathers.

## Gun Factories

from the G-B Rootsweb Electronic Mailing List

*(A question was submitted to the mailing list seeking information about weapons and weapons factories in or near the homeland. The following answer was submitted by Karen Hobbs.)*

The principal weapon used by the Austrian army in the mid-19th Century was the Lorenz rifled musket. That weapon was produced in a factory but I don't know where it was located. I have the impression that it was in the vicinity of Vienna. It may well have had the word "Lorenz" in its name.

There were still a lot of individual gunsmiths who were master craftsmen and produced the hunting rifles and other small arms that were owned by individuals throughout the empire at that time, but they were declining in number because it was so expensive to become a master. Without master-craftsmen under whom they could work, journeymen ended up working in factories when they could find such a position. In some cases a man who was a gunsmith but not a certified master-gunsmith might still have made a living producing hand-crafted rifles in his home village as long as there were people willing to pay the price.

It is said that the first breech-loaders produced in Austria were developed by such gunsmiths rather than by researchers at a factory. Those weapons were adopted shortly after Austria was defeated in the 1866 war - partly because of the superiority of the Prussian breech-loaded rifles over the Austrian muzzle-loaders.

Austria's selection of the Lorenz rifle in 1866, even though the US Civil War and some experience in the war in Denmark in 1864 had proved that the breech-loader was a superior weapon, is said to have been based on "politics" and economics. (Austrian government officials had a financial interest in the Lorenz factory.)

At that time the Austrian General Staff was more interested in saving money in order to preserve their huge pensions (according to one historian - Geoff Wawro) or to promote favorite construction projects than seeing that the common soldiers were well armed and well trained. They promoted the idea that the breech-loaders could be fired more rapidly than the muzzle-loader and would only lead to a waste of ammunition.

Gordon Craig says in his book about the battle of K nigger tz that the General Staff finally conceded that they should buy breech-loaders so they ordered some from America. But they were too late and when the war started in 1866 the new weapons were on the dock in Belgium and could not be issued in time. It is very possible that Craig also mentions where the Lorenz factory was in his discussion of that point.

## Find Your European Relatives

from the G-B Rootsweb

by Karen Hobbs

I found my cousins with a search of the German white pages phone book on line (<http://www.teleinfo.de>). I searched on the surnames and printed out all of the listings. Then I selected only those who lived in Bavaria and wrote to about 50 families. I received 16 replies and found cousins from two surname groups.

Before I did the search I looked through the Heimatbuch for the district that I knew my ancestors came from. I searched all of the villages listed and found my surnames in five or six of them -- all close to my g-grandfather's home village. So when I wrote to the people on my list I told them I was looking for people who came from the villages where I found the surnames.

I also told them a little about my great grandfather - that he came from a family that included an Ortsamtman and a Richter as well as farmers. That was important because one of the cousins said their family stories said that there were Richters in their family as well as stories that there were family members who had gone to America.

It was interesting to learn how little the people who were expelled and their descendants know about their own families. In two cases the people who responded said they were illegitimate children and did not even know where their mothers came from originally - one was able to tell me his mother worked for a certain family but that was all.

Also, the youngest generation descended from the Sudetens who were expelled had very little interest in the "Heimat." They were born in Germany and considered themselves to be German, not Sudeten, and they only went to such things as the Sudeten Treffens to please their parents. They had little in common with other people at the Treffens -- they were not old school friends or neighbors, just a room full of strangers. The generation I am speaking about includes those who are in their early 30s.

There is an active effort by the various Sudeten Heimat groups to document the families who were expelled and to compile genealogical records and there are some families who have good records. But overall this effort is relatively uncoordinated.

Some of the people who replied to my letters sent me Ahnentafel of their own lineage so that I could look for common ancestors.

## Of Os, The Wizard

by Frank Koerner

We are in Os' home province in central Europe. Os and his wife are victims of this postwar event. Until he was 37 years old and newly arrived in Munich as a man without a country, Os had never resided in Germany. It is one year after World War II's end. Europe's recovery from the war is underway. This region had been mostly untouched by the recent, cataclysmic battles and the Allied bombings that had destroyed Germany. Now, Os and all of his countrymen are losing their homeland. Not even the perpetrator of the war, Germany, though brought to an absolute standstill by the Allied Powers, has lost its entire homeland. Allied bombs have leveled the major German cities. Poland has annexed Germany's easternmost territories via the Potsdam Agreement of the Big Four powers. Further, Germany has been split into a number of pieces by the Allies. To the victors go the spoils. Nevertheless, although it was to take fifty years, Germany would once again be united. But now in the immediate postwar era...an individual, former Wehrmacht soldier of a totally devastated nation could still return to Stuttgart, or Bremen, or his hometown village in the northern province of Schleswig-Holstein and begin to put his personal life back into order. Such a controlled choice, however, is not possible in *this* land.

What is occurring in this province is a unique event. It is happening on a scale unparalleled in recorded history. It involves millions of people. The event is the largest, single mass deportation ever perpetrated on a population. Os and others of his heritage are yet more victims of the recent war. Ironically, they are not citizens of Germany. They have never been citizens of that country except for a recent, brief, and tumultuous period. Citizenship of the recently vanquished Nazi regime had been imposed on them for a little over six years by the famed Munich Agreement of 1938. Other more powerful governments had negotiated that fact. Union with Nazi Germany had been imposed by diplomatic mandate and without their consent. They had been pawns in Hitler's pre-war political chess game. Now the people of the region are being victimized solely because of their ethnicity. The entire population segment is ordered to report to town squares, city halls, train depots, and open fields. Their property, real and personal, is confiscated and seized by the state. Almost the entire population is temporarily placed in concentration camps, subjected in some cases to beatings and death. Some are cruelly and brutally separated from family. Some elements of families will never see each other again. Deportees are commanded by the authorities to bring only 30 kgs. of personal effects. That amounts roughly to one full suitcase. Most folks bring only clothing, family pictures, and personal family documents. Left behind are homes, all other worldly possessions, and centuries of tradition and heritage. Possessing

an ethnic German name means immediate persecution. Based on that discriminatory issue alone, folks are summarily deported from their homeland to unknown destinations. Some are anti-Fascists who had fought in the underground *against* the Nazis *on the side of the government that is now deporting them*. More ironically, some had recently been liberated from Nazi concentration camps. There is no possibility of appeal.

In essence, their governing authorities are blaming these people collectively for all the evil that has recently been perpetrated in Europe by the Nazis. It is being done with the tacit consent of the victors. The overwhelming majority of these deportees are not Nazis. Most are simple, apolitical folk. Yet, the world does not care. It looks the other way. There are unsympathetic, bitter voices that utter, "The Germans are getting what they deserve. They are getting a taste of their own medicine". Paradoxically, however, these people now being herded into open railroad cars are not German citizens. They are not Germans and certainly not "responsible" for the recent war. This body of people has a history in their homeland that dates back 1000 years. These people are totally defenseless and bewildered by their situation.

This is the last time this group of people will ever be a consolidated, cohesive entity. Whole villages are being evacuated of their residents. Os' hometown, Zwittau, will drop from a population of 9,649 to 178 in a matter of hours. Some cities and towns will soon be absolutely devoid of people. They will become ghost towns. History and its documentation are being obliterated...burned, in some cases. Within this tattered group of people, Os is a hero, but nobody knows it. Many years later, Os is to become world renowned for humanitarian deeds he had recently accomplished. Now he and his people are being punished. When Os was a child growing up, one supposes he exhibited some of the traits that would give him world renown as an adult, but who could have been so perceptive to notice? There must be anecdotes to be gleaned from childhood comrades that would indicate his character development or personality. Was he a good guy?...a bad guy?...a con man?...a dashing ladies' man?...somebody would recall him. Yet, his personal, hometown history will be impossible to research since the deporting officials are intent on destruction of records. All vestiges of the existence of these deportees are to be destroyed. A culture is being exterminated. That is the *officially stated* goal. Modernly, in Bosnia, this sort of orchestrated mass deportation would become known euphemistically as "ethnic cleansing". Fifty years hence, a memorial to Os will be erected in his hometown. Replacement residents there will not even have heard of Os. There will be no trace of Os in his hometown records. There will *be* no hometown records.

Much will be made of the fact that after Os' death, his remains are interned in the far off land of some of the people he helped. What will always be unstated in those reports is the fact that Os' own homeland no longer exists. It would have been impossible for him to be buried in his homeland, even if he had so desired. Here, in 1946, *his rights to his homeland are being obliterated by design*. Childhood and adult comrades are being scattered all over the globe. Few individuals will be able to vouch for Os' childhood attitudes and behavior or corroborate adult traits. Those eyewitnesses to his youth will themselves be gone from here and residing elsewhere all over the globe...in the U.S., Germany, Austria, Guatemala, Australia, South Africa...or other scattered points. Their survival instincts will dictate their destinations.

Where is this place? We are in Moravia. Ironically, one of the more famous, so-called "good Germans" to step out of the Nazi era will prove to be Os. He is a birthright Czech citizen and a Sudeten German Moravian. He and his wife are among the 3,500,000 Sudeten (and other) ethnic Germans being deported from Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia in 1946 by the post-war Czechoslovakian government. When he dies, the Jews whose lives Os saved during the Holocaust will give his mortal remains a resting place in Israel, but his Sudeten spirit will be eternally homeless. Os is Oskar Schindler.

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## **Heimat Village History Oberh tten**

(according to **Johann Micko**)

The place known as Oberh tten is presumed to have been founded around 1618 as a glassworks. It was about one kilometer from the Bavarian border.

The village of Oberh tte began to develop in 1738 when the two brothers, Friedrich and Christof Wenzl von Wiedersperg, ruled in Muttersdorf. By giving construction sites they increased their own income through the settlement of tax-paying subjects. At the time Oberh tten belonged to the Bavarian village of Steinlohe which was a part of Bohemia until 1766. In 1788 there were already 14 households. The residents of Ober-h tten probably did their compulsory "Robot" labor in the manorial forests or at the Dianahof manor house. In 1851 all Robot and dues or payment of tribute was canceled.

In 1785 there was a total count of 93 persons living in Oberh tten. By 1839 there were already 200 inhabitants. In 1865 eight houses and all their nearby buildings burned down, in 1907 ten properties became victims of flames and 23 families were left homeless.

During the 1860s the men of Oberh tten still wore yellow leather knee-trousers, knee stockings and buckled shoes. Later they wore full trousers and long coats of leather.

The people of Oberh tten made pilgrimages to Bavaria, in particular to Ast, Neukirchen-Heiligenblut and to Pleystein; sometimes also to Alt tting and Maria Kulm. The parish church was first located in Muttersdorf and later in Waier. But often many of the residents went to church in Stadlern. The school for Oberh tten was in Unterh tten.

During the First World War, 33 men enlisted and five did not return home.

There is a lot that can be said about the name of Oberh tten which is "Owahitn" or also " auf da eiwan Hitn." At first, between 1651 to 1735, it is mentioned as "Glash tte Schwarzach" but with many variations. There has never been a glassworks in Schwarzach. The glassmakers in Oberh tten back then were: Andreas, Hans, Georg und Ulrich Nachtmann, then men named Paa, Meindl, a man from Reichenberg named Christof M ller, and also Christof M ller, Lindmeier, Schwingt Erl, Hirsch, Widl, R ckauer, Kopp and Werner.

*Inset: Map of the village of Oberh t-ten.*

During the First World War the following soldiers fell: Fritz Lang house Nr. 5, Johann Meisinger Nr. 6, Georg Paa Nr. 17, Max Wiedl Nr. 22, Michael Wiedl Nr. 22.

During the Second World War 39 men marched off and 16 of them failed to return. They were: Johann Fleischmann house Nr.1, Johann Fleischmann Nr.9, Karl Fleischmann 54, Josef Hubatsch Nr.7, Johann Lindmeier Nr.4, Michael Lindmeier Nr.4, Anton Nagelschmidt Nr.15, Johann Paa Nr.14, Johann Paa Nr.16, Josef Paa Nr.14, Michael Paa Nr.18, Franz Wiedl Nr.3, Karl Wiedl Nr.50, Max Wiedl Nr.50, Georg Vogl Nr.13, Karl Vogl Nr.54.

Now there are only wild shrubs surrounded by timber forest where Oberh tten once stood. After the expulsion the people of Oberh tten were scattered throughout Germany. There is a group of them who settled in Oberviechtach.

The families living in Oberh tten prior to the expulsion were:

#### **Hs. Nr. House Name Family Name**

1 Haisler Honas Johann Fleischmann

2 Bauern Fritz Fritz Fleischmann

3 Bauern Honas Johann Fleischmann  
 4 Veil Tone Anton Lindmeier  
 5 Luli Ignaz Vogl  
 6 Meißl Franz Meisinger  
 7 Huwatsch Joseph Hubatsch  
 8 Schicksn Karl Bauer(Kolonial- waren)  
 9 Zeisn Josef Fleischmann  
 11 Schwoum Girgl Georg Schwab  
 13 Boltl Leopold Vogl  
 14 Ferdl Honas Johann Paa  
 15 Doman Fritz Fritz Fleischmann  
 16 Weißn Tone Anton Paa  
 17 Motzn Korl Karl Paa  
 18 Babistn Korl Karl Fleischmann  
 (Kolonialwaren)  
 20 Hanaschn Honas Michael Vogl  
 21 Schwoum Hons Johann Paa  
 22 Wiedl Sepp Joseph Wiedl  
 27 Schouster Johann Johann Schmied  
 47 Schwoum Sepp Josef Paa  
 50 Wiedl Adolf Adolf Wiedl (Tabaktrafik)  
 51 Haisl Franzl Franz Fleischmann  
 54 Hanaschn Korl Karl Vogl  
 60 Haisl Korl Karl Fleischmann

## The Origins of Names

*(A question was posted to the G-B Electronic Mailing list asking for the meaning of the surname SAFENREITER. The reply was given by Frank G. Soural)*

The name is without doubt German. I have looked it up in my book of "Family Names" and although it is not mentioned specifically, the word Reiter suggests someone riding on horseback. and Safen could be an Americanization of "Seifen".

I recently read somewhere that Seifen in middle-high German meant "Swamp" like in the village name of "Rabenseifen"

While this is all conjecture it suggests that you should investigate further. If you like you can write to:

**Gesellschaft Fuer Deutsche Sprache,  
 Taunusstrasse 11,  
 65183 Wiesbaden, Germany**

They will give you an interpretation of your name and identify origins and year when first attested, for a fee of course. Last I heard it was 80DM (German marks). You can write to them in English.

It is quite possible that the name originated in German settlements in the Ukraine, Hungary, Rumania or any of the other German "Sprachinseln".

The title of the book is: "Das grosse Buch der Familien Namen"  
 Pub. Falken.1994, ISBN # 3 8068 4781 9.

## A Letter From Home

by **Bev Sacher**

I have English translations of some letters written circa 1923---one is quite interesting [to me anyway]; it describes the inflation that happened at the time of World War I and is from my husband's great-uncle to his brother in America. I shall never understand why these two brothers came to the United States and for the most part totally wrote off their families in Europe, especially realizing what they must have been living through! Deane has an aunt who is 99 and she hated her father and was totally disinterested in learning anything about her roots in Bohemia. Strange world! It occurs to me that [perhaps] there may be other folks who have, are or will possibly be researching the Sacher line, or perhaps people they married. I know Herbert Zellhofer in Vienna was helping us, as well as Gerhard--- don't know anyone else involved with this particular line but you never know---any way, I'll quote you what I think might be remotely of interest. This letter from Elizabeth Ohms aged 82 now in Hamburg.

"It is true, Grandmother was born April 11, 1850 in St. Joachimsthal and Anton was born November 29, 1852 as well in St. Joachimsthal. Bohemia and Moravia belonged before World War I to Austria (Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy).

Our ancestors and myself were born in Austria and we had Austrian citizenship. World War I came to an end in 1918. In October 28, the Czechoslovakia was founded - so we became citizens of Czechoslovakia (3 1/2 million



Germans). In 1938 we were connected to Germany and 1945 after the lost World War II, we were thrown out by the Czechs.

My Grandmother had several children - they all died except the youngest son (my father). They died when they were grown-ups - I don't know why. There were 3 or 4 girls and one son named Theodor. He was not in the war (1914-1918).

My father was born in 1885 - he married in 1913 and had to go to war. He was 28 years old then. When I was born in January 2, 1915, he was still in the war. Thank God, he came back after being quite some time in Russian prisons.

Grandmother adopted a girl from an orphans home - but without giving her a new name. The girl kept her name which was Anne Lorenz.

Aunt Anna's husband, Anton Proschka, was a miner. He worked in the mine "Einigkeitsschacht". The Czechs needed experienced mine workers to work for them and that's why they did not have to leave - being Germans. So they stayed in the country.

The contrary happened to us. My parents, my sisters and brothers had to go through a lot of pain. We had to leave in 1946 our home and country without taking one penny with us. It was a nightmare. First we had to stay in a camp - then got transported to Genthin (East Germany/DDR). My father and one of my brothers died there. I myself lost a husband in 1940 and married in Genthin a second time.

I am very attached to my home country and home town - and even now after all these years I get homesick from time to time. That is why I went home during the past years several times which was possible with a visa. From all the brothers and sisters of my Grandmother (note: My husband's grandfather was one of these brothers) I only knew Pauline and Franz. Aunt Pauline Sacher, born March 24, 1843 and died May 24, 1925 had the married name of Reinwarth.

She lived in Forsterhauser - a little town in the mountains not far from St. Joachimsthal - 4 hours by walking. I walked this way quite often - there was no public transportation. From her children (note: Aunt Pauline) I only knew the three living there. Hans born 1874, Wally born 1885 and Fanni, the youngest one. Fanni was married and her married name was Korb. Hans and Wally did not marry. They

lived all together in Forsterhauser, Hans died there. Wally, Fanni and her husband had to leave the country as well - like us. They got transported to Patz/Konigswusterhausen - close to Berlin (East Germany and later DDR). I kept in contact with them until they died."

Until I started trying to locate my husband's roots, I didn't realize what these Germans living in Bohemia had to go through. During World War II, all we heard was how terrible the Germans were and how horribly they treated the Czechs...which was probably true. One forgets that "labels" are poor indicators of reality in total!

## While The Emperor Struggled

Johann K estler (1866-1939)

by Don Koestler

Part I

In the last half of the 19th century, immigrants from Bohemia listed Germany, Bohemia, or Austria when asked for their country of origin. The first was their identity, the second their homeland, and the third their monarchy. Bohemia was a Crown land of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Their emperor, Franz-Joseph of the Habsburg Dynasty, accepted this order of loyalty as a way of life. When he first came to power he had inherited a diverse group of people and lands. He was determined to keep them united, but as separate kingdoms, during an era of rising nationalism. Preserving this inheritance was the driving force of his life. Often seen as struggling to save the old order, today he seems almost modern in his attempt to have a salad bowl empire while other leaders were preaching nationalism.

Franz-Joseph, ruled from 1848 to 1916 (68 years). His reign spanned from the revolution which took the Empire out of the feudal system known as "robot", all the way through to World War I. In addition, it sowed the seeds for World War II. His involvement in wars and political alliances in the name of empire, led to the fall of the House of Habsburg.

Bohemian royalty and armies played important roles in the struggle at various times. His first Prime Minister, Prince Felix Schwarzenburg, had his roots in Bohemia. You have heard of Felix's brother-in-law, Prince Windischgraetz (owner of the deactivated monastery at Kladrau), and the 35th Regiment from Karen Hobbs. And, while Franz-Joseph struggled to hold his empire together, the Germans of Bohemia struggling to cast off the life of the peasant, were subject to his fortunes. They were his farmers, tradesmen and civil administrators. They fought his wars. This is a two part story of two families, that of a father and that of his youngest son, who were inheritors themselves. The House of Habsburg fell with the death of Franz-Joseph in 1916. Thirty years later, the 1946 expulsion from Sudetenland was his legacy to them.

My grandfather came to America from Nedraschitz, County Mies in 1891. His older brother Johann stayed behind and took over the family farm. Johann was very interested in history. He left two diaries filled with information about his family and the community. This information was preserved by his son (Part Two), and it came to me from my second cousin, Johann Kostler of Bad Aibling, Bavaria; Germany.

The Johann of this story started school at 5-1/2. The school was in the neighboring village of Kostelzen. Kostelzen was the Parish Center. There was no road to Kostelzen - only a poor lane which flooded every time it rained and vehicles got stuck. In 1872, a school was built in Nedraschitz and his young life got better. He finished school by the age of 14 and went to work at the village brick-works for 30 Kreuzers a day as a brick carrier.

In 1881 he took a hard look at the carpenter tools left by his father who had died unexpectedly in 1879. (In Prague, from smallpox, after going there for help with eye cataracts.) Once having decided to become a carpenter, he went to the master carpenter and trainer at the castle in Kladrau. He was assigned to build houses in the surrounding villages. He again earned 30 Kreuzers a day. In his second year, a bad storm severely damaged the corner of the monastery facing Kladrau. All craftsmen and apprentices had to go to the monastery to fix the roof as quickly as possible. Johann worked from six in the morning to six at night. In addition, he walked a total of four hours getting to and from his home. There was a lunch allowance of 10 Kreuzers, but he had to bring his own bread from home. By the next year he had worked himself up to 35 Kreuzers a day.

At that time, Bohemian men were required to serve in the Austrian army for three years. In October of 1886, at the age of twenty, Johann reported for active duty in the Quick Dragoon Regiment in Vienna. While there, he had a chance to visit his uncle who was a Rechnungs Official in the Austrian Ministry of War. He described his three years in the military as "carefree". It was winter when he was released. Getting a job was a problem. His younger brother, Joseph (my grandfather), was a musician and gave him a chance to earn some money by playing the guitar.

In 1890, Johann's widowed mother remarried and moved to Hradzen. Before she left, she pushed him to marry - with the incentive that he, the oldest son, would get the family farm. The wedding was wonderful. It took place at the village of St. Barbara and was celebrated with music and dance in the village of Sekarschen. His wife, Anna Bauml, received a "Heiratsgut" (which translates as "marriage portion", or more commonly, dowry) of 1000 Gulden and one cow. But, he points out that the next year they were unlucky and had to butcher the cow and spend 50 Gulden on a carriage.

Then came the acquisition years. In 1892, they bought another field over at Honositzer for 265 florins. In 1894, the parlor was added to the house. Later came a threshing machine (70 florins) and chaff-cutter (40 florins), and soon it became time to slaughter another cow. By 1896, they were back to spending on the house, rebuilding the kitchen which through the years had developed blackened walls - smoke stained from the open fire-place. In 1900 they added a barn over toward the village of Templ. The farm expanded further with the purchase of some woodland and another field at Novina.

Johann served several years on the municipal council. He was elected treasurer. On January 22, 1913 tragedy came to the village. Eduart Helm, lord of the manor, shot himself to death. Helm left a letter asking that Johann keep the house in common with his wife until relatives could arrive. The mayor informed Johann.

When Helm's relatives arrived in Nedraschitz, Johann was asked to lead the funeral. He was also given the job of estate administrator until a relative could take over the farm. During this time he was paid 120 crowns and had to stay at the farm. On November first, Georg Helm came to become the new owner.

With the start of World War I in 1914, Johann's older sons were immediately inducted into the Austrian Army. By 1917 even he had been called up. He reported in March, but was furloughed in June to run the village granary. By the time the war ended in 1918, one son had been killed, and one left an invalid. Two other sons returned to face a clothing shortage. The civilian clothes that they had taken with them had been stolen. That which they had left at home had become too small.

By 1919 the family was able to buy the land that they had leased for twenty years. They paid 4612 Kronen for a little more than 2 Hectares. At last, all of the fields and some wooded land belonged to them. In 1926, after building a retirement room onto the house, Johann and his wife turned over the farm and everything that went with it to his son Georg. Johann continued to work on the farm as much as he was able. He died in 1939.

## Part II

When Franz-Joseph of the House of Habsburg ascended to the throne in Vienna (1848), he was a young man of eighteen. At that time the Austrian Empire was a mix of Germans, Slavs, Italians, and Magyars. It was a time of revolution which threatened to tear the Empire apart. Surprisingly, it was held together by Sophie, Franz-Joseph's mother. Her son would have an empire to rule! Little wonder that his 68 years on the throne were dedicated to preserving his inheritance.

The Monarchy, somewhat bent and twisted, survived the terrible battle of Solferino in 1859 - with its loss of parts of Italy. It survived the stand-down with Prussia at the battle of Koniggratz, Bohemia in 1866, after building a compromise to avoid the pull out of Hungary which resulted in the Dual Monarchy. Franz-Joseph became King of Hungary and Emperor of Austria in 1867. The Monarchy started, but did not survive World War I.

The Emperor's heir apparent, his nephew Franz-Ferdinand, was assassinated in Serbia in 1914. Franz-Joseph had not much liked Franz-Ferdinand, but he decided to punish Serbia with a little two-week war. As a result of a web of European alliances and large standing armies, that little skirmish became World War I. In 1916, Franz-Joseph died of a stroke at the age of 84. He had kept the peace in Europe for 48 years. But, he had lost the struggle. Everything came unglued. The Austro-Hungarian Empire was dismembered. In 1918, to the detriment of the Sudeten Germans of Bohemia, the state of Czechoslovakia was made out of the pieces. The European community didn't listen when the Sudetens cried out for self-determination. Their pleas to remain a part of Austria fell on deaf ears.

There was still a Bohemia, but now it merely defined an area within the new state of Czechoslovakia. Suddenly, its Germans had become a minority in a land where they had been the movers and shakers. Austria, too, had become a shadow of its former self. Little wonder that some Sudetens reacted with enthusiasm when they became a part of Germany in 1938. Little did they suspect that they would soon be helping to fight Hitler's battles. But another leader, the former Czech president Edvard Benes, would write the bitter ending to their struggle. Exiled in London by the war that followed, he planned and brought about the expulsion of the Sudetens from their homeland in 1945- 46.

In Part I of this story, the family of the elder Johann Kostler mourned its losses and worked hard to recover from World War I. They were finally able to purchase all of their land, and the machinery to farm it. Despite the changes in governments, things were looking good for the family.

The Johann of Part II was the youngest son. Born in 1908 in Nedraschitz, he missed serving in World War I. He was the last of seven brothers and sisters. In 1914 he was of an age to start school, and when his studies were completed in 1922, his family wanted him to become a carpenter. But, there was little work available. Fortunately, for the family, all of his brothers were working - earning money for

the recovery from the long years of war. It fell to the youngest brother to stay at home and work on the farm. Finally, in 1925, he was able to pursue a trade of his own choosing. He decided to become a baker. His apprenticeship was served under a baker on the "Wassergasse" in the town of Mies. Later, as a journeyman, he worked in the villages of Karlsbad, Teplitz, Leitmeritz and Zwng.

Johann's life was put on hold from October of 1929 until March of 1931. This was his first stint at mandatory military service. With the Czech army, he served in Falkenau and Eger.

In April of 1937, at the age of twenty-nine, he married Hermine Lebegern. Together they leased a bakery in Nedraschitz, and started to build the business of their dreams. The trade built up quickly, since his father had been a carpenter and the family name was well known and respected in the community. Then came the occupation by German troops in 1938. Business got even better.

[What was left of the Habsburgs' Austria had been annexed by Germany in March of 1938. In September the Munich Pact was approved by the major European powers. British Prime Minister Chamberlain expected that the signing of the pact would achieve "peace in our time." The Pact allowed for the German occupation of Sudetenland by Oct. 10. A year later World War II started with Hitler's invasion of Poland.]

The war started on September 1, 1939. By September 23 Johann had once again been conscripted into an army. This time it was German. Hermine continued to run the bakery with the help of a journeyman. Before long, the journeyman too was in the army. In January 1940, Johann's first son was born. Two daughters were also born during the war years.

Stationed on the Western Front, Johann took part in the invasion and occupation of France. He also served at Grimm and Kuban in Russia, and in Italy. Wounded on April 12, 1945, he was taken to various field hospitals across the Po river in Italy. Being in that part of Italy was considered by him to be a stroke of luck because he was captured by the American army near Cortina. As an American prisoner of war, he was first sent to Verona. He was imprisoned at Pisa during the winter. In January of 1946 he was sent to Bamberg, Germany. In March he was released to work in a bakery in a small German town. His family knew nothing of this, and did not get word until May. By this time the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans had been underway for about a year. Alone, his wife and children were expelled from their home without him. They resettled in a small village near Munich. The family was not reunited until November.

It was not unusual for husbands and wives to be separated at the time of expulsion. Johann's older brother Georg, who had taken over the family farm, had escaped conscription into the German army because of his age. Sometime after the start of the expulsion in May of 1945, he was interned in a work camp at Tschemoshna (where he suffered terribly); he had to stay behind when his family left. His family, like everyone else, was allowed to take only 50 kilograms (about 110 pounds) of luggage and had to leave everything else behind. "Everything else" included the farm, its livestock and machinery as described in Part I. Georg later rejoined his family in a small Bavarian town north of Numburg.

Johann was successful in finding work in Bavaria. His first job was with a processed food factory (probably related to his bakery experience). Except for one short period of unemployment, he made his living working for others - not being the entrepreneur as he had once hoped. Family life, almost for the first time, became normal. Another child was born in 1950. In 1987 he and his wife celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in the presence of many relatives and friends - some of whom came from their Bohemian homeland.

[From 1958 to 1990, Johann Kostler was the Ortsbetreuer for Nedraschitz and a frequent contributor to the genealogical society's Heimatbrief. From the diaries of his father, he put together a chronicle of the village which was included in the Mies archives at Dinkelsbühl Germany. When he died in 1993, more than 300 guests attended his funeral.]

## Visit Our Web Site

Visit the German-Bohemian Heritage Society web site at [www.rootsweb.com/~gbhs/](http://www.rootsweb.com/~gbhs/)

There is a wealth of information available to you with just a click of your mouse including back issues of the *Heimatbrief*.

The following is just some of the information available.

**Mission**  
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**The German-Bohemian Heritage Singers**  
**Links to member's pages**

**Information & Resources:**  
**German-Bohemian-L Mailing List**  
**Genealogical Resources**  
**A Youthful Quest Fulfilled by Bob Paulson**  
**German-Czech Declaration, January 1997**  
**Humor**

**Links to Other Resources:**  
**Sudetenland Resources**  
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**Czech Republic: Bohemia and Moravia Genealogical Research**  
**FEFHS (Federation of Eastern European Family History Societies)**  
**Internet Resources for German Genealogy**  
**The Newberry Library: Bohemian Genealogy**  
**Czechoslovak Genealogy Society Intl.**  
**Czech & Slovak American Genealogy Society of Illinois**  
**Rootsweb Genealogical Data Cooperative**

## More Rave Reviews

Recently the following book review was published in the *Minnesota History*, a quarterly magazine published by the Minnesota Historical Society. An excerpt is printed here.

**GERMAN-BOHEMIANS: THE QUIET IMMIGRANTS** by LaVern J. Ripply with Robert J. Paulson (Northfield, Minn. St. Olaf College Press for the German-Bohemian Heritage Society, 1995. 9/9 p. Cloth, \$25.00.)

La Vern Ripply is one of the most prolific writers researching the history of German Americans in Minnesota and elsewhere. In this volume he collaborates with Robert Paulson, founder of the German-Bohemian Heritage Society, to recount the heretofore largely untold story of immigrants to the New Ulm area from the German-speaking western rim of the present-day Czech Republic.

The authors give some attention to the standard models of immigration history, seeing in the saga of the German Bohemians in Brown County a clear illustration of chain migration, the tendency of Europeans to join relatives and compatriots who had previously settled in the New World. The chapter that compares the German Bohemians with the earlier German immigrants to New Ulm, the Turners, introduces another aspect of immigration theory: the nature of ethnic and status communities. In theory, the former group feels alienated from the larger society and tends to isolate itself, emphasizing the enduring values of the transplanted ethnic community. The status community, on the other hand, desires to be exclusive and resists contact with fellow ethnics outside of their group. The Turners in New Ulm represented a status community, while the Bohemians exemplified an ethnic one. These concepts serve as a framework for discussing these two groups.

But this is not meant to be a book about theories; it is, rather, a story of a community and of individual families, of Old World traditions replanted (or not) on the Minnesota frontier. It is a story well told in

this well organized book, beginning with a chapter on the historical background of the German-speaking area of Bohemia. Chapters sketching the immigration history of Brown County follow. The final chapters deal comprehensively with the themes of folklore, work, leisure, music, and the relationship of German Bohemians to a variety of U.S. national events.

The chapter on folklore offers an instructive treatment of the folk culture of German Bohemia. For the authors, folklore encompasses every possible aspect of daily life: "We shall interweave the oral with the visible the material with the spiritual, the religious with the secular." This is done in detail, working through the calendar and recounting the customs attached to all the religious feasts, secular observances, and family events. The book paints a colorful picture of German-Bohemian life.

The rich musical tradition of the German-Bohemian community is also thoroughly researched and chronicled in a fascinating contribution to the grand story of German-American music making. Almost everyone living in the region during the middle decades of this century was familiar with Whoopee John Wilfahrt and his band. This band, however, was just one among many that received its impetus from this ethnic community.

The theme of this book, like its subtitle, is "the quiet immigrants." It is under this rubric that certain features of the German-Bohemian community in Brown County are to be understood: nonparticipation in the Turner community end its activities, the nontransfer of some elements of Bohemian culture, lack of involvement in civic affairs (members rarely became active candidates for public office), absence of public utterances. "They seem almost conspicuous by their absence from public and economic matters of importance," the authors assert. Such negative evidence is quite as relevant to the discussion as is the plethora of positive detail that has been presented. It, too, becomes a key for understanding the nature of the community.

Like all of Dr. Rippley's previous works, this volume is painstakingly researched and fully documented in consistently helpful endnotes. A bibliography of works consulted is lacking and not really needed, though it might have been useful. The index is helpful. The book possesses a beautiful layout with an impressively abundant collection of photographs.

The high quality of this book is somewhat marred some imprecise formulations. However, this does not diminish the value of this study, the panoramic power of the presentation, and the evocative intensity of the story.

*German-Bohemians*, is in many ways a family chronicle that will be of great interest to the descendants of the immigrants featured in this book. They are able to hear the tale of their forebears and recognize the heritage that is still theirs. But readers with German-Bohemian antecedents are not the only ones who will appreciate this book. It provides everyone who desires to learn more about Minnesota's rich immigrant past and present with a splendid opportunity to listen in on the conversation.

The book's preface describes the figures and repeats the inscriptions on the monument to German-Bohemian immigrants standing in New Ulm's German Park. The monument is a striking testimonial to the richness of their tradition. This book expands that story in fullest detail. The quiet immigrants have found their voice.

Reviewed by John Kulas, who teaches German at St. John's University in Collegeville. He has a Ph.D. in German from the University of Minnesota and has recently published a study of the early years of the German-American newspaper, *Der Wanderer* of St. Paul.

*Ed. note: to purchase this book refer to the History For Sale section in this newsletter.*

## Online Translation Service Available

Those of you who are online now have a new translation service available. Set your browser on:

[www.babelfish.altavista.digital.com/cgi-bin/translate?](http://www.babelfish.altavista.digital.com/cgi-bin/translate?)

You can translate English to German or German to English and French, Spanish, and Portuguese translations are also available. The translations are not perfect, therefore it is very helpful to have some knowledge of the language you are working with. You also need to double check the translations watching particularly for proper names and words that have double meanings. For instance using a persons last name of Flint may translate to fire stick .

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## Addresses

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

### E-Mail

Society & Newsletter:  
[lalgbs@newulmtel.net](mailto:lalgbs@newulmtel.net)

### Research Information:

[rpaulgb@pioneerplanet.infi.net](mailto:rpaulgb@pioneerplanet.infi.net)

GBHS Home Page On The World Wide Web:

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

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## Newsletter Deadline

The next issue of the *Heimatbrief* will be published in June. Deadline for articles is May 1. Thank you.

## Newsletter Back Issues

The *Heimatbrief* newsletter back issues can now be found on our web site. Most issues are available back to 1991. Our web site is located at:

[www.rootsweb.com/~gbhs/](http://www.rootsweb.com/~gbhs/)

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311 Linden Street  
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**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

**Border People: The Bohemische (German-Bohemians) in America**

by Ken Meter and Robert Paulson

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## Sudeten Germans in Scandinavia

Based on translation of an article by Rudolf Hbner published in "Sudeten-Jahrbuch, 1952"

By **Karen Hobbs**

After their expulsion from the homeland, approximately 4500 Sudeten Germans found their way to Scandinavia. Most of them now live in Sweden. Only a few dozen live in Denmark and Norway.

With few exceptions they have integrated well in their host countries. For this, they can thank a small band of high-principled Sudeten-Germans who emigrated in 1938 in order to escape the unpredictable acts of revenge perpetrated by the National Socialists (Nazis).

At the time that the Munich accords allowed the incorporation of the Sudeten areas into the Third Reich many thousands who opposed National Socialism (mostly Social Democrats) fled into the unoccupied parts of Czechoslovakia. The loyalty of these German-speaking citizens were badly repaid by the Prague government and most of them were forced to return to their home areas. More than 10,000 Sudeten Germans were delivered to concentration camps as a result of the Czech government's "debt" to Hitler. Only about 4000 of them escaped to foreign countries. About 230 found sanctuary in Sweden, 90 in Denmark, 60 in Norway and 50 in Finland. At the time there were few possibilities for employment in these countries and it was very difficult for the Sudetens to establish a new life -- especially for those who had to learn a new trade or profession. But ultimately they overcame these difficulties admirably. Their industry and methodical organization were the cornerstones of the good reputations they soon developed and these attributes made it possible for thousands of other Sudeten Germans to emigrate to Sweden after the war. Germany's conquest of Denmark and Norway forced most of the Sudeten emigrants in those lands to flee to Sweden. Some of them failed to get away. For example the Sudeten German artist (painter) Georg Hans Trapp was arrested in Norway and he was imprisoned in a concentration camp until the end of the war. A similar fate befell the Sudeten Germans in Finland as that country drew closer to Germany while she was at war with Russia.

For many months the refugees had to lead a life to which they were little accustomed -- the hard life of lumberjacks in the Swedish north country.

The emigrants of 1938 founded the "Treugemeinschaft Sudetendeutscher Sozialdemokraten" (Loyal Society of Sudeten-German Social Democrats) which remains to this day (1957) the summary organization of the Sudeten ethnic group in Scandinavia.

Once the Sudeten areas were absorbed by Germans the German Social Democratic Worker Party in the Czechoslovakian Republic lost its primary following (sphere of activity). In February, 1939, there was an unusual "Party-day" during which the "Treugemeinschaft Sudetendeutscher Sozialdemokraten" was established. This new party continued the traditions of the old party and began to work with foreign nations towards the deliverance of the homeland from the Nazis. One of the main places where the Treugemeinschaft set up its programs was in London. In Scandinavia, Ernst Paul came from Prague to represent the interests of the Sudeten Germans. Tirelessly dedicated, he carried on his work for the greater "family" of those who shared his fate. The successful alliance of the folk-group with agencies of the Swedish government are due for the greater part to the efforts of this man. Among his personal friends, Ernst Paul is considered to be the most important statesman in the north.

In the interest of peace and in spite of bad relations with the Czechs the Treugemeinschaft strove to establish a generally satisfactory coexistence between Czech and Sudeten-German emigrants in Sweden through effective cooperation. But when the clique around Dr. Benesch and Dr. Ripka convinced the allied consortium to consent to the expulsion of Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia and the Czech foreign policy leaned more and more towards the Soviet Union, this cooperative contact broke down.

At that time the Treugemeinschaft did all that could be done to prevent the criminal expulsion -- in vain, unfortunately. The Czech colony in Stockholm who arrived in 1838 and had had to make the same adjustments during their first years there, now denounced the Treugemeinschaft and the Sudeten-Germans as Nazis. The Swedish author, Amelie Posse, who was married to the Czech artist (painter) Brazda used the common situation to call attention to herself. Now, she brazenly presented her many "connections" to the top authorities of Czech foreign propaganda in Sweden.

As tragedy closed in on the Sudeten-Germans in the homeland during 1945 the small band of emigrants in the north set a fine example of solidarity and willingness to sacrifice. Ernst Paul set all machinery in motion to secure a Swedish relief effort. First, the Socialdemocratic Social Minister, Gustav Mller, issued 200 prospective entry visas. The members of the Treugemeinschaft donated one week's wages to a relief fund and Undersecretary Folke Thunborg established a source of Swedish funds. The former Social Democratic Party Secretary, Bruno Rother from Brnn, solicited a \$12,000 donation from the International Rescue and Relief Committee in New York. The Swedish Social Democrat, Axel Granath, who had already established asylum for Sudeten-Germans and Czechs opposed to the Nazis in Sweden during 1938, used his personal contacts in Prague government agencies in an effort to get assistance. This led him to the Czech Social Democratic Party Secretary in Prague, Frantisek Raus, whose basic humanitarianism was not weakened while he spent many years in a concentration camp in Germany. He proved to be a steadfast champion of the Sudeten Germans in defiance of the hostile Czechs. Today Raus has also emigrated to Sweden.

All of this eventually led to the evacuation of 250 Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia to Sweden. Two columns of Swedish Red Cross motor vehicles transported these emigrants from northern Bohemia and Pilsen at the end of 1945 and beginning of 1946.

The Treugemeinschaft in cooperation with the Swedish "Europahilfe" organization also assisted the Sudetens expelled to Germany with food, clothing and shoes valued at more than 100,000 Swedish Kronen. Packages were also sent from Sweden to Sudeten German prisoners of war in the Soviet Union. Two items of Vibro construction equipment were delivered to Wrtingen to support the construction effort for displaced persons there. When compared to the combined need of the Sudeten refugees this assistance may seem to be quite minor, but considering that it was the result of the effort of a few hundred 1938 emigrants to Sweden, it was an extraordinary performance. Ernst Paul also tried resolutely to arrange with the West German occupation authorities for Sudeten Germans to emigrate to Sweden. He was successful in the end because the Swedish Labor Authority was recruiting workers and they convinced the Austrian authorities to recruit Sudeten German Labor-power in Austria. As a result, in 1948 another 1832 Sudetens found their way to Sweden.

The departure regulations for Sudetens were finally relaxed in West Germany and after much hard work on details the Treugemeinschaft was able to smooth the way for about 1200 Sudeten Germans in West Germany to emigrate to Sweden also.

These newcomers found support and good advice among the established immigrants and with the favorable economic situation and good wages that were possible in the period after the war they were able to establish themselves quickly and comfortably.

Now these 4500 Sudeten Germans live scattered throughout the country. Large numbers of them are found in Stockholm and Malm, in Eskilstuna, Vsteras and Bor s. They are also at home in the smaller industrial towns of the mountains of middle Sweden and Dalarna, in the vicinity of Jnkping (the match-making city), in Linkping and Norrkping. And everywhere they maintain their solidarity in the Treugemeinschaft which has more than 1200 members in 132 places. Its 32 groups form a network which crisscrosses middle and southern Sweden. It is only in the harsh northland that the Sudeten population is more sparse. A very quiet group works in Gvle and the most northern cell is located in Tornskldsvik. There are groups in Denmark in the cities of Copenhagen and Odense and in Norway there group is located in Oslo.

In Sweden the Treugemeinschaft works to facilitate integration of the Sudeten Germans into Swedish life. That is now its main purpose. The Swedish are quite different from the Sudetens. They are very reserved and tend to live in closed social circles. Thus they often unintentionally force newcomers to stick together and take care of themselves. But now Sudeten youth are growing up in harmony with the Swedish environment -- exactly as Sudeten youth grow up in Germany and Austria -- while the Sudeten elders follow their path with each other. There are special events arranged by the Treugemeinschaft -- lectures, discussions, dances, bus and ship excursions. The Treugemeinschaft takes care of its members at work and play. It has now begun to organize group travel to Germany.

The "Bltter fr Sudetendeutsche Sozialdemokraten," a magazine published in an edition of 1000 copies ten times a year by the Treugemeinschaft, is read in Germany, Austria, England and Canada as well as in Sweden.

The Sudetens in Sweden work primarily in industry. About 35% work in metal, machine, and electro-industry while another 20% work in textile industry and in confectioneries. Some of these latter are independent businesses. The Swedish glass and porcelain industry has taken about 6%, among them many who were highly experienced workers from the formerly-renowned glass industry of north Bohemia. Another 12% are employed as domestic helpers; in child care, as cooks, housekeepers and in similar positions. The rest are spread through various trades and professions.

The Sudetens first arrived in Sweden with little property. Their energy and their willingness to work was their only wealth. They have greatly improved their situations. With few exceptions the Sudeten German workers have already achieved a living standard equal to the unusually high standard of the Swedish worker. Many of them live under living conditions much more comfortable than they could ever have hoped to create in their former homes.

Very few Sudetens work in offices or in elevated professions. Foreign professionals face strong resistance in Sweden -- primarily because of difficulties with language. Thus many of the emigrants in such professions faced a reduction in status once they arrived in Sweden.

The painter, Georg Hans Trapp, is almost the only one from the group of Sudeten artists who arrived in Sweden who has remained there. Before the war he already had an established reputation as a graphic artist in the homeland. He went first to Norway where the Gestapo arrested him. Until the end of the war he endured a dreadful German K.Z. (?) prison. He arrived in Sweden at the end of 1945 and after that his true wealth of artistic talent began to reveal itself. His series of graphic masterpieces drawn from his memories of the thousands of unknowns and their terrible sacrifices in the K.Z. prisons are a serious warning to all of mankind.

Trapp also created oil paintings in Sweden. The collection found in his beautifully situated home at Grnna am V tternsee is one of the more significant attractions for friends of the arts in the entire country -- all the more because the paintings are unusually stirring when seen in contrast with the starkness of life. They truly warm the heart and enrich the mind.

Martin Grill, another artist from Sudetenland, lives in S dert lje. In the daytime he is employed as a metalworker. During his free time he creates poetry. His work is little known. The collections of Sudeten poetry that appeared after the war in Germany did not once mention his name. His collection of poetry entitled "B hmische Passion -- Eine Fahrt ins Menschenland," which was written during the war and during the period leading up to the expulsion, is a combination of lyric poetry, a mature sonnet and many short stories. It still awaits a publisher.

Erna K nast who lives in Huddinge exhibits a similar skill. She earns her living in a stocking factory and her deep, sensitive poetry has remained relatively unknown up to now. Her little collection of poetry captures the magic of the "Visings ," weaving a tale around the rich natural beauty of that island in the V tternsee.

There is only one practicing Sudeten scholar in Sweden. He is the historian, Dr. Emil Schieche, who is now Dozent at the Stockholm University. He was born in B hmisch-Kamnitz.

In general the Sudeten-Germans have adjusted quite well to the different living conditions of Scandinavia. While the war caused other groups of foreigners in Sweden -- from such countries as Estonia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland and Czech lands -- to seek safety overseas in ever greater numbers, that tendency has not yet appeared among the Sudeten Germans in Scandinavia. That seems to indicate they have established "roots" although preserving their old traditions is complicated by how widely they are scattered. Absorption within the Swedish population may be merely a question of one generation if no unforeseen and extraordinary circumstance interferes. In the larger cities in particular it is only a question of time before different social contacts begin to break down the stratification of the German colony in Sweden.

However, today's group in Sweden feels strongly attached to the greater Sudeten population and holds fast to their different traditions.

1952 Sudeten-Jahrbuch der Seliger-Gemeinde (Munich).

## New Book Available

*From the G-B Rootsweb Electronic Mailing List*

### **Valley of the Shadow : After the Turmoil, My Heart Cries No More**

by Erich Anton Helfert

Hardcover, 372 pages

Published by Creative Arts Book Co

Publication date: February 1, 1997

Dimensions (in inches): 9.33 x 6.33 x 1.30

ISBN: 0887391176

Dr. Helmut Kohl, the Federal Chancellor, Federal Republic of Germany states: The hard and depressing fate of the Sudeten Germans, which was also the fate of your family, will not be left or be forgotten. This especially means that we be made conscious of both the tragedy itself and its consequences, which extend even into our current time. Your [moving family chronicle] makes a good contribution to this end .

#### **Book Description :**

A fourteen-year-old boy witnesses the upheavals, tragedies and displacement sweeping central Europe right after World War II. The action centers on the Sudetenland, where the native German-speaking population was uprooted and forced into exile by the Czech government at the end of the war. The Sudetenland, a former province of Austria which had been given to newly formed Czechoslovakia by the Allies at the end of World War I, was annexed in 1938 to Germany by Hitler before he occupied all of Czechoslovakia. The territory was returned to Czechoslovakia by the victorious Allies in May 1945. Sudden mass expulsions of the native German-speaking population by the new Czechoslovak government began soon after. From occupation by the Russians to dispossession and displacement by a new Czech government, and the tragic loss of his father and older brother, Dr. Helfert relays the history of his family and country during the tumultuous years just after World War II.

#### **About the Author :**

Erich Anton Helfert was born in Sudetenland in 1931. He gained writing experience as a journalist and correspondent. Dr. Helfert has published extensively in the field of finance during a career of teaching at Harvard, corporate management, and management consulting. His bestseller Techniques of Financial Analysis is in its ninth edition. Valley of the Shadow is his first literary work.

*(Ed. At last a great book about the Sudeten Germans written in English! The book may not be stocked at many book stores but can be ordered by them for around \$25. If you are online you can order the book from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) for \$17.50 plus \$3.95 S & H.) I would like to hear from those of you who have read this book and have an opinion you would like to share with our readers. You can write me at our P.O. box or email me at [lalghs@newulmtel.net](mailto:lalghs@newulmtel.net)*

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**Gertrude Beranek**  
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**Emma Dittrich**  
from Randy & Monica Wenninger,  
Paul & Janice Kretsch,  
Eleanor Kretsch

## Coming Events

April 4, 1998  
Board of Directors Meeting  
April 17, 1998  
GBHS Spring Dance  
May 16, 1998  
General Meeting/Workshop  
August 8, 1998  
GBHS Annual Picnic  
September 19, 1998  
Board of Directors Meeting  
October 24, 1998  
Fall General Meeting  
November 14, 1998  
Board of Directors Meeting

## German-Bohemian Heritage Singers Dates of Performances

April 17  
GBHS Spring Dance  
Turner Hall, New Ulm

April 25  
Elks Club  
Fergus Falls, MN

May 3  
Maifest  
Bayrischerhof Restaurant  
Montrose, MN

June 8  
German Park  
New Ulm, MN

July 11, 17, 18  
Heritagefest  
New Ulm, MN

August 8  
GBHS Picnic  
Herman Heights Park  
New Ulm, MN

October 2, 4, 9, 11  
Oktoberfest  
New Ulm, MN

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