

the Heimatbrie

A Newsletter Magazine of the German-Bohemian Heritage Society

Celebrating the GBHS' 17th Year

Vol XIII No. 1 March 2002

Village of Rothenbaum

GBHS Officers and Board Members

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Paul Kretsch
311 Linden Street
New Ulm, Minnesota 56073-1519
Telephone: (507) 354-2763
Email: pjkretsch@newulmtel.net

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Addresses

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

Research Center:

1200 South Broadway (lower level rear of building)
New Ulm, MN

Hours: 1st Saturday of each month 1:30 p.m.- 4:00 p.m. &
2nd Tuesday of each month 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

E-Mail

Society & Newsletter: Louis Lindmeyer

lal@newulmtel.net

Research Information: Robert Paulson

rpaulgb@skypoint.com

GBHS Home Page On The World Wide Web:
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~gbhs/>

German-Bohemian Heritage Society Newsletter

Editor: Louis Lindmeyer
1536 Lee Ave.
New Ulm, MN 56073
507-354-4831
Fax 507-354-2505
Email: lal@newulmtel.net

The GBHS "Heimatbrief" newsletter is published four times per year in March, June, September, December. Deadlines for articles are posted in each newsletter. Membership dues are \$15.00 per year for a family membership in the continental U.S., \$15.00 outside the U.S. Family membership includes those living in the same household. GBHS financial statements are available to members upon request.

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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@newulmtel.net. This newsletter was created using a Macintosh G3 computer.

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Addresses

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Coming Events

March 16, 2002

Board of Directors Meeting

April 21, 2002

Spring Dance and King Coronation

May 11, 2002

GBHS General Meeting
N. U. Public Library Lower Level
New Ulm, MN

August 24, 2002

GBHS Picnic
Herman Heights Park
New Ulm, MN

GBHS Spring Dance & Bohemian King Coronation Set

The date has been set for the GBHS Spring Dance and the coronation of a new honorary Bohemian King. The spring dance will be held on Sunday, April 21st, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Turner Hall in New Ulm. Admission price is \$5.00 per person. There will be a cash bar and snacks will be available at no charge. Johnny Helget, and David and Sandy Suess will be playing your favorite old-time music for your listening and dancing pleasure.

The GBHS has been without an honorary Bohemian King since the passing of Kurt Eisen in August of 2001.

The practice of electing a "Boehmer Koenig" dates back to the year 1875 with the election of Peter Gag as the very first King of the Bohemians. According to an article in the May 17th 1911 issue of the New Ulm Review, Peter Gag was described as "an old and respected citizen of New Ulm who has done more than anyone else for the comfort

Ulm who has done more than anyone else for the comfort of his native countrymen, when they - strangers in a foreign land - come to this country from the fatherland". Peter Gag was born in Trohatin, Bohemia in 1825 and immigrated to America in 1855 with his family, first settling in New Wien, Iowa where he resided for two years after which he traveled to Brown County where he homesteaded in Cottonwood township. He farmed until 1887 when he moved to New Ulm. Peter Gag was one of the first German-Bohemians to settle in the New Ulm area. He died in April of 1911.

The same newspaper article goes on to describe in some detail the festivities surrounding the election of the second "Boehmer Koenig", prominent New Ulm attorney Joseph A. Eckstein, "Two hundred and thirty-six votes were counted and of these Joseph A. Eckstein received two hundred seventeen. He was therefore "declared and proclaimed to be King of the Bohemians of New Ulm and vicinity." The result of the election was received with great applause. After the crowning of the King, his majesty read his first proclamation announcing his cabinet and other officials of the Kingdom.

"His Majesty, the New King, announces to his subjects the appointment of the following gentlemen as members of his Cabinet: Prince Regent, Joseph Gag; Secretary of State, Henry Seifert; Secretary of War, Anton Wiesner; Secretary of the Navy, Mathew Pedersen; Secretary of the Treasury, Henry J. Berg; Secretary of the Interior, Louis J. Vogel; Attorney General, Wenceslaus H. Dempsey; Postmaster General, Joseph Smasal; Secretary of Agriculture, Joseph Wiesner; Secretary of Commerce, Peter J. Soukup; Imperial Hofkapellmeister, Joseph Bier."

The foregoing members of the Cabinet to His Majesty, are each to receive a salary of \$25,000 per year, but they must find out themselves where to get it."

The following ambassadors are hereby appointed by His Majesty, the King of the Bohemians, to foreign countries, each with a salary of \$10,000 per year, but they must find out themselves where to get it."

Lamberton, John G. Haas; Sanborn, Henry Schwerdtfeger; Springfield, George Reis; Gaenseviertel, New Ulm, John Baeuml; New Prague, Le Sueur and Scott Counties, Mathew Siebenbrunner; St. George, Leonard Vetter; Klossner, Karl Muehlbauer; Courtland, Edward Precht; Searles, Jos. J. Sperl; Sleepy Eye, Michael Radl; Essig John Siebenbrunner; Morgan, Frank Schiefert; Iberia, Anton Rubey; Comfrey, Frank Schwertzler; Town of Sigel, Anton Hillesheim; Green Isle, Patrick R. McHale; Fairfax, George A. Leary."

Joseph A. Eckstein was born in Bohemia on October 25, 1857 and came to America with his parents in 1862 and

settled in Sigel township. Mr. Eckstein attended state normal school at Mankato and upon graduation taught school for several years. He then studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1880 and was considered one of the best criminal lawyers in the state. For seventeen years, Mr. Eckstein was city attorney of New Ulm. Upon the death of Joseph Eckstein in April of 1915, Anton "Tony" Wiesner was elected the King of the Bohemians. Tony was born in 1861 in Bohemia and immigrated with his parents in 1878. He operated a livery barn in New Ulm and later drove the Dakota Hotel bus. He moved to St. Paul about 1919 where he died in 1942.

George Wurmstein of Springfield was elected the high office when Tony Wiesner moved from New Ulm. George was also born in Bohemia on Nov. 25, 1866 and came to this country when he was eighteen years old. He followed the trade of bricklayer, was a saloonkeeper, and later he was "deposed" in 1925. He died in 1931.

The rather clouded selection of the next claimant to the throne is in the New Ulm Review on Feb. 1925:

"George Wurmstein of Springfield who now holds the title of "Boehmer Koenig" of Brown County will no doubt be surprised to learn that there is a "Pretender" to the throne in the person of John Seifert of Milford who at a gathering of the klan at the Seifert home last Thursday was proclaimed "King of Bohemia." "Thirty of Siefert's friends, German-Bohemians and near Bohemians, journeyed to the Seifert home in the evening accompanied by a band of six pieces and then and there the host was elected to fill this honorable and worthy position. Adolf A. Alwin acted as master of ceremonies and from all reports he was equal to the occasion. After the king had been elected and crowned, it was suggested by someone, the establishment of the king would not be complete without a "Hofnarr" and to his important position "Gustel" Schneider was installed by the master of ceremonies."

With this important work disposed of, the guests enjoyed themselves by playing cards, singing German folk songs and listening to the band. There were good things to eat on hand. The host had three different kind of sausages and the followers of the king certainly did justice to the splendid repast. This king crowning episode came to an end at one o'clock when the guests returned to their homes well satisfied that they had spent an enjoyable evening and had elected a worthy king.

John Seifert of Milford was the first Bohemian King born in America. He was born in May of 1878, the son of Joseph Seifert who came to this country in 1867 with his father John and two brothers Andrew and Christ. They joined another brother, John Jr., who immigrated earlier; thus establishing the large Milford branch of the Seifert family.

Nearly thirty-five years later the German-Bohemian Heritage Society revived the tradition of electing a "Böhmer König". Otto Dietz, a life-long Cottonwood township farmer, was unanimously elected and properly installed at the annual picnic held in August 1985 at Herman Park in New Ulm. Otto was a fitting candidate for this noble office for he was very proud of his German-Bohemian heritage and related many stories about the German-Bohemian community and the previous Bohemian Kings. Otto was born Feb. 17, 1900 in Cottonwood township, the third generation of the Dietz family to farm his grandfather's homestead. Unfortunately Otto enjoyed his lofty office for but a few months, for he died in December 1985. The throne again remained vacant for several months in tribute to the memory of the dead king. Kurt Eisen was then installed as Bohemian King in 1986 and reigned until his passing this past year.

It is now time again to crown a new "Boehmer Koenig". The board of directors have reviewed nominees and have chosen the next king. The board's selection will remain a secret until the crowning ceremony at the spring dance.

Please mark your calendars for April 21st and plan to attend. The dance is open to the public so please bring your friends for an enjoyable Sunday afternoon of music, dancing, and friendship.

(Editors note: Thanks to Robert Paulson for contributing to this article.)

GBHS Spring General Meeting

The GBHS spring membership meeting will be held on May 11, 2002 in the lower level of the New Ulm Public Library. The meeting will begin promptly at 9:00 a.m. Robert Paulson will give a travelogue of his trip to the Czech Republic and the German-Bohemian villages this past summer. The meeting is open to the public.

Research Center Hours

The hours for the GBHS Research Center are as follows; First Saturday of each month from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. and the second Tuesday of the month from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. The research center is located at 1200 South Broadway (lower level rear of building) in New Ulm. The research center may not be open if the open hours fall on a holiday weekend. Call Don Brand at 507-354-5688 for further information.

Holy Week and Easter in the Old Heimat

The celebration of the Holy Week and Easter rites in the churches of our Heimat are among our most beautiful memories. We felt very much at home with the Christmas celebrations in Germany but we found the Easter Season back in the Heimat to be much more beautiful than it is here.

On Palm Sunday all of the boys came to church with palm branches decorated with colorful ribbons -- each trying to have the most beautiful one. The palms were blessed followed by a procession around the church that was reminiscent of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. On Maunday Thursday (Holy Thursday) the church bells and the organ were silenced during the morning service and the Ratschenbuben (boys with rattles or noisemakers) took position near the altar and used their rattles (Ratschen) during the Holy Mass. At noon they signaled the arrival of the Angel of The Lord.

On Good Friday (Karfreitag) the church service was held in the morning with the church in semi-darkness. One had to get there early in order to get a place to sit because this was one of the few days in the year when people came who would not be seen in church at other times -- the Good Friday Christians. The priest, dressed in black vestments, would position himself on the altar steps while the choir chanted the story of the crucifixion according to John with beautiful solos throughout. That was a truly marvelous experience! The priest removed his shoes and in stocking feet he proceeded to remove the draping from the cross while singing the "Eccelignum crucis." During Good Friday afternoon we went to the stations of the cross on a nearby hillside and also to the holy sepulchre (probably the church, funeral chapel or a chapel in the church crypt) where the most sacred sacrament was exposed in a Monstrance that had a purple veil thrown over it.

The wonderful climax of the week and beginning of the celebrations of the Easter season was the Easter vigil procession that started right after dark on Holy Saturday evening. All the houses along the route of the procession were darkened except for candles in their windows. At the "Holy Sepulchre" the priest removed the veil from the Monstrance, held it up in front of the congregation and sang, "Christus ist auferstanden, Alleluja!" (Christ has risen! Alleluia!)

The procession into the church was accompanied by festive music from drums and horns and whatever instruments were available while the people sang. As the procession made its way from the dark into the light of the beautifully decorated church the Te Deum was sung. On Easter Sunday and Easter Monday everyone was eager to attend services again, to sing the beautiful Easter

hymns and to hear the Easter sermons. That is how we spent Easter in the old Heimat!!

Written by Georg Woratsch
Taken from Glaube und Heimat
Translated/edited by Karen Hobbs

My Cousin Albert

by Terry Kita

I met my cousin Albert Multerer and his wife Rosa, in Rittsteig, Germany, June 9th, 2001. Rittsteig is just across the border from St. Katherine (Sv. Katarina), in southern Bohemia, where Albert was born and tried to grow up. His growing up in St. Katherine was interrupted by WWII. Albert had suggested that we meet in the pension that his friend owned.

Earlier that day my wife and I had driven through beautiful southern Bohemian countryside, including the towns of Zelezna Ruda and Tynec, the castle and museum at Klenova, to Rittsteig. The area is south of Pilsen (Plzen), in the Bohmerwald. We were near the end of our two-week trip to Poland and the Czech Republic. The primary reason for the trip was the wedding of Petra and Petr. Ten years ago Petra had lived in our Minneapolis home while attending South High School. While we were in tile neighborhood I wanted to show my wife and daughter a little of Poland, and southern Bohemia.

My great-grandparents Valentine and Magdalena Kita had immigrated from an area north of Poznan, Poland to Door County, Wisconsin, in 1881. I had been able to locate their birthplaces, and find 'Kita cousins' on an earlier trip. I wanted them to see the area where my Polish ancestors had lived. Anil does not share my interest in genealogy, and wants no part of traipsing around looking for old relatives, records, graves, etc. I had to be able to tread lightly on the genealogical side.

We spent about a week in Poland, including Torun and Kalisz, where I had attended English language camps, Lubasz, where the Kita family originated from, Wroclaw, where we visited Ania and her father Andrzej, Oswiecim, where Emily and I walked the big camp, and finally Krakow and the old Jewish quarter. The wedding was a wonderful experience. Just as she was part of our family in Minneapolis, so too have Petra, parents and friends treated us as family on our visits. We planned to visit Prague and southern Bohemia after the wedding, although I had an ulterior motive to the southern Bohemia visit.

My maternal grandmother's family originated from southern Bohemia, and nearby Bavaria. Her family was the third quarter of my European ancestors I intended to

research. They immigrated to eastern Wisconsin, near Manitowac, in the 1850's - 1870s. My cousin Jan has spent a lot of time researching this part of our family but I knew very little about them, or of relatives living in the area. I had visited the village of Hirschau (Hyrsov), South Bohemia, where my great-grandfather George Simmet was born, on a previous trip with Petra and family. Catherine Multerer, perhaps born in Bohemia, married Johann Koeppel (Koppel), from Bavaria, in Manitowac, Wisconsin, October 1854. Their daughter Walburga married George Simmet of Hirschau. The area around Manitowac was heavily settled by Germans, German-Bohemians, and Czechs from South Bohemia and Bavaria, from 1820 on. Town and road names near Manitowac reflect the settlers' ancestry.

visit the area where Albert had been born, towns along the border, the village of Hirschau, and a church which he had helped to reconstruct.

Rittsteig is about 2km south from the Bohemian-Bavarian border, on the road to St. Katherine. Just after the border we stopped at Albert's land in Bohemia. It was his land but is no longer because he is German and this land is in Bohemia. He was one of about 3,000,000 citizens of German ancestry living in Czechoslovakia prior to WWII. His father's farm was just on the border, in Czechoslovakia. His uncle's farm was just south, in Bavaria. Toward the end of WWII, as the Americans were heading toward Germany, they fought with German troops on the Multerer land. German troops hidden in their woods were bombarded by American artillery, as was their farmhouse

Shortly after the war was over, when Albert was 5 years old, those of German ancestry were expelled from Czechoslovakia. He remembers being loaded into a freight car, traveling for about a week, with a few possessions, and being unloaded in Munich. He grew up, married Rosa, had several children, and lives in Grabenstatt, near Salzburg, where he manufactures and sells ski lifts. We walked about part of his land, which he could never own. On the distant hillside one could see the cut through the forest where the iron curtain had been. The original version was a high voltage fence meant to electrocute, the later version only to separate.

We drove to the small village of St. Katherine. It had the misfortune to be near enough to the border to be bulldozed by the Communist troops shortly after they took control. Because of the space needed for the iron curtain, a border access road, and no-man's land, several kilometers of land adjacent to the border had been cleared in places, and all persons removed.

Rothenbaum Kirche

While visiting relatives near Manitowac last year, I learned that the brother of a distant cousin had sold land to a German by the name of Multerer, the surname of my great-great-grandmother. I asked for and was given the address and FAX number of Albert Multerer, in Germany. By FAX I introduced myself as a potential relative, and invited us to meet with Albert near Hirschau. Albert was happy to oblige, and made reservations for us to meet at Rittsteig.

Albert speaks English well, partly from spending a month each year in Canada and the USA, and because he sells equipment to English speaking customers. Fortunately their English is much better than our German. Their daughter Rosa had spent one year at Manitowac high school with relatives of Albert's great-uncles, who had migrated there. We met in the evening, had dinner, a bottle of wine, and talked for a while. Next day we would

He showed us several tombstones where the church had been. While visiting this area during communist control, he had made the acquaintance of the man who owned the land next to the church. When he uncovered several tombstones while excavating for a building addition, he contacted Albert. They were able to rescue several of them, and set up a small monument on the church site. There are very few remaining structures from before the war. We set off north along the border, for villages that had been. It is eerie traveling along the narrow asphalt road that was used to patrol the iron curtain. It is not a commonly traveled road, and is not marked. Every shred of the iron Curtain was torn out earlier in the 1990s.

Next village was Rothenbaum, which had a parish church until it was demolished. Its foundation skeleton has been redone. Most of the tombstones had been uncovered by former residents and their families, and stacked along the periphery of the graveyard. It will be rebuilt at a future date. Very few of the prewar structures

remain. Pictures and the history of Rothenbaum described it as a particularly beautiful Catholic Church. Most of the area along this part of the border is rolling hills, formerly inhabited by German farmers. Most of the interior periphery of Bohemia, adjacent to the German and Polish borders, was occupied by German-Bohemians. Every 10 miles or so was a Catholic church, around which clustered the parish villages. It appears that most marriages were between fellow parishioners. An interesting fact about the German-Bohemian parishes near the border is that they could include parishioners from Bavaria - Albert's uncle from Bavaria attended the St. Katherine church.

I told Albert that I wanted to show them the village of Hirschau, which we reckoned to be about 10 km away. After a shortcut of about 25 km we approached Hirschau from the north. It also has a Catholic Church, St. Wendelin, with surrounding villages clustered around it. Hirschau was far enough from the border to avoid demolition. I had visited it in 1996, shortly after the Velvet Revolution. While under communist control, all of the land, every bit of it, near the Iron Curtain, was emptied, to be easily patrolled. No one but border patrol was allowed within a certain distance of the border, under penalty of death. Villages and buildings near the border were demolished or vacated. In 1996 very few people lived in Hirschau, and there were many vacant buildings. In 2001, it was looking more lived in and prosperous.

I wanted to see the inside of the church, which was locked. Using my very best Czech, I asked a passerby who had the church keys. She motioned me to a farmhouse on the outskirts of town. At the farmhouse, the owner, through words and gesticulation, motioned me back to the church, which would soon be opened. Church keys are always available, it is a matter of finding the them. The inside of St. Wendelin is much better preserved than the outside. I have heard that former residents and family visit the church annually, and keep it in good repair. I have not been able to contact any of the annual visitors. The cemetery is nearby, and in better repair than last time. The tombs of several Simmets are there.

Also in the cemetery is a monument to the School Sisters of Notre Dame, an order which originated in Hirschau, relocated to Germany, and has spread to the USA. One of their convents is in Mankato, Minnesota. I have been trying without success to find a history of this order, which might give me some information about my ancestors. There is a Hirschau parish history by Karl Bretl, which Karen Hobbs excerpted in this genealogical newsletter, a Rothenbaum parish history, and possibly one from St. Katherine.

Our final stop was the small village of Kohlheim (Uhliste), near St. Katherine where we visited the Juda

family cottage. Anna Judova is a 2nd cousin of Albert. She, husband Lada, son Lada and daughter Jana are repairing the house, complete with flax oven, which has been in Anna's family forever. Anna's grandmother was German. They live half of the year here, and the other half in nearby Neuern (Nyrsko).

Albert would periodically visit his homeland while it was under communist control, and attempt to get the Catholic Church hierarchy to intervene in the destruction of Catholic churches, without much success. St. Leonhard church, on a small hill overlooking Kohlheim, afforded the communists a good place for a border area lookout. To gain easy access to the roof, a large hole was made in it, with resultant water damage to the entire church. The church had been privately and beautifully reconstructed by many volunteers, including Albert and Lada several years ago. Each year in June the restoration of St. Leonhard's is celebrated. Unfortunately for us, this year's celebration was to be a week hence, when we would be in Minnesota. This celebration includes hundreds of horse riders from nearby villages, and a procession from the village to the church, followed by a bishop's mass, and a dinner.

St. Leonards bei Kohlheim

We toured the church and nearby grounds. Albert and Lada are very obviously pleased and proud of the result of their labors. It is just outside the village, overlooking the beautiful rolling hills of southern Bohemia. It is one of the most peaceful places you will ever visit. The church is used only once each year, for this celebratory mass. Jana, who maintains the church, conducted most of the tour because of her excellent English. We had a small lunch at the only restaurant in town, and dessert at the cottage, before preparing to leave. We were to return to Rittsteig for our car, then drive to Prague that evening,

Just before leaving, I asked Albert and Ann aside, and said that I would like to invite Jana to spend a year with us, to attend high school in Minneapolis. Both had been

thinking the same thing. We asked Jana if she wanted to, which she did. Her parents agreed that it would be a good idea. Her younger brother Lada was ecstatic-he would have total occupancy of their shared bedroom for a year. Albert volunteered to pay tuition and airfare, and I told him to wait until I had a school which would enroll her, before he purchased a ticket. Jana has lived with us since August 15th, and attends De La Salle High School in Minneapolis.

Ann and I spent about 8 hours with Albert and Rosa, easily one the most interesting days we have ever had. I have invited Albert and Rosa to visit our home, and that part of Wisconsin to which his great-uncles had immigrated in the 1800s. We are planning a family reunion next year, for the time when they may visit. Albert and I still don't know for sure if and how we are related, but we probably are. It doesn't really matter.

Terry Kita
 5036 Queen Ave. S.
 Minneapolis, Mn. 55410
 terry.kita@federalcartidge. com

Experience in Private Research

By Paul Egginger
 Supported by his cousin Willy (Austria)
 submitted by Linda Therkelsen

(Linda's introduction) As I have worked my way back researching my German-Bohemian ancestors in South Bohemia, I discovered a third cousin in Germany who forwarded my letter to the "family genealogists" for the Egginger line, cousins Paul Egginger and Willy in Austria. Paul and Willy generously shared with me all of their amazing research for many lines back into the 1600s, most done in the Archive in Trebon. Because of their success and the exceptionally high quality and documentation of their research, I asked if they would write for all of us about their experience. I know this will help not only those who can go to the Czech Republic to do their own research, but also those who must organize work to be done by paid private researchers. Paul and Willy are NOT available to do research for hire.

Linda Therkelsen (e-mail: lindather@prodigy. net)

This article shall give a global, but brief view about doing private research on BOHEMIAN ancestors in the Czech Archives.

SYSTEMS/TOOLS

To keep always an overview it is recommended to make a family tree with ID numbers.

A. Research on ancestors

Grandparents	6	/	7
Father/mother	4	/	5
Parents f/m	2	/	3
Yourself (researcher)			1

This system does not show all data and the other relatives. Therefore it is necessary to establish further helpful measures such as:

- Form for baptism/birth
- Form for marriage
- Form for death
- Table for one family showing the parents with all children and all relevant data
- Form for a couple showing their baptisms/births, marriage and deaths

There are several software packages available, but all researching can be also done without computer by means of a manual card index.

B. Research on descendants

Another possibility is to do research on descendants, which means to start with the oldest descendant found and build the family tree downwards. The advantage is that all relatives can be registered, but the system is much more complicated and up to now I did not find a reasonable numbering system to allow a single database only. By doing research on descendants it is recommended to have a database for every family tree; consequently the amount of data will become incalculable, depending on the number of generations you go back.

Willy is following the system explained under A and Paul has a database (MS-Access) as described under B but up to now only for the family tree EGGINGER and downwards (about 150 records).

HOW TO START

The best way is to find someone within your relatives, who is already doing research, or like I did it to ask father and mother to write down every thing they know or remember. The result was that I came back in our family tree to 1785, only by asking my father about his knowledge on our relatives. With the first draft of my database I contacted Willy, whether he can prove what I received from my father or not. So it turned out that Willy worked also on his ancestors and we have, of course, partly the same lines. Today the oldest EGGINGER we found lived from approximately. 1607 to 1667 and there is realistically little chance to go further back.

The next step is to sort out and to decide on the methodology you like to continue. There are some general rules that should be always kept in mind to avoid failures or extra work:

- All data needs to be confirmed

- Don't base on information that has not been proved
 - All data shall be provided with information on origin
- Researching should be done step by step, from son/daughter to father/mother. The research shall be continued only, when all data are checked for plausibility (names, location, reasonability on time frame between parents and children etc.).

It formerly happened, that a man or wife married up to 4 times, but the first marriage in general took place at the village of the bride's parents.

PARISHES and GEOGRAPHY

Before starting research in Czech archives it is strongly recommended to become familiar with the several villages, their location and their affiliation to the corresponding parish. For that purpose a map of Bohemia is very useful indicating both the German and Czech names of the villages. The minimum scale should be 1:200,000 or larger (1 : 50,000). It is important that also the names and locations of the villages which no longer exist are indicated.

More difficult is to find out what villages belong to what parish or when a new parish was founded. So it can happen that a village belonged up to a certain date to parish A and after that to parish B.

In the reading room you will find 3 parish index books containing all parishes sorted according the Czech-Alphabet. For each parish time of founding and some other explanations are given, but all in Czech, followed by the list of affiliated villages (Czech names) and at the end the registers belonging to that parish.

So a listing of parishes with affiliated villages should be made during your first visits to have later on a basis at the archive. In our case Willy has done a perfect work. He made a small notebook, where all parishes we need are listed with all the relevant villages (names in German and Czech), also indicating the date when a village joined the corresponding parish. (Note: two books available at the GBHS library and also at the Czech Genealogical Society International collection and other locations can assist in making such a list: Pfarrortexikon Bohmen and Matrikenverzeichnis Der Böhmisches Staatsarchive: Ted 1, Archive Leitmeritz, Pilsen und Wittingau by Felix Gundacker. The first lists names of Bohemian villages, their parishes, and civil districts. The second shows the parish records available at the archives and the dates of the parishes, with the earlier parishes for new ones given.)

LANGUAGE and WRITING

At the beginning (approximately. 1600 - 1785) many records in South-Bohemia were in Latin language. After approximately. 1785 the so-called "Kurrentschrift" (German writing) was used for the records in the registers.

The number of words used in Latin is not so large; mostly it concerns baptism, legitimacy, parents, relatives, godparents, profession, etc. More difficult is to read the death register, if the cause of death is indicated.

The largest problem we found was the individual handwriting. Some you can read very well, but there was also handwriting, which we could not make out even with a lot of fantasy.

In such cases we copied it as good and exactly as possible.

Formerly the writing of the names was in accordance to that which the priest understood/heard without taking any orthographic rules into account.

This leads to different spelling of the names like Eginger, Ekingler, Eginer, Eckhinger or Pröll, Brüll or Bartholorneus, Bartl or Miller instead of Müller etc.

ARCHIVE

The Archive for South-Bohemia is accommodated in the castle at Wittingau (Trebou), directly in the center of the town/main-square. It contains all the parish-registers from approximately 1664 to 1890/1900.

The more recent registers are in the different district-towns. The archive has a separate reading room for about 18 persons only, therefore it is recommended to make a reservation at least 2 weeks in advance, even earlier.

Office time: Status: June 2001 (it might be possible, that some changes will occur after reopening in September 2001)
 Monday, Wednesday 07.30 - 17.00 h
 Tuesday, Thursday 07.30 - 15.00 h

During lunch-break (11.30 - 12.30) no books will be handed out. Per book handed out 20 Kč (Czech koruna) will be requested (max. 6 books/person/day).

For the purpose of cataloging into the archive the books/registers have been completely renumbered. To receive a register the new number has to be called, which can be taken from the Index-book available in the reading room. Up to today the registers of the parishes you will get are the original books and are not microfilmed.

For the time period of 1664 - 1784 (some parishes started earlier - Krumau in 1591) the records of baptism/birth, marriage and death are in one book/register. Later on separate books (one each for birth, marriage and death) have been used. This can be seen from the Index-book: If after the Index No. the letters N, O and Z are shown, than it is a register containing all, baptism/birth, marriage and death, or if it is one of the single letters N, O or Z, than it contains baptism/birth or marriage or death.

When entering the archive you will be registered. The cloakroom is located at the ground floor and you will get a

key for a small box, where you can leave your coats or larger bags. Small notebooks, maps and small bags can be taken into the reading room.

The archive itself is on the next floor and via a small office you can enter the reading room. At the office you will get a form to be filled in. The form itself is in Czech, but you will get an example in German or English. Besides your name, profession, passport, residence etc. you are asked for the purpose of research.

The ladies in the office are very cooperative, but for the first visit it is advisable to have someone with you who speaks Czech, since the ladies understand only a few words in German or English.

Taking photos or video is not allowed, copies can be requested, but this takes some time. Laptops can also be used.

Willy was about 80 times in Trebon and I joined him for about 10 times. Guided by Willy, I looked for the main line of "EGGINGER" and started with the parish Salnau with book No. 22 containing the Index for the books 1-3. I noted all Eggingers found in the Index, than in a second run all the details shown in the several records of books 1-3.

More work is to follow up the female lines. First you have to note the marriage in the Index, afterwards the detailed records where the parents of the wife can be found and probably the village she came from. From Willy I learned that proceeding systematically is necessary for successful researching.

A longer stay in Trebon is possible and 2-3 hotels are directly located at the main square.

REFERENCE

Willibald Mayrhofer: Quellenerläuterungen für Haus- und Familienforscher in Oberösterreich (Basic explanation on research concerning buildings/homes and families at Upper-Austria)

Note: This book contains very helpful tips, references to literatures, glossary, monetary system, units, typefaces etc. Presently it is out of print, but shall be reprinted in 2002.

Rootsweb

Social Security Death Index. The October update of the database contains more than 67 million names and is ready for searching at

<http://ssdi.genealogy.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/ssdi.cgi/>

To learn more about this incredible American genealogy resource see: Exploring the SSDI and Railroad Retirement

Board Records:

<http://rwguide.rootsweb.com/lesson10.htm>

WORLDCONNECT. Unable to find your ancestors or your cousins? Try searching the more than 177 million names at WorldConnect or post your GEDCOMs here and let them find you:

<http://www.worldconnect.rootsweb.com/>

ROOTSWEB'S GUIDE TO TRACING FAMILY TREES where you will learn how to find your ancestors and answers to your research questions.

<http://rwguide.rootsweb.com/>

African American, Native American, Jewish, and Unique Peoples: <http://rwguide.rootsweb.com/lesson25.htm>

Rootsweb Electronic Mail List

You can now ask Dr. Christoph Tepperberg at the Vienna War Archive questions about ancestors who served in the Austrian Military. The web site is called: Austrian Military Service.

<http://hwk.best.vwh.net/gottscheebb/messages/1078.html>

There is place to pose your questions on one page and you can read Dr. Tepperberg's replies to all questions by clicking on the link "Re: Austrian Military Service near the top of the page.

Look at the questions and answers given at the site before posting a question of your own. Provide as much information as you can but keep the format very simple and direct. List known facts then ask a specific question.

Karen Hobbs

Destiny, A Finding I Did Not Expect!

By Jerry Gulden

Here is my real life incident and here is what you may miss if you don't look for the original newspaper article yourself. Remember that the obits you get from others may have the papers name, and date to make things easier. To me the following happening was one of the top events of my genealogical efforts. I call it: Destiny or what?

From my notes February 16, 2001: This Friday noon I went to New Ulm for lunch as usual and thought about the fact that I do not have my Great Grandma Mary Henle

Brown County Historical Society to look for the obit. I searched their family name file archives without success. I then asked the attendant if they had it in microfiche and found out that they have a lapse in coverage over the year I was looking for. Then I thought about who in our family may have it? It brought to mind Aunt Glady whose husband is an avid genealogist, so I asked Uncle Art Glass by e-mail if he had the obituary. He fired one back and said no but wished me well on my quest. I remembered one time when we were having a German-Bohemian Heritage Society general meeting at the New Ulm Library that there was someone there who had a bound copy of what looked like New Ulm papers. So I went to the Library, as I still had the probable date of the obituary I was looking for with me. The librarian brought out the bound newspaper edition I was looking for, these are bound as a full page, the books are an inch or two thick and cover about a half year. Takes a horse to carry it. I opened up the book and started to page towards July 6, 1957, the date of her death. I came to the 6th of July which was Saturday. It wasn't there. I grabbed a couple of pages ahead and lo and behold hit the front page of Monday, July 8, 1957. What a shock! On the front page upper right corner was a big picture of my dad Dennis Gulden and his buddy Bib's Marti, each with a bottle of beer in hand sitting by the picnic table in their swimming suits with a hose fashioned to point straight up and gently spray down on them. Caption for the picture was: that even 97 degrees couldn't stop them. Although the picnic table was too wet to play cards that made no difference. This picture also brought back words I remember my father saying that they wouldn't let us show the beer bottle labels, (Schell's). In the middle of that same page was the caption: Former New Ulm Resident Dies Mrs. Mary Gulden, 93, pioneer resident of this community, died Saturday.

Now what would have happened if I had got the obituary from someone, the picture would still be there, but I would not have ever seen it. Sometimes things work out better than expected. So my tip to you is even though you have a copy of the obit, look at that paper, maybe you may luck out as I have.

Newsletter Deadline

The June 2002 issue of the "Heimatbrief" newsletter will go to print in in early May. Therefore articles and other submissions must be received by April 15, 2002.

History For Sale

German-Bohemians - The Quiet

Immigrants by La Vern Rippley & Robert Paulson

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

One Hundred Tales from Sudetenland

Translated and Edited by Karen Hobbs

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

Duetsch-Böhmische Küche, First Edition

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

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

Duetsch-Böhmische Küche, 'Gut Essen'

Cookbook, Second Edition More authentic recipes plus a twist that you will not find in other cookbooks.

Historical memories with six Menu Suggestions, Heritage items, and Meals; Second section: Soup, Salad & Vegetables, Kraut, & Dumplings; Third section: Meat, Backereie, & Desserts. Ringbound, soft cover. \$12.00

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

by LaVern J. Rippley. \$6.00

German-Bohemian Immigrant Monument Book

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

Music

"German-Bohemian Heritage Singers

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

"Preserving the Heritage II" cassette tape. An

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

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

Finding My Ancestors in the Czech Republic

by Paula Goblirsch

This past summer I had the opportunity to visit the villages of my German-Bohemian ancestors and do research in the Czech Republic. In June of 2001, I went to Europe with the German-Bohemian Heritage Society tour. We planned to spend several days in the Bavarian town of Furth-im-Wald near the Czech border. Our visit had been planned to coincide with the Bischofteinitz "Heimatkreistreffen". Every few years the Germans who had been expelled from villages in Kreis Bischofteinitz meet here to renew old acquaintances.

The first day six of us were to go to the Pilsen archives to do research. The German-Bohemian Heritage Society arranged for a researcher to go with us. We took the morning train from Furth-im-Wald to Pilsen. It was interesting to see the Czech countryside from the train. At each town and village, people boarded the train to go to work in Pilsen. We walked across town to the main square. We waited while our guide, Robert Frötschl, purchased the postage stamps needed to pay for using the archive materials.

We then made our way to the police station where the archives were located. We showed our passports and were given an ID to wear while in the archives. As in most archives I have visited, we had to put our things into a locker. We were allowed to bring pencils, paper, and research notes.

The archivists did not speak English or much German. Our guide helped us fill out our request forms for materials. We were limited to only three microfilms the entire day. If you chose the wrong microfilm, you were out of luck. I was lucky, because many of the materials I needed had not yet been microfilmed and were not included in the limit. My Goblirsch ancestors had to walk to a larger town called Tutz to go to church. Tutz, now called Dubec in Czech, was where their birth death and marriage records were kept. The records, of course, were in German. I read a little German, but have some difficulty with the script. Our guide, Robert Frötschl, pointed out that the each entry followed a specific formula. Once I figured out the first record, the rest were not too difficult.

Since Goblirsch is a relatively easy name to pick out and because I already had birth dates, I quickly found birth records for my great-great-grandparents, Johann and Elizabeth, and their three sons. Johann and Elizabeth's birth records indicated that they were married on the 31 December 1860. When I found the marriage record, it was dated 22 Jan 1861. Johann and Elizabeth were living in House #5 when their children were born.

Dubec (Tutz) 6/38 1835. Born and baptized on: 18 Sept. Birth place: Zemschen N. 5. Name: Johann Goblirsch. Catholic, male, legitimate (note: married 31 Dec 1860). Father: Georg Goblirsch, legitimate son of Johann Goblirsch, Farmer, Zemschen N. 21, and his wife Margaret, born Schlögel, of Zemschen N. 18, of the Herrschaft of Hostau. Mother: Maria Anna, legitimate daughter of the the deceased Christoph Säckl, householder, Pössigkau N. 2 and his wife, the deceased Anna, born Schiefert, of Pössigkau N. 16, of the Herrschaft of Hostau. Sponsors: Johann Weltinger, householder, Zemschen, and his wife Katharina. Midwife: Regina ?

The records for my Seifert great-great grandparents Seiferts were from Horní Sekyrany. I found birth records for their children, Barbara and Elizabeth, but not those for their parents Mathias Seifert and Anna Dürmer, nor their marriage record. When the children were born, the Seiferts were living in house #93.

That was all I had time to find at the archives in Pilsen, but at least I know that there is more information there. The Pilsen archives do not make photocopies of books or microfilm, but you can order copies. The books and microfilm are sent to Prague. There the pages you requested are copied. They send you a bill for the copies and postage. I sent a personal check in U.S. dollars and within several weeks I received my photocopies.

The most immediate value of my trip to the Pilsen archives was the discovery of the numbers of the houses my ancestors were living in. I had a map of my ancestral villages showing house numbers. With the house numbers, I was now ready to visit my ancestral villages.

The second day of our stay in Furth-im-Wald, we again crossed the border into the Czech Republic. This time, those of us who had ancestry in Kreis Mies were going to visit our ancestral villages. Again, our guide was Robert Frötschl, as his family had originated in the town of Mies.

Preheischen or Prehysov lies in the southeast part of Kreis Mies, not too far from Pilsen. The countryside consists of gently rolling fields and looks relatively good for farming. There is also some mining in the area. The map I had indicated the house #93 was in the northeast corner of the village. There was no house at that spot, only a very nice garden with fruit trees and flowers. I took several pictures of the surrounding houses. The town itself was neat and clean. There was a small church in a grassy area of ground in the center of the village. Our guide found a man who spoke German and asked about my missing ancestral home. The man said that we were mistaken about the location of house #93. A new road had been put through that area and the house still stood. It was one of the houses I had taken a picture of.

Preheischen#93

On the third day of my stay in Furth-im-Wald, I crossed over into the Czech Republic again. This time our guide was Robert Paulson. First we drove to Dubec, formerly Tutz. Here was the church of St. Michael the Archangel, where my ancestors attended church, were married and baptized. The cemetery was on the edge of town. In Europe, plots are generally used for only about 30 years, then they are reused. I did not expect to find any relatives buried there, but did find headstones with family names dated after by ancestors emigrated.

From there we drove to Zemschen or Tremesne. Our route led up into the mountains this time. The road was not much wider than our bus and appeared not to have changed from the time my ancestors walked it, except that it was now paved. Pine trees grew thickly along either side. Zemschen and Pössigkau lie in a small valley on the Pössigkau or Bezdekovsky river. The villages used to be a small distance apart, but now have grown together. The houses in Zemschen surround several goose ponds that were once used to put out fires. A maypole stands near the monument to those who died in World War I. The houses are numbered in the order they were built. House #5, where my great-great grandparents lived was no longer standing. A neat garden filled the space where it once stood. (After returning from Europe, I examined my village map again and the picture I had taken. On the map, the house is set back from the road more than the other houses. On my picture, behind some trees, there appeared to be a barn like structure. Could this have been house #5?)

That evening we attended the Heimatkreistreffen. Each village had a table where people gathered to talk, eat, and drink beer. Those of us from America were seated at the front of the room next to the band. I went over to the Zemschen/Pössigkau table hoping to find some relatives. I met Josef Pingert and Maria Baierl. They did not speak English and didn't understand my limited German very well. I did learn that their grandmother was a Goblirsch. I gave them my genealogy information, a photo of my great-great grandparents' family and my address. They promised to contact me.

The next day we left Furth-im-Wald, Bavaria to finish our trip in Prague, Dresden and Berlin. I won't soon forget my trip to my ancestral villages in the Czech Republic. Since my return, I have been corresponding with distant Goblirsch relatives in Europe. They want to plan a family reunion in Bavaria. I may be returning to my ancestral homeland sooner than I thought.

Paula Goblirsch

Query

My great-grandparents all came from Bohemia -- one set from near Muttersdorf (Lieb and Simon) and the other from southern Bohemia (Fast & Pelz/Peltz), near present day Nova Bystrice (on the Austrian border). I plan to visit the later area this fall and do some searching for family records. I'm told that the records for the southern

villages, Alber and Adams Freiheit (now Alber and Hurky, in Czech) are kept in the nearby city of Trebon.

Has anyone had experience finding records in Trebon or have contacts there that might be able to help me during my visit? Any assistance would be appreciated.

Richard Fast, Big Sky, MT (406) 995-7486
FastSki@aol.com

German - Bohemian Küche Korner

By Jerry Gulden

Welcome to the Küche Korner

As most of you have already purchased the first and second issues of the heritage cookbook I wanted to establish a corner for foods as an on going part of the newsletter.

The cookbook committee had been approached by many people that would have liked to have had something of their family customs and recipes included in a forthcoming cookbook. At this point in time the board of directors and the cookbook committee have felt that two cookbooks are enough for awhile.

I thought that some other items concerning foods could be documented through the newsletter. As heritage is composed of many items, language, customs, dress and the foods we ate and continue to eat. Items I look forward to receiving from you are recipes thought of since the second cookbook has been published, fruit, vegetable and meat preparation and storage practices.

Contributions of food related items or stories about the old days are appreciated, don't worry about how you get them into the newsletter. Just send me the material you have and your best attempt at how you want it to look or send the pieces and I will review it and contact you if need be. Enclose your address and telephone number. Now is the time to do it!

Another use of the corner would be to see if someone has a copy of those lost or favorite recipes you are trying to find. Like what was a Rhunserie (sp?) Club? Or what was Blutz and dunkle? If you have answers to these two items let me know and I will publish them in the following newsletter. The continuation of this Küche Korner depends on your response.

These materials can be sent by mail to the postal address of the society or e-mail to the society clearinghouse address GBHS84@HOTMAIL.COM.

The following is a sample of the items that could be sent

Spotting and Using Elderberries In The Upcoming Year

So how do I find elderberries to make the following dessert?? First, elderberries grow on a shrub like tree. These shrubs can be found easily during June and July. Where? They can be seen standing along side fence-lines, groves, and next to county ditches. The shrubs are 4 to 12 feet high, and during these months the edges of the shrubs are covered with huge (8 inch) multi stemmed flower blossoms composed of flat plates of flower-heads made up of many tiny cream-white flowers. Leaves grow in opposite pairs and are compound. Leaflets are toothed and oval in shape, and the small white flowers sit in flat clusters, ripening into purple-black berries in September.

During the latter part of July and August these white flowers turn into green berries and later become a rich deep dark purple-blackberry color about the size of a spring pea. The berries can be considered ripe when the clusters begin to turn upside down. You also know when they are ready because the birds start to eat them. So better hurry and harvest your share before the birds get them all. If the berries are clean of bugs, the berry's can be eaten straight off the branches on a hot summer's day. When picking the berry's, pull the stem and berry-head portion off the plant and gently stack them into a large portable container that can be carried easily out of the grove or ditch.

Before harvesting the berries off of the stem gently wash the berry. Now comes the time for plucking the berry off the stem. If children are around have them help pull off the berries, but have a hose is close by to hose the children down after berry pulling. This beats you doing all of them yourself. I have heard that some people use a large toothed comb and comb through the berry head and remove the berries this way. Oh Ya, one point of caution, the berry juice will stain about anything it touches.

What is it they say, oh yes, "now we can get ready to eat the fruits of our labor." Refer to the DEUTSCH-BÖHMISCHE KÜCHE, 'Gut essen' Cookbook, Edition No. 2 as Angie has supplied many other delicious and heritage recipes using elderberries.

Angies(Meidl Portner) Elderberry Dessert

3-1/2 cups elderberries, (cleaned berries, remove stems from berries)

1-1/2 cups water 1/4 cup lemon juice

1 cup sugar 3 chopped apples

Combine all and cook until apples are soft, about 10 minutes. Then in a shaker jar add 1/2 cup water and 3 tsp. cornstarch and shake until dissolved, then add this to the boiling mixture and stir until thick. Remove from stove and place into your favorite serving dishes or bowl. Refrigerate. Serve with ice cream or whipped cream. Try it you will like it as the editors did.

From the kitchen of Angie Portner

Join Us

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

Name _____ Phone# _____

Address _____ Email Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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