

GERMAN - BOHEMIAN



HERITAGE SOCIETY

19 84

the Heimatbrief

A Newsletter Magazine of the German-Bohemian Heritage Society

Celebrating the GBHS' 18th Year

Vol XIV No. 1

March 2003

I was born to a woman I never knew and raised by another who took in orphans. I do not know my background, my lineage, my biological or cultural heritage. But when I meet someone new, I treat them with respect. For after all, they could be my people.

James A. Michener (1907-1997)
Writer

GBHS Officers and Board Addresses

Members

2003 Officers

President

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

Vice President - Donald Brand

Treasurer - George Portner

Secretary - Joleen Keckstein

GBHS Board of Directors

Committee Assignments

Budget, Social, Library, New Ulm 150th Anniv.

Paul Kretsch

Social Activities, Research Center, Membership

Don Brand

Budget Committee, Library, Newsletter Book

Patrick Eckstein

Program Chair, Social Activities, Library

Gerald Gulden

Social Activities Chair, Budget Committee, Library

Pat Kretsch

Newsletter Editor, Library, Membership, N.U. 150th

Louis Lindmeyer

Research Chair, Internet Chair, Library, N.U. 150th

Robert Paulson

Sales Chair, Membership Chair, Treasurer Asst., Budget

Angeline Portner

Library

Molly Schweinfurter

Newsletter Book

Don Zwach

Finance, Budget, Library

George Portner

Publicity

Joleen Keckstein

Outreach Committee

Pat Eckstein, Molly Schweinfurter

Library, Research Center

Jim Mack

Library

Jenny Eckstein

Board Member Emeritus

LaVern J. Rippley

Adeline Wilfahrt

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@comcast.net

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.

Articles contained in this newsletter may not be copied, published, or distributed for commercial purposes without the written consent of the German-Bohemian Heritage Society.

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.

© 2003 German-Bohemian Heritage Society

In this Issue

In this Issue

- page 2 Delinquent Taxpayers
page 5 GGS Spring Conference
page 6 Das Soldatenleben
page 7 Natural Catastrophes
page 7 Chronicle of Tiss
page 8 Rootsweb
page 9 Our Readers Write
page 11 . . . Wisconsin Genealogical Resources
page 11 . . . Marriage to Avoid Service
page 13 . . . Tailors
page 14 . . . Mailcarriers in the Andreas Mts.

Coming Events

March 15, 2003

**GBHS Board of Directors Meeting
GBHS Research Center**

April 27, 2003

**GBHS Annual Spring Dance
Turner Hall, New Ulm
1 - 5 p.m.**

May 3, 2003

**GBHS Spring Meeting
Lower Level New Ulm Public Library 9 a.m.**

August 16, 2003

**GBHS Picnic
Herman Heights Park, New Ulm**

Spring Meeting Set Internet Resources for Research

The annual GBHS spring member meeting will take place on May 3, 2003 in the lower level of the New Ulm Public Library. The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. and conclude around noon. Coffee, cookies, and juice will be provided.

Our guest speaker will be Paula Goblirsch. Paula's topic is **Internet Resources for Research**. What resources are available on the Internet for researching your family history? How do you find these resources? This talk will be an overview of some useful research sites including genealogy sites, archives, libraries, and historical societies. It will also show you how to use a search engine, Google, to find other resources.

societies. It will also show you how to use a search engine, Google, to find other resources.

Paula is editor of the Minnesota Genealogical Society's newsletter and maintains several genealogy web sites and mailing lists including those of the German-Bohemian Heritage Society. She also teaches classes on using your computer and the Internet for genealogy.

This meeting is open to the public so please bring a friend.

Dance, Dance Dance

The GBHS annual Spring Dance will be held on Sunday afternoon April 27, 2003 from 1 to 5 p.m. Good old time music will be provided by Johnny Gag and his band. Admission will be \$5.00 per person. Free snacks will be provided and a cash bar will be available. This dance is open to the public so please bring all your friends.

Measures Taken Against Delinquent Taxpayers in the Eighteenth Century

**From Heimat im Bohmen by Dr. Karl Stich
Translated by Karen Hobbs**

Considering the burden of multiple taxes there is little surprise that the subjects might fall behind. Compliance (execution) Ordinances aimed at collecting delinquent taxes were decreed in 1715, 1725, 1737, and 1744.

One such execution order called upon the kingdom of Bohemia to intensify collections by the noble estates under the edict of March 27, 1744, and deliver the revenue by March 16, 1747 with the admonishment that prior casual and long-drawn-out collections can not be tolerated for long in view of the recent calamities of war.

Nevertheless according to the "new execution order "in materia Tributaria" (concerning revenues) there was a perception that "by 16 March 1747, despite the stricter provisions decreed on March 27, 1744" concerning payments by the highly esteemed noble estates of taxes allowed and imposed, produced less than the local authorities own special taxes... in the Bohemian kingdom. ... Such "lax and tardy remittals, in consideration of the disasters brought by war, can no longer be permitted."

"No lack of means is to be blamed for the growing contributonal and other tax delinquencies other than the habitual resistance along with the nonchalance of the

the narrow minds of the authorities whose economic officials burden "the poor subjects" with constant new charges. Accordingly the royal lords' principal district officials must first of all present a good example by paying the (collected) taxes of the district residents and then, wherever it is necessary, to personally examine "Whether anyone is resisting payment because of peevishness (Morosität; obstinance) or is otherwise unable to pay."

In any case, the "prevailing state of war" required prescription of "a comprehensive rule on how and in what manner to collect the contributational and other taxes and in the future to collect (overdue, delinquent) taxes after the expiration of the grace period by utilizing the militia."

As soon as the principal district officials of the royal superior tax administration received the tax delinquency tables (Restantientabellen) they used them to determine "which dominions (Herrschaft) and places (cities, towns, villages) on the tables participated in 1) Militare Ordinarium, Extreordinarium, Rekrouten - and Rimont

2) and/or meat and tobacco taxes that remained unpaid within expired time limits". The tax administration then issued an "Executions-patent" for the delinquent places on their list for specific amounts that were delinquent for a specified period.

Next they sent "the captain of the Land-Militia Company, or in his absence the Lieutenant, along with available regular troops, into the specified delinquent places."

The execution orders for collecting taxes in the first category named above were to be carried out month to month along with the "normal induction of recruits and payment of infantry and cavalry recruits relief money" with no deferment tolerated. Other delinquent revenues (second category) were to be collected respectively after three months, plus an Exekutionsbebühr (fine) of 3 kreuzers daily per hundred gulden owed.

If the delinquent amount originated from the time before the new execution order took effect the daily fines for the years 1743, 1744, and 1745 were raised to 9 kronen per 100 florins and in 1746 to 6 kronen.

The military tax collectors proceeded with the collection of delinquent "recruit and remount relief money" (old and new alike) in the most resolute manner. In their estimation those funds were most urgently needed. From that time on it was also incumbent on the principal royal lords' district and city officials to impose the military execution order without wasting any time. Collections from localities standing in arrears would have to include, without respite, daily fines of 9 kronen per 100 gulden for the period of delay. The amount due was paid to the

appropriate treasury affiliate (Filialkassa)."

Whether one or another place would also still be in the position to pay the monthly Ordinarium at the same time -- and specifically the regular military tax -- was left up to the judgment of the principal district officials.

Up till then the outstanding Extraordinarium der Obrigkeiten (special levies demanded by noble landlords /local authorities)" was raised by "appointed negotiators" who were to apply pressure and who received a substantial per diem allowance for doing so. They went about their collections very slowly and seemed most interested in collecting extra per diem for themselves; this "respectable extortion" usually succeeded only after threats of military intervention against subject residents.

The result was that butchers and other individuals dealing with slaughtering cattle now had pay what was due whether they were local authorities (noble landlords, free city officials), their agents, pastors or other private persons making the collections. Otherwise all delinquent taxes would be collected along with the tobacco taxes due "by means of the military execution in the dominions (Herrschaft) and cities."

The worst tax delinquencies were in "smaller villages contributions". It was impossible to put tax collectors in every locality which would have "spread the troops too thin and left the larger places without any tax collectors," so the district officials' executions-patent cleverly combined several smaller neighboring places with tax collection office in one of them.

Upon his arrival the tax collector had to announce the execution order and to stay in the locality that owed the most. Once that debt was settled he proceeded to the next place with the next-largest tax liability.

He took quarters for the first 14 days "with the individual owing the largest sum or with the person whose debt had the longest term. At the end of that time he moved in with the village, market or city judge. When that didn't suffice to complete his collections he took another 14 days or longer in the residence of the Kontribution-Rechnungführer (Contributions bookkeeper or tally chief) and remained there until the remainder was collected (or canceled) and he received orders for recall.

Pressure was exerted to give the tax collector meat and a pint (1.9 liters) of beer as well as a variety of vegetables (every day) for as long as he was there (although his salary was enough to live on without further payments).

There was the opinion that the presence of a tax collector would be of little consequence by itself if at the same time

individual taxpayers did not feel the pressure of this "personal" tax collection.

To make sure the new execution order would have the expected effect, officials who made errors or were dishonest had to pay a fine and those "whose intent was to deceive the treasury and who took collected revenue for their own use could inevitably expect corporal and even life-threatening punishments.

The combined tax revenues for Bohemia in the year 1748 which was a year after the new Executions Ordinance was in effect was 6,758,000 Gulden. The army and on-going wars devoured all but an insignificant fraction of that amount.

The Habsburg State had become a great power through its victorious campaigns against the Turks (1683-1699 and 1714-1718) and the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714) for which the hereditary lands, led by Bohemia, indeed had to make enormous sacrifices of lives as well as money.

"The last drop of blood has been squeezed from the kingdom", "there is little ready money (cash) in this land and none to be seen", "commerce and the trades are run aground (at a standstill)" were the complaints resounding in the Bohemian Landtag. Again and again the estates pointed out that because of all the workers taken by recruiters hardly one in ten farmers had a field hand and their wives and children had to work in the fields while the farmer himself performed robot at the landlord's manor.

By way of contrast the nobility understood only too well how to find the means to support an extravagant lifestyle and lavish construction projects whenever they wished. First they would simply increase their subject peasant's required deliveries of produce and labor. Next they would distribute their own Landesfürstlichen taxes and contributions so that the Dominical or noble estates which they administered themselves paid little while the peasant population and farmers' land-holdings carried the main load.

"In these times splendor and misery existed right next to each other; yes, the incomparable accomplishments in architecture, painting, creativity and the art of garden landscaping represent the showpieces of an era, while their underside displayed the subservience and compulsory labors of peasant farmers which often deteriorated to virtual slavery, and the miserable existence of a middle class living within most modest means."

GGG Spring Conference Plans Announced

The Germanic Genealogy Society is pleased to announce that Dr. George K. Schweitzer will be the featured speaker at its 2003 Spring Conference. The conference will be held in Northwestern Hall on the campus of Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, on May 2-3.

Dr. Schweitzer, a professor at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, has spoken at over 200 genealogy conferences. He is widely known for his use of historic reenactment to teach genealogy. He is also the author of 19 genealogical guidebooks, including *German Genealogical Research, Handbook of Genealogical Sources*, and *Civil War Genealogy*.

The topic at the Friday evening session will be "Finding Your Ancestors' Parents." Dr. Schweitzer's presentation will be followed by dessert and beverage.

The topics to be presented on Saturday are "German Genealogical Research Hints," "German Emigration, Immigration and Migration," and "Tracing Your German Ancestors Back Across the Atlantic. The conference will conclude with an hour-long session of questions and answers. A German-style lunch (rouladen, red cabbage and hot German potato salad) will be available.

For complete conference information and registration forms, see the Germanic Genealogy Society web site: www.mtn.org/mgs/german/ or send a postcard to: GGS, P.O. Box 16312, St. Paul, MN 55116-0312 with your request.

GGG members will receive registration material by mail in March. The deadline for preregistration is April 24. Preregistration for Friday evening is required to reserve a dessert. Pre-registraton is not required for Saturday's program, but lunch will be available only to those who preregister.

Questions? Contact Kent Cutkomp, (612)920-8118 or kcutkomp@mn.rr.com

Das Soldatenleben (A Soldier's Life)

An introduction to the upcoming book by Eric E. Birmingham:

Eric Earl Birmingham, the author of *Das Soldatenleben (A Soldier's Life)*, is the grandson of the book's Böhmisch hero Adolf Klostermann. The completion date for the documentary book is estimated for Summer 2003. Mr. Birmingham also owns and operates the web site www.bghresearch.com. The site is dedicated to Böhmisch German heritage and contains many items, including historical and musical CD's from the Klostermann family, Böhmisch Cookbook by Edeltraud Klostermann Birmingham, and artwork by Edeltraud and Eric. Genealogical services including research, photo restoration, CD creation and audio cleaning, and web site and online store creation are available at www.bghresearch.com and Mr. Birmingham's upcoming web site GenServ.com. Mr. Birmingham can be reached at EBirm272@aol.com or bghr@c3bgroup.com.

My grandfather, Adolf Klostermann II, was and always will be a hero of mine. He was a soldier in the German Army in the Second World War. This, contrary to the belief of some, does not make him an evil man. I knew him until his death in 1994. I admired him for his honesty, his morality, his patriotism, and his commitment to his family. He was a man who loved to joke and often wore a smile. He would love nothing better than to share a drink with you. This was when the war was not on his mind. If it was, you saw a far different man.

He was not a Nazi. He was a common man caught up in extraordinary and unwanted circumstances, as so many were then. He lived in the Bohmerwald mountain region as his family had for many generations. He worked in a small factory, was a part-time farmer, and was also a volunteer fireman in his home village. He married a local girl and settled down not far from the place of his birth, never intending to leave there. In 1937, his first child was born, a baby girl named Edeltraud. In 1938, the winds of change came when Hitler's Germany annexed his native Sudetenland. I'm sure at the time this seemed like a wonderful thing for the Bohmisch Germans living in an area controlled by Czechoslovakia. Within its borders they were a strange and rather unwanted minority. It seemed that union with their German brethren made much more sense. But the "winds of change" soon turned into a hurricane and then nothing made sense and everything was turned upside down.

Adolf was drafted in 1940 and forced to leave his young wife and baby daughter. He spent four years of his life fighting all over Europe. Constantly in forward areas, he was wounded in battle and often subjected to the harshest of conditions. He seldom saw his family during these years. In 1944, he was captured and sent to a prisoner of

war camp in the deserts of Egypt. Here he languished for another four years, for much of it not knowing if his family was dead or alive. They wondered the same of him. He was finally reunited with his family in Germany in 1948, three years after the war had ended. He was destitute.

My grandfather survived the war. But he had lost eight of the best years of his life. He missed the intimacy of his wife. He missed seeing his daughter's early childhood and the birth of his son. He lost his house and everything he owned. Nearly every friend he had grown up with had been killed. And he was deprived of the right to live in his ancestral homeland that he dearly loved and mourned for the rest of his life. The Sudetenland had been erased, and the Bohmisch people were largely forgotten by the rest of the world. As a cultural entity, they ceased to exist.

So the war was a very sensitive subject for my grandfather. As a young man, I learned to love history and I began to realize that it lived right in the house with me. But he always remained guarded about the subject. He would occasionally tell a tragic story, never revealing what his feelings were at the time of the event. But his usual cheerful expression would be gone, his face etched with sadness. You could not push him on the subject. Once I read him a passage from a book regarding a Russian frontal assault across a frozen river against a strong German position. It was folly, and the Russian men were mown down like hay. Upon hearing this he began to shout and shake his head. "No! That never happened! They are lying about us! That never happened!"

I was taken aback. I would never have purposely said anything to upset him or be accusatory. I don't know if he was in that engagement. I would not dare insult him by asking.

Adolf did not believe in the holocaust. I believe the holocaust to be undoubtedly true. He was an intelligent man, but also a very stubborn one. I knew better than to approach this subject with him. I think deep down that he knew, but it was hard for him to accept such a thing. He had fought for so long and given up so much for Germany, the whole while never knowing what the government was carrying out. He had seen much death in warfare, but he had never seen a death camp. To find out that he had given all that he had to something that was so sinister at its core made him angry and ashamed. I believe it hurt him deeply, and to turn a blind eye to such things after the fact was necessary towards keeping his sanity. He felt as though he was constantly under attack, constantly being judged. Even his name, passed down by his father and then given to his own son, had now become synonymous with evil. In America, he felt forced to change its spelling. His identity had been stolen, and he was a man from a place that no longer existed.

In wartime, common men are the tools of governments and individuals. The word "common" is really a misnomer. It is only to the powerful few that they are common. As my grandmother Luise put it, "Hitler reached into our villages and tore out all the young men like pieces of wood, and then burned them up on the fire". Adolf was drafted and had to leave. To refuse meant death. Whether German or Jewish, Russian or Polish, English or Japanese, every race had its evildoers and innocent victims. There are only those with power and those without.

The common man is merely the fuel burned up in the engine of the regime. Some men and women paid the ultimate price in the war, others survived to live and cope with harrowing memories and scars of all nature. But to say that a man is evil or does not deserve to be heard simply because he is German or of any other race is inherently evil in itself.

My grandfather was a good man. His story, and the plight of the Sudeten Germans has been ignored for too long.

For more information, log on to www.bghresearch.com, or contact Mr. Birmingham at EBirm272@aol.com.

Natural Catastrophes in the Egerland

Translated by Karen Hobbs from original German written by Franz Kaunzn

In the year 1938, the Kratzin community-forest was completely destroyed by pine bark beetle grubs (Fichtenborckenkäfer). This unwelcome guest probably also spread destruction into the wooded areas belonging to Tiss.

On 22. November 1868 -- or was it during the spring of that year? -- the forests were devastated by a terrible cyclone that did immeasurable damage. More devastation followed a widespread cloudburst and flood on May 25, 1871 on the eve of the feast of the Holy Trinity (there was to be a big festival at Walkowa). The community ponds at Pastuchowitz, Weletschin, Pladen, Steben and elsewhere were completely washed away by the gushing waters of a flash flood. Neuhaöuseln in particular suffered from floodwaters on that date. There was another significant cloudburst and flash flooding in 1876 and hailstorms with very large hailstones occurred on May 14, 1880, June 30, 1889, and August 7, 1899. Fires destroyed several buildings in Tiss in 1884, 1904, and 1911.

Dry years always bring drought to Tiss and drinking water must sometimes be brought in from some distance (several kilometers) away. The autumn and winter months of 1921

and 1922 brought an especially serious drought.

There is a well known robbers' cave hideout that is said to have a tunnel that leads all the way from Tiss to Luditz and another that leads to Rabenstein. There is a saga that tells of "Petraken" (who were a race of dwarves) lived in the robbers' cave. Nearby residents were well acquainted with them. Their leader, whose name was Petrak, supposedly drowned accidentally in the pond to the west of the glassworks at Tiss and that is how the pond got its name, the "Petraenteich". Shortly after the death of Petrak, all of the Petracons vanished.

Tiss has an upper and a lower village. The properties of the upper village are somewhat inferior to those of the lower village, they are primarily small houses and cottages occupied by masons and forest servicemen. There is a significant contrast between the masons and the farmers of the lower village and before World War I there was even some animosity between the two. Their relationships are much more amicable in more recent times. Family relationships play a rather large role in the social structure and the particular bond felt by some kindred groups is quite noticeable on special occasions or when events call for the people to express their opinions. For example, they play an important part in community elections and legal decisions that affect the whole community.

The newspapers can also play a big part in influencing fundamental attitudes. There is also a community library for those who wish to read other material.

The legend of the "Wilde Jagd" (wild hunters) that races through the forests on stormy nights is very much alive in the forests of Tiss.

A Chronicle of Tiss

from the German original by Hartwig Kaunzner

The predominant political parties around Tiss are the Social Democrats, the Farmers Party and the Christian Socialists.

The business of raising crops produces a somewhat mediocre harvest in the vicinity of Tiss. The farmers begin to bring in their crops around August 1 every year. Raising livestock is a more important source of income and provides ample supplies of fertilizer for the fields. Forestry is also an important business around Tiss. Between 1906 and 1908 the "Nonnenspinner" (a moth) appeared in the forests of Alberitz that neighbor the forests of Tiss and caused a lot of damage. They did little harm at Tiss at that time but when they reappeared in 1921 and 1922 they did enormous damage.

At the same time "Rüsselkäfer" (a beetle) and

“Fichtenborkenkäfer” (pine bark beetle) attacked our forests and seriously affected tree growth - virtually wiping out broad areas of forest. All the surrounding area was robbed of its most beautiful jewel, its forest. At Neuhof, agriculture is a bit more important than it is in Tiss with cattle, goats and chickens being the primary products. There is very little beekeeping in our area but hunting is quite rewarding with deer, hares, rabbits, foxes, muskrats, partridges, pheasants, waterfowl, snipes, and Auerhahn as well as other birds in plentiful supply.

An Ortsgruppe (village group) of the association of the German country-youth association was established in the year 1929; The first Obmann was Leopold Tschischka from Kratzin. The young Ortsgruppe did not last very long and was already dissolved at the beginning of 1930. The “Kulturverbandsortsgruppe” (Cultur Society local group), formed in 1925, became very active over a period of years. They were especially proud of their fourth place finish in theater / drama competitions. On August 7, 1926, the “Kulturverbandsortsgruppe” purchases the choral society's theater-stage for about 1000 crowns and transported the stage to Tiss on August 8.

There were local branches of political parties in Tiss to include and Ortsgrupps of the Farmers' Associaio and a Social Democrats club (founded 1929). Tiss also has a local branch of an insurance society with headquarters in Eger. The local agency is managed by Mr. Franz Lifka.

In the early 1920s there were two Gendarme posts in Tiss. They went vacant for a while and then were reactivated in 1929. Their office was housed in the building called the “Czech-home”. Constable Josef Stokr was stationed in Tiss the longest of all the gendarmes assigned there and he is the one the local residents remember the best. The last station commander was Josef Klač whose rank was Oberwachtmeister.

The residents of Tiss are both Czech and German and their relationships have become much more settled as the years of controversy fade into the past. The rapport between the two ethnic groups brought about the founding of a Bohemian school (1926) and a Bohemian kindergarten (1929).

The residents are Catholics; one family is Jewish. With justifiable pride, everyone considers themselves to be Egerlanders although the local Egerland dialect deviates quite strongly in favor of noticeable influence from the Saaz district.

From Rootsweb.com: Setting the Record Straight on Internet Searches

By Robert Ragan robert@amberskyline.attbbs.net
Creator of "Search Engine Secrets Made Easy for Genealogy Researchers" and editor of "Treasure Maps" -- an e-mail genealogy newsletter.
<http://amberskyline.com/searchsecrets/>

I was alarmed when I read a recent letter in RootsWeb Review that suggested ignoring the "symbols" when doing online searches. This is a HUGE mistake. Understanding how to use the symbols and the search process itself is critical to all genealogists. I've taught thousands how to troubleshoot their specific research problems-at-hand and craft them into pay dirt on the Internet.

When you learn how to translate a problem into keywords and symbols to use in a search engine (let's say Google at www.google.com), the keys to the Internet are yours. Here is how it works:

The plus (+) symbol forces a key word to be INCLUDED. The staple of genealogy research is vital records -- when our ancestors were born, died, and married -- so a search with any surname and these keywords work well: Example: +ragan +born. You can use the keyword "died" or "married" in the spot where "born" is in the above example.

The minus (-) symbol forces a keyword to be EXCLUDED. This is an extremely powerful research tool when you learn how to use it properly with the plus symbol.

One of the variant spellings of my surname is REAGAN. What do you think happens when you start doing searches with this name? Many of the "hits" or "results" that come back are about former U.S. President Ronald Reagan. Here is how to fix it: Use: +reagan +born -president. The word "president" will not be in any of my results. Get the idea?

What if the surname was "Morse" or "Cook"? Here are example of searches that you might do using the symbols: Search: +morse +married -code (the word "code" is excluded because of "morse code"). Try: +cook +died-food -chef (the words "food" and "chef" are excluded).

Fine Tune Your Searches: Count on doing a search from three to five times. Each time you click on the "Search" button examine the results and see if there are any other keywords you can include or exclude.

Don't worry about a large amount of results. What matters is the top 10 or 20 -- ignore the rest and start fine tuning. This way you really can find the needle in the haystack.

You will be able to get the good stuff to come to the top like cream floats to the top of Grandpa's milk pail.

Previously published in Roots Web Review: Vol. 5, No. 43, 23 October 2002.

Sharing, Caring, and Paying

Suzi Plooster mplooste@du.edu

I always find it interesting to receive requests for my genealogy information and usually I always try to help people with their requests. I often answer queries on different mail groups. I am always happy to share the work of my labors.

However, what I find perplexing is that so few who receive the information are willing to carry their share of the load. The work that I have done over 14 years has carried with it a very large price tag. I now request that everyone I share information with pay for the postage on the packets of materials and pay me 10 cents per page for copying. This barely covers the expense of the actual materials and, of course, my time and research are gained free. Yet, so often the requester tells me they do not want it if they have to pay for it. Surely they should realize that I have initially born the costs of this research and paying for postage and copying is a very minimal amount.

Folks who request information should be willing to pay their own way, and not think that now because all the hard work has been done it is always free to them. Yes, I know that information posted on the Web is often free. However, I choose to keep control of my information and feel that it too needs to be honored. However, I have given information out and later find that they have posted my information on the Web without my permission and with out attributing the researcher who did the work.

Every genealogical searcher whether on the Internet or in private transactions needs to be willing to:

1. Pay your own way.
2. Acknowledge receipt of all materials promptly.
3. Thank the giver for all the information.
4. Ask permission of the researcher from whom you received the information if you may post it on the Web.
5. If permission is given the researcher must be given credit for the research on the posting.

Courtesy, honor, and ethics are a necessity in sharing genealogical information.

Previously published in Roots Web Review 11-20-02.

Our Readers Write

On a previous date that I made an inquiry in the Heimatbrief, I was thrilled to receive so many helpful replies to my questions that I am daring to try this route again. My last inquiry was about the Hoffman family. I received information from Angie Portner, Duane Piere and a phone call from Denis Warta who took time out from his busy schedule at the New Ulm Heritagefest to hunt for me at the Flandrau State Park campground so that he could show me where the people in question were buried. I was able to add some good stories and information to my genealogy records along with photos of the tombstones. Perhaps I can hit the jackpot one more time.

My mother's name was Eleanor Dietz. She is a sister to Otto, Alfred (Boy), and Albert Dietz and to Elizabeth Dietz Weber. Their parents were John Thomas Dietz and Theresa Portner. The parents of John Thomas Dietz were George Jacob Dietz and Dorothy (Beck). The parents of Dorothy Beck were George Beck and Theresa Dietz. That is as far as I have traced back the family of my great great grandmother, Dorothy Beck. And the fact that Dorothy's mother's surname is the same as her own husband's surname is where the puzzle comes in.

Here is some background information. I found an article in a special issue of the New Ulm Journal commemorating the Sioux Indian Uprising of 1862. The article names Brown County men who served in the Civil War in various capacities. I quote:

Minnesota's Eleventh Regiment of Infantry was formed under the last call of President Lincoln for troops. Service of this regiment was probably less eventful than that of any other regiment or troop furnished by the state. Lives were sacrificed but not in battle. Largest number of Brown County men, 28, served in the Eleventh

It goes on to list these men and their ranks an ages and goes on:

Other country men in the regiment were George Beck, 41; John Clasen, 28; Henry Fortwengler, 24; Bernhard Gaentner, 30; Phillip Gross, 29; Robert Hinton, 30; Joseph Hillesheim, 24; John Hoehne, 24; John Holm, 38; Philip Kirby, 33; Conrad Kleinknecht, 42; August Kuhne, 30; Christian Kumm, 31; Michael Lange, 33; theobald Scheibel, 25; Henry Schumacher, 25; Fred Walther, 23; and Casper Koerch, 34. they served in Company A under Captain Adam Buck.

On the tombstone in the New Ulm cemetery the inscription says that George Beck was born December 11, 1823 and died October 1, 1995. Thercsia Beck (his wife) was born April 22, 1827 and died October 14, 1896.

According to a copy of a legal document which I found in the Beck file at the Brown County Historical Museum

Theresia applied for widow's pension shortly after George's death. One of the documents, written in German and which I have translated reads as follows:

In the matter of the Widow's Pension claim of Theresa Beck ABR 0240177 on this sixteenth day of December, 1895 personally came before me August Dietz aged 71 years and Margaret Dietz aged 69 years, residents of New Ulm, Minn, respectable persons and entitled to credit who being duly sworn, depose and say: That they were intimately acquainted with George Beck and Theresa Beck (nee Dietz) since their childhood and know that neither of them were married before they joined in marriage on or about October 28, 1855. That affiants were present at the marriage ceremony of George and Theresa Beck at the Catholic Church in Ploess in Bohemia and since coming to this country have always lived near neighbors and from their intimate acquaintance and intercourse know that the claimant has never been divorced from her said husband but that George Beck and Theresa Beck lived together as husband and wife uninterruptedly until the death of said George Beck .

They further say that this statement was all written down by William Pfaender at his office in the city of New Ulm on the 16th of December 1895 in their presence and only from their oral statements then made so said William Pfaender and that in making the same they did not use and were not aided or prompted by any written or printed statement or verbal prepared or dictated by any other person and not attached as an exhibit to this testimony.

Another form with basically the same information but including the name Franz Zeug and excluding the name of Margaret Dietz was dated November 1, 1895. (An Anna Zeug, daughter of Matthias Zeug of Neubau and Anna Schubert from Schmolau also is the grandmother of George Jacob Dietz.)

My mother often spoke of her grandmother, Dorothy Beck. Since Mom's grandfather, George Jacob Dietz died quite young, Dorothy was remarried to Leonard Vetter. But Mom never mentioned an August or Margaret Dietz. Nothing I have mentions whether they were sister and brother, or brother and sister-in-law to Theresa, or whether they were related in any way to Theresa or to Theresa's son-in-law (who is also my great grandfather). If trying to follow this gives you a headache, join the club!!!!

I would appreciate word from anyone who can shed some light on this little mystery. My e-mail address is leorawilkes@yahoo.com and my snailmail address is 606 Park Avenue SE, Pierz, MN 56364.

Recently I watched a series of nine videos titled HEIMAT, which I was able to rent from the Great River Regional

Library system in our area. The film takes place in Germany in a fictional village called Schaubach in a fictional area called Hansruck (not at all sure of that spelling). It follows the life of a peasant family starting at the end of WWI through to recent years. It is in German with English subtitles. The land and architecture was reminiscent of the area we visited in Bohemia in the Czech Republic in 2001. The story line was exceptional and educational. It moves along quite quickly. I would like to recommend it to anyone with a German heritage or who is interested in German History.

Leora Wilkes

.....

To the Editor,
Genealogy is nothing more than shaking the family tree to see what kind of nuts will fall out! That having been said let me say that as far as my history of the name Drimmel and it's various spellings I owe it all to (GBHS founder) Bob Paulson. He put me in touch with T&P research in the Czech Republic. They traced my family from my grandfather back to 1792. They gave me a bound book with copies of documents they found and translations of those documents but also pictures of the areas mentioned. If I was to total up the cost of air fare, car rental, food and lodging and an interpreter, I got by very cheap! I do have to admit that I owe Bob a couple of twelve packs for all of his help.

One of my problems I have found is dealing with relatives. Have you ever been told that, "they aren't related because they spell their name different"? At different times my great uncle spelled his last name Drimmel, Drimmell, Drimel, Dremel, and Driml. One of my cousins has my grandfathers papers and either doesn't know it or won't admit it. Another problem is a difference in history that you find. Uncle John said they landed in New York August 13, 1884. My grandfather said they landed August 13, 1884 in Baltimore. The only way that could be possible would be if John fell overboard and swam to New York while the others went on the Baltimore. What ever.

Don Drimmel
P.O. Box 128
Webster, WI 54893

Query

Looking for information regarding the exact village origin of Franz WAGNER and his wife Johanna (both born 1812 or 1813) who settled in the Sauk City, Wisconsin area about 1855 with their children: Franz, Jr. (born Dec. 1839-1844), John (born June 1846 or 1847), and Theresa (born March 1847 or 1848). Johanna's maiden name was RAPP,

March 1847 or 1848). Johanna's maiden name was RAPP, RAAB, RAD, or RABING, depending on which record you view. Johanna had a sister named Josepha or Sophie (Sofia) (born 1825 or 1826) who married a Mathias MICHELS in the late 1850's. The sister Josepha lived in the nearby Roxbury area of Dane County, Wisconsin. Franz, Jr. married a Katherine TRUMER from Stuben in South Bohemia (now Hurka, Czech Republic) and Theresa married Katherine's brother Marcus Trumer (also from Stuben per 1880 Dodge County, Wisconsin history). Entries in 1920 and 1930 Census records of Snohomish County, Washington (to which Franz, Jr. and Katherine moved late in life) suggests that the Wagners were also from the Oberplan parish area (or very close to it) which included Stuben. The TRUMERS from Stuben were descended from Matthias Trumer (born 1809-1811) and Maria Magdalena Hassinger (born 1812-1813). Incidentally, Oberplan is now known as Horni Plana, Czech Republic.

Thank you,
Bob Tratz
2841 Lancaster Dr.
Boise, Idaho 83702
mbtratznaearthlink.net

Wisconsin Genealogical Resources

www.wisconsinhistory.org

GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH SERVICE

Order Wisconsin birth, marriage and death records issued before Oct. 1907 and Civil War service records for soldiers who served in Wisconsin units. Submit your request and pay by credit card online. The trained staff will search the indexes, print out all relevant records, and mail them to you within 28 days.

www.wisconsinhistory.org/genealogy/ogrs/

WISCONSIN LOCAL HISTORY & BIOGRAPHY ARTICLES - FREE!

Read more than 16,000 articles clipped from Wisconsin newspapers between 1850 and 1950, totaling nearly 50,000 pages. Search for people by name or browse articles from a particular community, including biographical sketches, interviews, obituaries, reminiscences, and much more!

www.wisconsinhistory.org/wlhb/

WISCONSIN HISTORICAL IMAGES - FREE!

View more than 250 Wisconsin photographs taken between 1870 and 1970 and order quality reproductions of any that you'd like to own. Some postcards, prints and posters are included, too. Browse through large subject groupings such as "transportation" and "domestic life" or search for specific people and places.

search for specific people and places.

www.wisconsinhistory.org/whi/

ROSTER OF WISCONSIN VOLUNTEERS, 1861-1865 FREE!

Discover what happened to any Wisconsin Soldier, or browse regiment and company muster rolls. Nearly 90,000 soldiers are documented on 3,000 pages. For even more information, request the unpublished records on which these volumes were based from our online Genealogical Research Service.

www.wisconsinhistory.org/roster/

PLANNING A VISIT? Get directions, hours, and phone numbers. Search our library and archives catalogs from home before you come. Read more than 50 pages of description about our genealogical collections and services. Learn how to make the most of your time in Madison. All this and more, at:

www.wisconsinhistory.org/genealogy/

Marriage to Avoid Service

by **Karen Hobbs**

Married men were exempt from military service and soldiers on active duty could not marry unless they were non-commissioned officers or officers and received permission to do so.

The Austrian army recruiters sometimes respected the law about marriage making men exempt and sometimes they did not. It depended on how critical the need for manpower was at the time and during the seven years war (War of Bavarian Succession) with Prussia and the wars with France 1792-1815 many men had to serve in spite of multiple exemptions.

Dr. Karl Stich's book "Heimat im Bohmen" gives examples of petitions to noble lords from wives/mothers whose husbands had been taken by the military in spite of being exempt as married men and being master craftsmen. The replies from the noble lords were usually something like, "when the need is as great as it is at present even men who would normally be exempt must serve."

In 1812 Austria attempted to halt marriages of very young men to avoid the draft with a new marriage law. The new law required a marriage license (permit to marry) and civil ceremony for a legal (legitimate) marriage. Most young men could not qualify for the marriage license because they could not show enough income to support a family (the law was also aimed at reducing the numbers on welfare) and because they were eligible for the draft and had not yet fulfilled a military obligation.

About the only way a young man could get a marriage

About the only way a young man could get a marriage license after that was to pay someone else to substitute for him for conscription and to prove that he could provide for a family. Most men could not meet that last requirement until they were 26 or older even if they could afford to pay someone to serve as their substitute.

Men who married before they achieved financial independence could end depending on their families to support them for a very long time or even on welfare. If they found work it was usually only as field hands or house servants.

Authorities would deny marriage license applications by some couples year after year because they could not prove adequate income. Journeymen tradesmen were particularly hard hit by that ruling after the start of the industrial revolution. In some cases couples who could not get a marriage license for a legal marriage would have a religious ceremony if they could arrange it and live together anyway. There were probably many who did not even have the religious ceremony.

Any children born to such unions were considered illegitimate by the civil authorities and had to be entered into church records as such. Men who took wives in that manner were not legally married and therefore were single in the eyes of the law and still eligible for conscription. There are cases of soldiers who have children born while they are on active duty and -- if they were not NCOs or officers -- could not contract a legal marriage. All those children were considered illegitimate until the soldier left the army and was able to get a marriage license and go through a civil ceremony with his wife. At that time the birth records would be changed to reflect the children's now-legitimate births.

Newsletter Deadline

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

History For Sale

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

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

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

Tailors

by **Karen Hobbs**

There are pictures of tailors at work in the Diderot Encyclopedia that may be available at local libraries. It is the 18th century tailor but the 19th century shop was probably not much different.

All crafts had the same three steps to becoming a master - apprentice, journeyman and masterwork submitted to and accepted by the guild.

Apprentices to any trade started as young as 12-14 years old and spent up to 7 years as apprentices and as long as it took as journeymen to get enough money to join the guild and present a masterwork if they wanted to be called master.

Whether or not being a master tailor meant one had a better income depended on where he lived. I suspect that a bigger town or city was the only place that a master tailor could realize any real economic advantage for having joined the guild.

A tailor had to know how to measure a body for fit, make a model or adjust a model in the shop to represent the customer if needed, make a pattern, select the right cloth for a given item -- or make sure that the cloth the customer provided was suitable -- and know if it needed reinforcing with something else. He did the cutting, sewing (by hand or machine), fitting and altering until it was just right. Then he had to find the accessories like buttons and other trim.

Hand sewing required knowledge of which kind of stitch to use for which purpose -- basting, straight sewing, button holes, tacks, reinforcing back stitches, embroidery or applying trim, etc., and to understand what kind of thread to use. It also required knowing how to snip curves and stretch seams and reinforce them so they would lay flat yet give without breaking the thread. And they had to understand how and when everything should be pressed in order to look and fit the best as the work progressed.

They had to be up on style or able to look at a picture and copy the clothing shown. I suspect tailors sometimes made muslin mockups of new styles or to test a pattern on a new customer in order to try it for fit before cutting the final cloth. I understand that a popular tailor shop in a large city would have forms for all their best customers so they could do a lot of the work without requiring the customer to return for many fittings. The tailor shop made each customer's form or had to verify his size against a standard one.

Peasants spun their own yarn from flax and wool they raised themselves. They took the yarn to a local weaver

to be made into cloth that was then taken to a cloth finisher (if the weaver did not provide that service) and a dyer if they could not finish their cloth at home. The weaver always kept some of the yarn for his own use as part of his payment. After 1815 cheap cotton began to replace the linen that peasants used. By the 1860s silk came into use for fancy aprons and printed silks began to show up in skirts for Sunday tracht. Tailors had to be able to work with all these fabrics plus more basic or finer cloth and they had to know where to get the right kind of cloth for each project.

The heavy wools like loden cloth were always hand woven by peasants for many years. They were used for jackets and coats for both men and women. Linen would be woven into heavier and lighter cloth depending on how fine the yarn the spinner provided. The heavier cloths made work shirts and aprons or skirts and breeches or summer coats and jackets while finer yarn went into undergarments, blouses, and bed linens. Breeches were also made of soft sueded leathers or other leather -- to include sheepskin with leather on one side and fluffy wool on the other -- and so were jackets and coats. Tailors had to be able to work with all of these materials (some might have required using a very special needle).

I have never seen anything to indicate just who provided the customer base for the tailors but I suspect it was the men more than the women, especially in smaller towns and villages. Women were more apt to make their own clothing, especially their folk costumes (Tracht). They would spend many hours on elaborate embroideries and beadwork on winter nights and they developed designs that would grow with them as they matured or if they put on some weight (that is the reason for the laces in the front of an embroidered bodice). Tracht for both men and women were made to last for many years and it is a wonder that a tailor could stay in business under the circumstances. Once his customers were all outfitted he wouldn't see them again for a very long time! At the same time a rural tailor had to deal with peasants who provided their own cloth for most of the work they gave -- depriving the tailor of a chance at profit from fine cloth from somewhere else.

Tailors, Stone Masons, Blacksmiths and Bakers were trades that were often referred to as "overpopulated" during the 19th century -- there were more men in the trades than the work available could sustain. Some historians say that many men in those overpopulated trades had to join the army in order to get work or they had to find work in factories.

There was always plenty of work for tailors and bakers in the army if a man was willing to work in the uniforms and supply (Montours) branch. The Cavalry always needed farriers and the transportation corps always needed blacksmiths and farriers alike. Stone masons probably

also had plenty of work to do if they wanted to practice that trade in the army.

After ready made clothing began to appear in shops across Europe the tailors who had provided all non-home-made clothing before could not compete. The ones who survived were the ones who maintained exclusive shops catering to the wealthy or who set up their shops within the household of a wealthy nobleman who had a constant need for new clothes.

Mailcarrier in the Andreas Mountains

Wenzl Schwarz Ottmar

Original German in Glaube und Heimat, Feb. 1995

Translated by Karen Hobbs

Andreasberg's nearest post office was in Stein until the Bohemian Forest was incorporated into the Third Reich in 1938. After that Andreasberg had its own post office with Mr. Richard Stoiber as first postmaster. I had been trained in Stein and was immediately put into service as mail carrier in Andreasberg.

On the feast of the Epiphany that particular winter a storm began that raged on over several days, leaving 2.5 meters of snow on the ground. In spite of all our efforts to keep the roads clear they would be drifted shut again each morning and neither the horse-drawn sleighs nor the mail bus could get through. So the three mail carriers had to go on foot or on skis to the post office in Stein to pick up the mail that came in by railroad. That little trip took more than three hours.

On February 6 there was another storm that left snowdrifts blocking the roads once again and all of the postmen were reluctant to give service in such weather. However there were two registered letters from the Wehrmacht (armed services) for the Koller-Spitzn house high up on the Chumberg and some other important mail. We tried to decide which of the three of us should take on this task and I finally volunteered.

I got my skis and trudged up past Neudörfel, Chumau, Chumhäuser and Maurerferdl to the Spitzn house. I made good progress in spite of the snow and without a lot of effort I reached my goal more quickly than I expected.

On the way back I went down the steep forest path to the Zodlgraben. There was deep snow everywhere and I missed seeing the house called "Scheimroafm" because the snow had drifted right over the roof. I had a big reminder that the house was there when I skied off the

landed in a huge snow drift. My left binding came loose and the ski kept going so I hobbled on with only one ski, fell, rolled and dug my way through the snow down that steep slope. I was near exhaustion when I finally reached the Strassl (lane) by the "Oiwaran Hausl" (Oiwaran cottage) where my ski had finally gotten caught. I called out and Herr Jordan came to the front door. Franzi called out: "Ja! It's the mail carrier, Wenzl! Come on in and rest with us. I'll fix your binding for you. It's exactly noon -- eat with us so you get your strength back again." Franzi's wife waved me in as I accepted their offer.

My route was not ended there, however, because I had still to deliver the mail in my pouch to Graben, Pragerstift, Kriebaumkollern and then to cross back over the "Motzei" (a stream) to Adreasberg. In the late afternoon when it was already getting dark I arrived at the home station completely exhausted. My co-workers looked me over curiously and tried to seem very serious when they said, "What do you know! He's still among the living!"

Eventually I became the substitute post master for my boss when he was on vacation. The whole crew became the best of friends.

Wenzl Schwarz-Ottmar

Important Dates

April 27

GBHS Spring Dance

May 3

GBHS Spring Meeting

August 16

GBHS Picnic

Mark Your Calendars!

The Potato Harvest



The gatherers follow the plow

Circa 1940

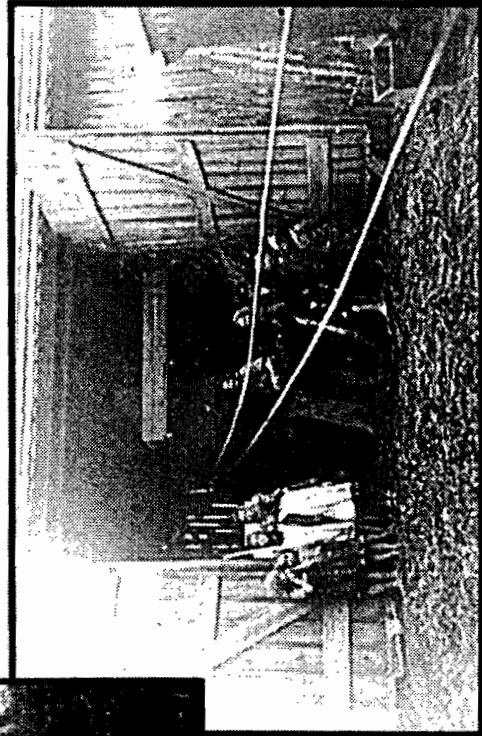


Hard Workers, All!



**Marie, Anna, Margaret
mother, Maria father, Georg**

**Photos from the Köstler
Family Farm:
Nedraschitz House #18
Kreis, Mies**



Threshing The Rye

Circa 1937

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 _____

Change of Address

Name _____ Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please enter new information and mail to us at: GBHS, P.O. Box 822, New Ulm, MN., 56073

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

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 54
New Ulm, MN
56073-0822