

Trentoner Donauschwaben

Volume 2 Issue 2



April-June 2002

Special points of interest:

- Did you know that one in five Germans enjoy an afternoon nap, according to researcher, Jürgen Zullye?
- Prussian Baron von Steuben standardized the U.S. Continental Army training manual in the spring of 1778 at Valley Forge, PA. This proved it's worth at the Battle of Monmouth, NJ in June 1778, when the U.S. troops defeated the British.
- Military enlistment was mandatory for our Hungarian ancestors in the 19th and early 20th century.
- German was the predominant language in the Austro-Hungary military.

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WINTERESSEN FEATURES DANCE GROUP

Of course the dinner was delicious, Sauerbraten is always a big hit and our kitchen staff does it as well as anyone can. However, January's monthly club dinner will best be remembered for the appearance of the Donauschwaben Dance Group. Lead by our sister organization in Philadelphia, under the direction of Herr Fred Gauss, with participation from our own club. That's right, dear readers, a joint dance group! As you may suspect, their performance was a huge success and we were extremely pleased to have them appear. Even the fact that our hall is a bit on the smallish side had little effect as the mostly teenaged group whirled and twirled through a number of rousing Volkstänze. It was like just like "old times" at the Trenton Donauschwaben!

Many of us felt more than a little twinge of nostalgia to have a new generation of dancers take to the floor. The group's appearance is also indication of our growing relationship with the Philadelphia Donauschwaben. There has been a growing amount of back and forth between our two clubs in recent years and we couldn't be more pleased!

Thanks to all the wonderful dancers (including Trenton's Brittaney Brandecker and Anna Martini!), the Philly parents who came along and to Fred Gauss for making our January dinner a very special occasion. And thanks to all who attended, you were a great audience!



BATTLESHIP NEW JERSEY COMES HOME (painting by David M. Boone)

Since our Club is located in New Jersey and most of our members reside here, it is only natural that we welcome home the Battleship New Jersey BB-62 to Camden, NJ.

The ship was officially opened for visitors 15 October 2001. It is located at the Camden, NJ waterfront dock adjacent to the Tweeter Center. Hours of operation are October 1-March 31 9am-3pm and April 1-September 30 9am-5pm. The cost is \$10 for adults, \$7 for children under 12 and \$7 for veteran & senior citizens.

The "Big J" is America's most decorated battleships and served in four wars: World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Persian Gulf War. It was one of four Iowa Class battleships and was commissioned in 1943.

My friend and I made the trip and guided tour in December 2001 it was a sight to behold. It took us over two hours to explore the 45,000 ton ship. What a difference between the World War II class destroyers we both served on and this behemoth. The 16" guns are enormous and could shoot 23 miles. The ship itself is over three football fields in length. The range of the Tomahawk missiles were 1500 miles.

It truly is a great experience to visit this fine ship. She did her namesake proud while serving this nation and protecting our freedom.

Dennis J. Bauer

Club Matters

NEW COMMITTEE INSTALLED AT ANNUAL MEETING

At the Clubhouse by Hans Martini

Presided over by President Joseph Brandecker the recent General Annual Meeting (27 January 2002) featured discussion on a wide array of topics of considerable importance to our club. The well-attended Sunday event was also notable as it marked the installation of the governing committee for the years 2002 – 2004.

Most everyone from the previous committee was carried over with a few notable exceptions: We welcome Dennis J. Bauer as our newest vice-president. Dennis is well known and respected for his genealogical expertise and enthusiasm for all things Donauschwaben. Dennis will serve as a back up to the president with a special interest in promoting the club's cultural affairs. Another well-known individual in our club, Harold Parr, has assumed the duties of school president. Harold will oversee all aspects of the club's language education program. These two members, along with the many others who make up our committee, will provide the type of strong and dedicated leadership necessary for our club to achieve continued success in the future. We wish the entire committee all the best in all of its endeavors for the years to come. A complete listing of our club's officers can be found at the clubhouse.

It might be of some interest to mention one of the issues brought up at the meeting. The subject was language education in our primary schools here in New Jersey. Herr Kurt

Müller, one of our Adult German Language School instructors, correctly pointed out that there is a serious lack of choice when it comes to language education in taxpayer-financed schools. Indeed, while New Jerseyans are from every conceivable ethnic background, usually only Spanish is offered as the foreign language. Yet the benefits of learning a language such as German, the language of the most important economy in Europe and whose scientific, social, and cultural importance is quite considerable, can not be overstated. He encouraged our membership to advocate for the inclusion of German as an alternative foreign language. We hope to formulate some type of strategy to address this concern in the near future.

Thanks to all who attended and to the kitchen staff for providing the tasty lunch!

HELP STILL NEEDED WITH MEALS & NEWS

Preparation and service of these meals require a lot of time and effort from those who volunteer. Please, please consider helping out in the future. The number of helpers is growing smaller. Not only will you help the Club out, but you will have a lot of fun and fellowship with other members!

In addition, do not feel that you can not submit articles or news for the Club Newsletter! It is your newsletter, so please consider sending an article, news item, etc. for inclusion in the next issue.

MEIN SCHIURLAUB in ÖSTEREICH

By Ludwig Jakob

Ich hatte die Gelegenheit 7 Tage Schiurlaub mit meinen Verwandten und Freunden in Eben im Pongau (Land Salzburg) zu geniessen. Das schöne Jugendgästehaus. LINDENHOF geleitet von Maria und Josef Kirchner, welche ausgezeichnete freundliche Gastgeber sind und Sie können stolz sein auf Ihr gutes Essen and reine Zimmer. Am Samstagabend nach dem alle angekommen waren, wurde ich vorgestellt als Onkel Ludwig aus Amerika und dann wurden Pläne gemacht für die nächste Woche. Sonntag fuhren wir Ski in Eben, am Montag fuhren Fritz, Ilse, Dani und Freundin und ich zu dem Schiort Flachau (15 Minuten mit dem Auto). Der Weltbekannte Schifahrer Herman Maier kommt von der Flachau.

Schigebiet Flachau ist sehr gross und ist erreichbar von 3 Taelern. Ein herrliches Schigebiet und das Wetter, die Schneeverhältnisse waren sehr gut (eigentlich ein bisschen zu warm) Jede Nacht hatten wir 2“-8“ Neuschnee. Am Dienstag fuhren Fritz und ich wieder in die Flachau, wo uns 8“ Neuschnee erwartet, was natuerlich schön ist, aber es war für mich diesmal zuviel. Nach dem Mittagessen blieben wir in Eben. Am Mittwoch kamen Inge und toni für einen Tag zum Schifahren. Am Donnerstag fuhren Fritz und ich auf die Rieteralm Steiermark, Basecamp von Christl, Hebert und rolan (Verwandte). Hebert übernahm die Führung und zeigte uns die Reiteralms und Würzeralm, ein herrliches Schigebiet mit unzähligen Pisten, Gondolas, Sessellifte (6 Personen). Unser letzter Tag Freitag blieben wir in Eben mit der Gruppe, es war der schönste Schitag, mit 4“ Neuschnee und herrlichem Sonnenschein und wenige Schifahrer. Die Aussicht von den Schneebedecketen hohen Bergen einfach atemlos. Nach dem geschmackvollen Mittagessen mussten wir zusammenpacken, denn alles Schöne muss leider zu Ende gehen, aber mein Trost war ich fuhr zurück zu meiner lieben Schwester, Schwager und Rest von meinen Verwandten, wo ich weiter herrliche Tage verbrachte. Die Erinnerung an diesen schönen Urlaub werde ich noch lange geniessen.



Genealogy & History Section

DONAUSCHWABEN GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH USING ORTSSIPPENBUCH/FAMILIENBUCH

An Ortssippenbuch (roughly translated "town family/kinship book") is a village or town book dealing with the resident's genealogy. The book may contain several volumes or editions/updates. They cost between 27-260 DM each, are written in German and arranged alphabetically by family surnames, listing husband, wife and their children. The introduction discusses the history of the town and its founders. The genealogical data generally includes each family members birth date and place, marriage date and place and death date and place. The information in a book may trace a particular family back from the present to the late 1600s. The Familienbuch (family book) is very similar to the Ortssippenbuch.

The author uses information from civil, church records and family histories supplied by fellow genealogists to compose the book. As in any secondary source there are occasional errors. Therefore, one should verify the information by checking the original records if possible. Most of the Roman Catholic Church records from 1826-1896 are available on microfilm from the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (LDS), Family History Center and are listed by town name. Keep in mind many of the original German town names had been changed to Hungarian names and then to Serbian names. There are several references available that can be used to determine the various names used over time for a particular town. Vital records from 1897-1919 can be obtained from the Archdiocese of Kalocsa, Kalocsa-Kecskemet, Erseki Hatosag, Szentharomsag ter 1, Postfach 29 Kalocsa H-6301, Hungary.

Unfortunately, there is not an Ortssippenbuch for each town in the Donauschwaben areas of Hungary, Yugoslavia and Romania. However, the list grows each year as individuals compose these works in order to preserve a town's family history and genealogy. Many of the Donauschwaben Ortssippenbücher are marketed by the author through the Arbeitskreis donauschwäbischer Familienforscher (AkdFF) [The Working Group of Danube-Swabian Genealogists]. Their library is located at, AkdFF-Bibliothek, Goldmühlestr. 30, D-71065 Sindelfingen, Germany. In some cases they are ordered directly from the author. The books may also be available in the United States at the larger public or specialized libraries, including the main LDS Family History Library in Salt Lake City, UT, and the New York Public Library.

Dennis J. Bauer, our Club Genealogist, has collected 24 of these useful genealogical resources. Although most of his collection is from towns in Batschka, he has several books from the Banat and other Donauschwaben regions. Contact Dennis for which town books he has in his personal library.

Our Club website also has a partial list of the available Ortssippenbücher/Familienbücher.

HISTORY OF OUR DONAUSCHWABEN ANCESTORS

This fall members; Dennis J. Bauer and Hans Martini, will present a joint lecture at the Club entitled "History of Our Donauschwaben Ancestors". The lecture will be open to all members and guests and trace the migration of our German ancestors from the Alsace-Lorraine/Swabia areas to Hungary in the 1700/1800s. Look for further details in future newsletters and flyers.

LOCAL GENEALOGY LECTURES

The Morrisville PA Senior Center, 31 East Cleveland Ave., Morrisville (215-295-0567) will host two genealogy lectures this spring. On April 22, 2002 at 10AM, James Beidler, Genealogical Society of PA, will give a talk entitled "PA Family history: The Search for Identity". On 6 May 2002 at 10AM, Linda Ries will give a talk entitled "Collecting & Perserving your Family Records". Both lectures are open to the public.

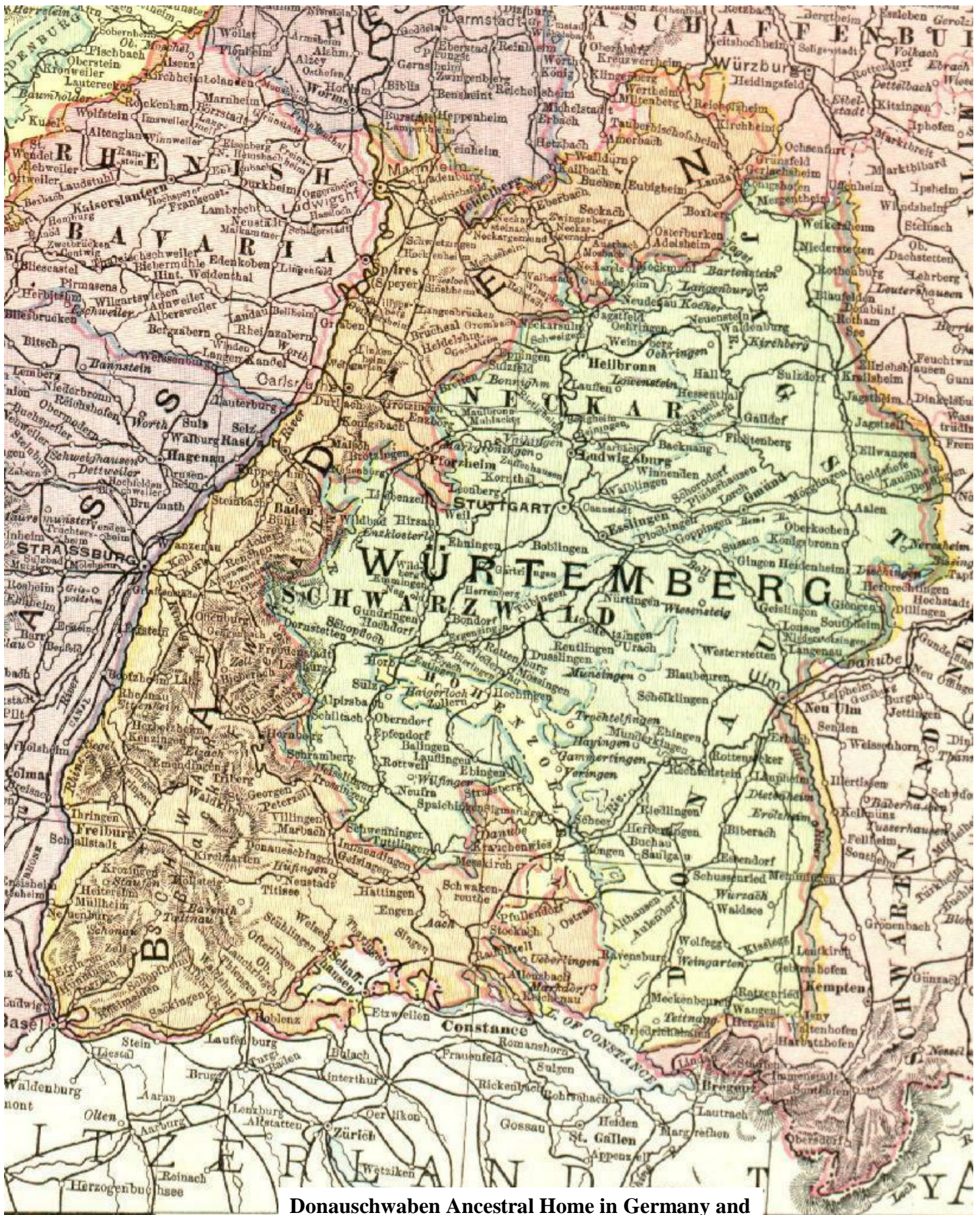
PHILLY DONAUSCHWABEN SEEKS SURVIVOR'S STORIES

Fred Gauss, Philly's club president, is gathering stories submitted by survivors of the Donauschwaben Genocide. Modeled after similar successful efforts in Chicago, Fred hopes to gather as many experiences as possible and publish a book for the benefit of generations to come. Right now he is in the process of refining his procedures and will have something for all of our member-survivors soon. Please consider being a part of this endeavor. It will be a valuable resource for the future.



A Typical Donauschwaben Home

The Donauschwaben village was laid out in squares, with the church and market place being in the central location. The homes and barns lined the village streets, with the farm lands on the out skirts of the village. Small vegetable and wine gardens could be found near the homes for family use.



Donauschwaben Ancestral Home in Germany and
Alsace-Lorraine 1895

Membership News

2002 Club Officers & Staff

Joseph Brandecker— President *Robert Walter*— V.P. for Facilities
Kim Walter— V.P. for Human Resources *Hans Martini*— Corresponding Secretary
Eva Martini— Recording Secretary *Ludwig Jakober*— Treasurer
Josefa Brandecker— President Ladies' Auxiliary
Harold Paar— President of German Language School
Dennis J. Bauer— V.P. for Cultural Affairs, Genealogist, Newspaper Editor
Dana Miles— Web Master *Adam Martini*— Newspaper Staff Writer



CLUB GENEALOGIST MAKES THE NEWS

Club member & genealogist, Dennis J. Bauer, was in the Sunday 24 February 2002 issue of the Bucks County Courier Times. He volunteered his time and help at the 23 February 2002 Saturday open house of the Morrisville, PA Family History Center. He setup a table and discussed the use of the U.S. Census records in genealogical research. In the newspaper photo above, Dennis is helping co-worker, Wayne Aaronson, check the 1880 U.S. Census index CD-Rom for Wayne's ancestors.



Club President, Joe Brandecker and wife Caroline, stopped by later that day for some genealogical help with Caroline's family line. They were able to find information about several of her ancestors that she did not have before! Dennis wore our Club shirt which generated several inquiries about our Club and the Donauschwaben. He gave out information about our Club, its mission, goals and events to interested individuals.

In a related issue, the 1930 U.S. census records were just released for public access. on 1 April 2002. They can be found at the National Archives main branch in Washington, DC or at any of the regional branches, including the one in Philadelphia, PA. Copies should also be available at the local NJ State Library, NJ State Archives and Family History Centers later this year.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES ON THE WEB

Some of the articles from the Club's newsletter can now be found on member John Feldenzer's *Palanka* website. His website address is www.feldenzer.com. The Club wishes to thank John for his kind and thoughtful posting of these articles for the world to see and read.

Membership Happenings (births, engagements, weddings, deaths, anniversaries, vacation trips, graduations, etc.)

Sympathy: Condolenses to members, Nikolaus & Anna Marie Wiener on the passing of Anna's mother **Katherine Hoffmann Wenzler**. Katherine died 6 February 2002. She was a member of the German American Society.

Condolences to members, Chuck & Theresa Pinkerton of Langhorne, PA and Walt & Anne Suttman of Chalfont, PA on the passing of Chuck & Anne's mother, **Catherine "Cass" Maguire Pinkerton**, of Chalfont, PA. Catherine was a life member of the German Police Association, former president of the Catholic Kolping Society of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Donauschwaben. She died 11 March 2002.

Jahrestag: Members, **Jason & Pam Bauer** celebrated their first wedding anniversary on 31 March 2002. Congratulations!

CHILDREN'S SCHOOL - A GREAT BEGINNING

Early indications are extremely promising as students in our children's language school report *enjoying* the class. Hurray! Under the tutelage of Frau Brigitte Kleinmann, our school now numbers about a dozen pupils varying in age from six to almost thirteen. The lesson plan includes not only grammar and vocabulary, but also arts, crafts and singing. It's proving to be a great way for our children to get a real feel for the language of our ancestors. The Donauschwaben considers itself very fortunate to be able to offer our members this educational opportunity.

School runs from 10 to 12 noon each Saturday at the clubhouse. For those wishing more information please call school president Harold Parr at 609-890-1966. We encourage everyone to consider giving their child or grandchild the benefit of learning another language. **Wir lernen Deutsch!**

Deutsche Ecke, Seite 1

DIE FLUCHT – Adam Martini (Continued from the last issue)

Editor's note: The following article is by Adam Martini, about his true-life experience as 10-year-old Donauschwabe from Bukin during the ethnic cleansing of Germans from Yugoslavia in the aftermath of WWII. This story is not unlike that of many other Donauschwaben who survived similar ordeals. Sadly, some 126,000 others did not.

Das bringt uns zum dritten Versuch. Der Kontakt mit den jungen Männern wurde wieder aufgenommen. Der Tag der Flucht festgesetzt und wir versuchten wieder in die Felder zu gelangen. Diesmal an einem anderen Ortsteil vom Lager. Nach längerer Zeit schafften wir es über den leeren Landstreifen der die Felder vom Lager trennten. Das Kukuruzfeld war dort auch gross und wir irrten herum bis wir Stimmen hörten, schwowische Stimmen. Es war eine Erlösung zumindest für mich, denn unser Pech mit der Flucht hat mich fast zur Verzweiflung gebracht. Unsere Mutter war aber nicht hier. Sie war auf der Feldarbeit am anderen Dorfende und musste nach der Arbeit uns hier treffen. Ja, das war schön und gut, aber langsam wurde es dunkel und die drei junge Männer wurden nervös. Meine Ohren waren wie zwei Antennen und ich hörte alles was gesagt wurde, sowie jedes Geräusch in der Umgebung. Die Freiheit lockte, doch Mutter war nicht hier. Langsam hörte man Gemurmel vom Gehen und nicht die ganze Nacht warten auf eine Person. Grossmutter, eine sehr religiöse Person, fing an zu beten, meine Schwester Maria, machte nervöse Laute und ich horchte in die Nacht für die liebe Stimme meiner Mutter. Zwei von den jungen Männer gingen weg in verschiedenen Richtungen um unsere Mutter zu finden. Nach einer halben Stunde wollten sie wieder zurück sein. Es war beschlossen, nach der Rückkehr der zwei Führern wird aufgebrochen mit oder ohne uns. Ich wusste aber, dass meine Grossmutter niemals meine Mutter verlassen würde und wir dann wieder unseren Weg zurück ins Lager finden müssten. Einer der Zwei kam zurück und setzte sich hin, sagte aber nichts. Die Gruppe wollte weg von dort, sie dachten wir sind zu nahe am Lager. Doch der zweite Führer war noch nicht da. Dann auf einmal tauchte er auf. Er hatte ein Kopfband und er war es der immer das Brot brachte von Gara. Ich wünsche ich hätte seinen Namen beibehalten. Hinter ihm kam meine Mutter keuchend aber froh. Gefühle wie diese bekommt man nicht oft im Leben und das war ein Moment wo ich den Herrgott umarmen hätte können, an Ihn glaubte und Ihn innig dankte. Meine Grossmutter war in Tränen und meine kleine Schwester war überaus froh. Sofort wurde aufgebrochen, denn die Grenze war einige Kilometer weg, eigentlich nicht weit, aber die mussten immer einen anderen Weg einschlagen damit die Straschars uns nicht erwischen. Und so ging es bis Mitternacht. In einer mond hellen Spätsommernacht, eine Gruppe von ungefähr sechszehn Leuten, schlichen sich, unter der Leitung der sehr jungen Führern durch Felder an die Grenze. Dort angekommen sahen wir wieder dasselbe wie in Kruschiwil, ein Streifen Land abgemät. Nur Bündel von Kukuruzstengel lagen auf dem Feld. Ich kann mich nicht mehr ganz genau erinnern, ich weiss es waren Bündel und die

raschelten wenn man nicht aufpasste und dar überfiel. Wir blieben im Kukuruzfeld ganz still und einer der Führer schlich sich näher an die Grenze um den Moment zu erlauschen wenn das Überqueren möglich ist. Die Grenzer hatten nämlich Holztürme aufgebaut in regelmässigen Abständen und gingen zu Fuss bis zur Mitte zwischen den Türmen, sprachen einige Worte und gingen wieder zurück zu den Türmen. So unsere Möglichkeit war wenn sie bei den Türmen waren dann mussten wir schnell in der Mitte durchlaufen. Wir waren so nahe an der Grenze, dass wir die Grenzer singen hörten. Ich denke die hatten genau so Angst wie wir, denn sie sangen immer und so wussten wir auch wo sie sind. Jedenfalls trafen sich zwei Grenzer in der Mitte zwischen den Türmen, sprachen einige Worte, dann fingen sie an zu singen und gingen wieder zurück zu den Türmen.

Das war unser Moment. Der Führer der den Übergang ausspähte kam zurück und sagte einige Worte zu den anderen zwei Führern die uns dann ans Herz legten sehr ruhig zu sein und immer schnell vorwärts zu gehen, immer vorwärts. Und wir gingen. Zuerst über den offenen Streifen Land mit den Bündeln. Unsere Mutter hatte meine Schwester Maria auf ihrem Rücken, ich hatte Grossmutter an der Hand und zog sie immer schneller in die ersehnte Freiheit. Aber da waren die Bündel. Obwohl der Mond viel Licht abgab, so war es doch nicht das Beste. Wir sahen die Bündel aber die Posten konnten auch sehen. So rannten wir über diesen offenen Streifen Land. Grossmutter fiel über so manchen Bündel, doch stand sofort auf und rannte weiter. Ich denke wir waren niemals enger verbunden als damals. Und so ging es weiter, Stunde um Stunde. Niemand fühlte sich müde. Im Lager konnten wir fast nicht mehr gehen und jetzt gingen wir für Stunden, ein wahres Wunder. Man hörte wir sind in Ungarn, aber wir müssen schnell weiter, weil manchesmal kamen die Straschars und fangen die Flüchtlinge wieder und dann wurde man zurück in's

Lager gebracht. Aber wir gingen weiter und weiter. Man hörte Hunde bellen, die Führer wurden nervös und trieben uns immer schneller weiter. Dann kamen wir an einen Bach oder Graben. Da lag ein Brett oder Balken von Ufer zu Ufer. Meine Grossmutter sagte da geh ich nicht drüber. Ich war mit ihr, Mutter und Maria waren schon an der anderen Seite, niemand wollte warten. So zog ich Grossmutter auf das Brett, sie kam zögernd und wir erreichten die andere Seite des Baches. Wiederum dankte ich unserem Herrgott für die Einsicht und Geduld der Gruppe. Nur immer weiter. Das Bellen der Hunde wurde leiser und bald konnten wir es nicht mehr hören. Das gab mir ein gutes Gefühl, für das ich keine Worte finden kann, ich denke man muss so etwas erlebt haben um es zu verstehen. Für mich waren die drei Jahre des Lagerlebens vorbei und ich spürte schon die Freiheit. Wir kamen früh am Morgen am nächsten Tag an, und zwar auf einem Salasch oder Bauernhof. Es war ein Hof wo die drei Jungs die Leute brachten vom Lager und dann in Gruppen von zwei Personen am folgenden Tag nach Gara, ungefähr 15 Minuten vom Hof, gehen liessen. Unsere Ankunft am Hof war ungefähr 4 bis 5 Uhr morgens. Bei der Ankunft stellte man einen Kübel voll mit Kuhmilch in unsere Mitte und wir fingen an zu trinken. Kuhmilch! Ich konnte nicht genug haben und trank und trank. Es ist wieder eines von meinen Erlebnissen die ich nie vergessen werde, Kuhmilch,

Freiheit und Leben. Mein Fieber war weg. Unglaublich sogar für mich, dass so ein Leiden über Nacht weg geht. Es ist ein unbeschreibliches Gefühl. Am nächsten Tag gingen wir nach Gara zu meiner Tante, sie ist die Schwester meiner Grossmutter, eine Nonne und Lehrerin. Wir blieben einige Wochen in Gara in der Klosterschule neben der Kirche, dann ging es weiter in Richtung Österreich zu unseren Verwandten in Haigermoos, Oberösterreich.

Diese Erlebnisse, und da sind noch mehrere, haben mich überzeugt, wir Donauschwaben sind eine spezielle Gruppe, die durch diese Umstände ihren Gipfel erreichten und somit unsere deutsche Herkunft bereichern und unseren Kindern sowie Enkelkindern ein Beispiel sein können. Wir gehen nicht unter.

The Batschka Countryside



Deutsche Ecke, Seite 2

MY ESCAPE TO FREEDOM... by
Adam Martini

(Continued from the last issue)

(Editor's note: The following article is an English translation by Hans Martini of "Die Flucht" - the true-life experience of his 10-year-old Donauschwabe father from Bukin during the ethnic cleansing of Germans from Yugoslavia in the aftermath of WWII. This story is not unlike that of many other Donauschwaben who survived similar ordeals. Sadly, some 126,000 others did not.)

The same three young men again aided our third and final escape attempt. A different area of the camp and clearing was chosen and we soon found ourselves trying to find our way in a large cornfield. We bungled about in the maze of corn until we heard voices – German voices. This was truly wonderful for me, as our bad luck in previous attempts had made me a nervous wreck. But as we waited and waited for my mother to arrive from working in a field at the other end of the camp, our luck seemed to again be running out. As the day began to turn night, our guides became nervous. My ears were like antennae and I heard everything being said and every noise around us. I soon picked up from the grumbling of the group that they wanted to leave without my mother. Freedom beckoned and my mother was nowhere to be seen!

My grandmother, being quite religious, began to pray fervently. My sister fidgeted and made nervous noises while I strained to listen for the dear voice of my mother. Soon two of the three guides set off in opposite directions to look for her. It was resolved that they would return in half an hour and the group would then set off with or without her. I knew, of course, that my grandmother would never leave without her and that we would then have to make our way back to camp, again. The first of the two guides eventually returned, sat on the ground and said nothing. The group of people escaping with us grew increasingly scared and wanted to get going.

Just then the second guide sounded his approach. He wore a headband and it was he who brought us bread from Gara (sadly, I never did know his name).

Behind him followed my dear mother! I was overwhelmed with joy and gratefully thanked God in whom I placed my trust. My grandmother cried tears of joy and my sister was simply ecstatic. It was a moment I shall never forget.

And yet this terrifying adventure was not yet over and we quickly departed, as the border was still a couple of miles away. Actually it wasn't the distance that was the problem, rather it was the need to avoid the patrols that made us most fearful. And so it went on that moonlit late summer night. A group of about 16 Donauschwaben led by some very young guys sneaking through various fields on the way to the border. There we were confronted with much the same scene as outside our camp: a cleared strip of "no man's land". This time hay bales dotted the landscape along with small guard towers at regular intervals. Sentries walked back and forth between them, meeting in the middle, turning and walking back to their respective posts. One of our guides crept up to the middle point to determine the best moment for our group to rush through the gap as the sentries' backs were turned. The sentries must have been scared too as they sang continuously and we knew precisely where they were. Soon our moment arrived. As the sentries turned toward their towers, our guides urged us to quietly follow them as quickly as possible. Onward, we were implored, ever onward. First through the clearing with its hay bales, my mother carrying my sister and I holding my grandmother's hand, which I pulled ever harder toward the freedom, that lay ahead. The hay bales did provide us some protection despite the moonlight but we knew the sentries would still be able to see us. My grandmother fell over a few of these bales but would always jump up and run onward. I don't think I've ever been closer to her in my entire life. We went on like this for hours and yet no one

complained of being tired. It's funny but in the camps none of us felt we could do much of anything and yet now we could go on for hours – a small wonder.

After a while we did hear we were in Hungary but the guides hurried us along, as the Yugoslavs were known to chase after refugees far across the border. We then heard a dog barking and quickened our pace, as the guides were once again quite nervous. We came upon a small brook with just a small board running across it. My grandmother absolutely refused to cross such a rickety bridge. My mother and sister were already on the other side as was the rest of the group and they were intent on continuing apace. I had little choice but to pull my grandmother across! Soon the sound of the barking dog receded into the distance and a very good feeling suddenly washed over me. I think you must experience something like this to truly understand it. For me the three years spent in camp were finally at an end and I finally felt free.

Our group came upon a farm the next day that served as a transit point for the Donauschwaben escaping to freedom. From here, our group would make its way to Gara in smaller groups of two or so the following day. While we waited, a large bucket of fresh milk was brought in for us to drink. Fresh milk! I drank and drank; I just couldn't get enough. It was for me another memorable moment: Fresh milk, freedom, and life. It was an indescribable feeling. The next day we arrived in Gara at the home of my grandmother's sister, my aunt.

This experience and many others have convinced me that we Donauschwaben *are* a special group. Through great difficulties we have achieved our goals, have enriched our heritage and have set a fine example for our children and grandchildren. We did not go under, we are Donauschwaben!

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Dennis Jacob Bauer
Family Historian

49 Conifer Road
Levittown, PA
19057-1718
USA

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ATTORNEY AT LAW

RUHLMAN & BUTRYM, P.A.

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PHONE: (609) 737-9300 FAX: (609) 737-0992
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Opinion: Struggle for Donauschwaben History Continues—by Hans Martini, Corresponding Secretary

This writer has been at e-mail loggerheads with a fellow named Branislav living in Serbia over the tragedy that befell the Donauschwaben from 1944 –48. Don't get me wrong, it's great having him acknowledge at least part of what happened and the fact that he's a member of the faculty at a university there makes it even better. Surely we'll need people like him if that country is ever to fully recognize the events that transpired there so tragically. However, after a number of e-mails back and forth, it's very apparent it's not going to be easy.

Even while recognizing that up to 126,000 of 600,000 Donauschwaben perished during this awful time, Branislav makes every effort to present mitigating circumstances, in effect, excuses for why things happened the way they did. Indeed, by the time he's done, you almost get the feeling he's trying to say, "they got what they deserved, so be quiet". He employs the all-too-familiar tactic that whenever German tragedies are mentioned he recites the usual litany of German "crimes" in the same sentence. The effect, of course, is to diminish our sad experiences. In reality, it is a commonly used smoke screen that hampers any objective exploration of the facts.

The struggle for full recognition of the Donauschwaben Genocide will be long and arduous. We will always run into the Branislav's of this world who would unjustly seek to minimize our tragedy. For Donauschwaben to give in and not promote an accounting of their history would be an even graver injustice. An organization like ours must do all it can to insure that the suffering of those terrible years did not happen in vain. Everyone must learn the lessons of man's inhumanities to man in order that we might all achieve a better understanding and tolerance for each other.

Please consider supporting our efforts to publicize our history by purchasing a copy of Genocide of the Ethnic Germans in Yugoslavia. The book goes for \$15 and is a fast and informative read. Contact a club officer for further details.

Club Events for the Spring 2002

EVENTS— DATES & TIMES

- * *Donauschwabenessen— Sunday, 1pm, 14 April 2002*
- * *Muttertagessen— Sunday, 1pm, 5 May 2002*
- * *Donauschwaben Ausflug— Sunday, 8am, 19 May 2002*
- * *Donauschwaben Walfahrt— Sunday, 8am, 2 June 2002*
- * *Vatertagspiessbratenessen— Sunday, 1pm, 9 June 2002*
- * *Donauschwaben Kanufahrt/Zelteln— 4th July Weekend*
- * *Sommerspiessbratenessen— Sunday, 1pm, 14 July 2002*

Please call Frau Josefa Brandecker at (609) 585-8460 for meal reservations.

Vielen Dank !

A special thanks goes out to our wonderful food preparers, cooks, dishwashers, servers and bartenders. Without their hard work, our dinners would not be the success that they are. Danke schön !



Though certainly not necessary, feel free to tip our young servers. Young, hard workers are hard to come by. They appreciate it!

VEREINIGUNG DER DONAUSCHWABEN
127 ROUTE 156, YARDVILLE, NJ 08620
609-585-1932

PRESIDENT— JOSEPH BRANDECKER
609-585-9001

Dennis J. Bauer, Editor & Club Genealogist
49 Conifer Road
Levittown, PA 19057-1718
Email: donauschwaben@mail.com
215-945-9089

Hans Martini, Corresponding Secretary
1822 Orchard Ave.
Hamilton, NJ 08610
Email: DSATrenton@aol.com
609-888-2762

[www.geocities.com/
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Our Fabulous Members

Our club has been lucky to have many volunteers doing everything from licking stamps to cooking and serving food. Donauschwaben members are the best! We laugh and have a great time with each other while helping the club. It's all about community spirit and it's what makes our club special.

February's Schlachtfest was a case in point: over half a dozen members showed up on Friday to get things going; two dozen showed on Saturday to make sausages and Sarma; and, finally, another two dozen came by on Sunday to cook and serve the dinners that day. The event was a great success; the club made a little money; we upheld our ethnic traditions; and, we all had a good time helping out. It's what our club is all about!

Please consider doing your part by becoming a volunteer during one of our many events throughout the year. There are many ways you can help and **No experience is necessary!**

We look forward to your being a part of the winning Donauschwaben volunteer team soon!

From the Club Officers & Staff