

# HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF GERMANS FROM POLAND & VOLHYNIA



*A Society dedicated to preserving and promoting the historical heritage of Ethnic Germans—highlighting those from Poland & Volhynia.*

Plowing Scene --Brücke zur Heimat (1957) + Der grosse Treck -Jahrbuch Weichsel-Warthe 1993]

Room 11, Trinity Lutheran Church, 10014-81 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T6E 1W8

Editor: Sandra Tober

## CALLING ALL HSGPV MEMBERS!

### Annual General Meeting

Saturday May 23, 2015

2:00 p.m.

Trinity Lutheran Church, 10014 – 81 Ave

All members and friends are invited to attend the AGM for the meeting and vote, followed by Kaffee und Kuchen and a small program.

Come support your society and meet with friends!



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#### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY PASTOR FRED TOBER

Centuries ago our ancestors migrated east to seek better conditions for themselves. They were invited to come. They were willing to work extremely hard and consequently prospered.

However, the ebb and flow of history has been such that at the end of World War II they had to leave their adopted homeland under extremely difficult circumstances and seek a new life in the West where they established themselves and prospered again.

As an historical society it is incumbent upon us to

research, record, and there is outright misinformation. promote our history.

First of all, we need to do this for the sake of our own children and their children's children after them. If we don't

there is the possibility that they will forget their roots. Often the knowledge of a family background does not go beyond the grandparents.

Secondly, it is also necessary to promote our history in the general population.

Not only is it just a lack of knowledge, but often

If you have not done so already, I encourage you to record your own family history and trace your family tree.

Finally, for personal reasons I am resigning as president of our Society, but I will continue to be involved as a director.

Thank you for the opportunity to have served as President.

Sincerely,

F. Tober



## LEAVING POLAND 1946

By Amanda Rode

*After the end of the Second World War, the Polish government removed property rights to all German nationals. As Poland became increasingly hostile towards them, many Germans were forced to leave the country. The following is based on the account of Mrs. Amanda Rode of Bohlsen, who related her story to me when I was looking for my Aunt in Germany in 1987. She was a friend of my oldest sister and had lived not far from our family in Borki, Poland. Her story is a personal account of what happened to Germans living in Poland after the war.*

- Fred Tober

On a most beautiful sunrise April 29, 1946, with our last possessions in our hands and on our backs, we left our yard proceeding on the country road to an uncertain future. We, meaning my mother, my daughter aged five, and a Mrs. Gerke who had come to us in January 1945 when the Russians had caught up to her not too far from us, plus myself. Mrs. Gerke was old and feeble and had no relatives.

Our exit papers stated that our destination was Germany. However, many did not make it to Germany with these papers. Along the way they were conscripted into forced labor by the Poles, as was the case with my sister P. Rinas. The railway from our place to the district town of Gostynin was approximately 40 km. We still had German money with which we had paid for our exit papers. German money still was much in demand. Thus we had paid a Polish farmer who had a team of horses a sum of money plus good table cloths, who then drove us to the train at Gostynin. At the station about 44 of us with our bundles were shunted into a side room. It did not look good for us. They screened us and the stronger ones were taken to work.

A member of our group, a Mr. Tews, was very resourceful. He was confident and had a good command of the Polish language. It was getting dusk and we were fearful to lie there for the night. Tews made an attempt to help us, turning to the station supervisor asking him when we could count on continuing our journey. The supervisor indicated that he would do his best when the appropriate train would arrive. All the trains were overfilled. Tews came to an understanding with the supervisor, and a train was promised to us in the morning. Tews inquired whether we had German money or valuables which we could give to the station supervisor. It was enough for the asked-for amount for the supervisor. In addition the supervisor got some good liquor, and nothing bad happened to us that night.

In the morning the conductors pushed us into the cars of a train, and we traveled as far as Kutno, There we had to disembark and go into a separate room in which we repeatedly were mustered and asked some stupid questions. Mr. Tews again tried his luck with this station supervisor. When he inquired with our group whether we still had anything of value, we gave him of that which we still had left, Mr. Tews was lucky. Against much opposition and over-filled cars, we were pressed into a train heading in the direction of Posen-Stettin.

I spoke Polish, was young and slim, and was not recognized at first sight as German. Thus I managed to squeeze through to a spot in the middle of the car, place my wooden suitcase into a corner and sit down on it, taking my five-year-old daughter on my lap. After that movement was impossible because of the congestion. In addition to myself from our German group a farmer from Deutsch-Wiontschemin, Michael Gatzke, was squeezed into this car.

Mr. Gatzke was tormented. He had to bark, crow. He had not shaven. He was teased that one did not go on a journey unshaven. The tormentors told him they would do it for him, lit matches and burned the beard of Mr. Gatzke, then asked him if it hurt, followed by laughter so that the pleas, groans and lament of Mr. Gatzke could not be heard. Repeatedly the car's door was opened with the threat to throw out Mr. Gatzke.

As this “game” became louder, many other voices rose up in protest to this kind of behavior. Foremost was the voice of an undaunted lady clad in traditional Polish attire who was seated not too far from me.

Two Poles, in their mid-thirties suspected that I might be a German. To be on the safe side, they politely asked me if I was German. I told them the truth. Immediately their chicanery began also with me.

They asked me if I loved my child. I gave them no answer, for the Polish lady in the traditional attire bravely came to my defense. She spoke calmly and clearly to the men. The Pole took hold of my daughter’s head and said, “I’m going to throw her out. The old ones we can let go, they are not going to return, the young ones, the children, we must kill, for if we don’t do that these *Niemcy* (Germans) will return in twenty-five years, etc.” The lady in the traditional dress reminded this Pole that we were Christians and subject to the commands of Jesus Christ who had commanded us to love our neighbors as well as our enemies.” The Pole rejected this kind of talk, but the lady continued to speak of the faith in her calm manner. The Pole could not ignore her, but he heard the spectacle with Mr. Gatzke, and he and his companion decided to join that crowd.

Thus we traveled till Posen. There almost all the passengers disembarked, and we Germans had no further incidents till Stettin.

Next to me, another lady had entered the train who recognized me as German. She acted opposite to the first lady who had come to our rescue. She was cursing horribly, one could get the impression one was in hell. She got no support from the other passengers. I pretended I did not hear nor see her.

My mother, Mrs. G. and a few other Germans had been put into another car in Kutno. In that car also the verbal abuse of the “Hitlers” was common. An older Pole asked my mother where she came from. My mother answered that she came from Wiaszemin Niemicki. Then he asked her what her name was, and what her maiden name was. Mother mentioned the name Rinas, nee Krause. The Pole responded that she must be a daughter of a Rinas whom he had visited often. Thus a conversation developed. The Pole wanted to know how things were with her brothers and sisters. Mother had to sit, and the Pole talked of days gone by, mentioning a number of German families with whom he had had good relations, including the father of my mother. All abuse of the Poles stopped and only the conversation of the older Pole and my mother could be heard.

We had guardian angels. Never will I forget the lady who did not hide her godly light under a bushel but let it shine. I have admired her and wished I had such a sure faith whenever called for.

We stayed in Stettin for three days, as the registration took that long. After three days we were loaded 50 persons to a cattle car, plus luggage, and transported to Bad Segeberg. There, after a further three days, we were billeted in local villages. Our village was called Sueffeld.

It had taken us nine days to travel from Wionscemin to Sueffeld. We lived in Schleswig-Holstein for one year. Then we found a residence here in Bohlsen, which our mother’s sister was able supply for us. Mother’s sister came to Germany in 1919, bought the mill, and this became the place of refuge of many refugees from our old home area. Many were able to find themselves through this place of support in 1945-48. Uncle and Aunt Brandt did much good to many people.



### Call for Stories!

The HSGPV newsletter is always looking for content so if you have any family stories, historical research or announcements such as birthdays, anniversaries, or obituaries, please send them to the HSGPV office at Room 11, Trinity Lutheran Church, 10014—81 Ave

### Items for Sale through the HSGPV

- Step Back in Time Vol. I and Vol. II
- HSGPV German Cookbook (\$12)
- Complete set of E. Wushchke's "Wandering Volhynien Magazine" (\$100)
- Marsh Family Book (\$20)

## The Historical Society of Germans from Poland and Volhynia

Why care about your Heritage? Each one of us is a product of our environment! We have learned wit, humour, skills, Christian ethics, fashions, handicrafts, intellectual culture, literature, and building skills.

Our HISTORY is to encourage and facilitate research into the historical origins of Germans from Poland and Volhynia, as well as Volga, Black Sea, Bessarabia, Prussia, Romania and many more;

- To promote a public awareness of the cultural traditions of the descendants of Germans from Poland and Volhynia and their contributions;
- To secure, preserve, and maintain materials and records (charts, books manuscripts, maps, photographs, microfilms, photocopies...) for facilitating genealogical research pertaining to Germans from Poland and Volhynia;
- To assist members of the Society and interested parties in genealogical research;
- To cooperate with non-profit educational institutions, societies, researchers;
- To accept private collections from various donors.

Our society is raising donations to qualify for a government grant to improve our facilities, equipment, and location.

**Current Goal: \$20,000**

**Will you make a tax receipted gift?**

If so, please contact Helga Roth through the Society.

Note: before the government will give us the grant we need to raise the money. Can we count on your donation?

## Request for Information

*The Society was contacted by Waldemar Lenz from Bremen, Germany who is looking for information on his relatives. The following is the email from Waldemar. If anyone has any information they can pass on, please contact the Society:*

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren!

Die Geschwister meines Vaters, Richard Lenz, geboren 1893 und Alma Lenz geboren 1895, sind im Dorf Slawow, Bezirk Tschernjachow, Kreis Shitomir, Ukraine geboren. Ihre Eltern, Christoph und Otilie Lenz, waren Lutherischen Glaubens.

Vor dem ersten Weltkrieg, 1910 - 1914 sind Richard (August) Lenz und Alma (Emilie) Lenz nach Canada in die Provinz Manitoba oder Alberta ausgewandert.

Meine Frage: Gibt es vielleicht nähere Informationen zu diesen Personen, ihren Kindern oder gar Enkelm?

Velen Dank im Voraus.

Mit herzlichen Grussen.

Waldemar Lenz



## 1930 Flour Sacks

By Colleen B. Hubert



*In that long ago time when things were saved,  
when roads were graveled and barrels were staved,  
when worn-out clothing was used as rags,  
and there were no plastic wrap or bags,  
and the well and the pump were way out back,  
a versatile item was the flour sack.*

*Pillsbury's Best, Mother's and Gold Medal Too,  
stamped their names proudly in purple and blue.  
The string sewn on top was pulled and kept;  
the flour emptied and spills were swept.  
The bag was folded and stored in a sack,  
that durable, practical flour sack.*

*The sack could be filled with feathers and down,  
for a pillow or I would make a nice sleeping gown.  
It could carry a book and be a school bag,  
or become a mail sack slung over a nag.  
It made a very convenient pack,  
that adaptable, cotton flour sack.*

*Bleached and sewn, it was dutifully worn  
as bibs, diapers, or kerchief adorned.  
It was made into skirts, blouses and slips.  
And Mom braided rugs from one hundred strips  
she made ruffled curtains for the house or shack,  
from that humble but treasured flour sack.*

*As dish towels, embroidered or not,  
they covered up dough, helped pass pans so hot,  
tied up dishes for neighbors in need,  
and for men out in the field to seed.  
They dried dishes from pan, not rack  
that absorbent, handy flour sack!*

*So now my friends, when they ask you  
as curious youngsters often do,  
"Before plastic wrap, Elmers glue  
and paper towels, what did you do?"  
Tell them loudly and with pride don't lack,  
"Grandmother had that wonderful flour sack!"*



# HSGPV

  
**WWW.HSGPV.COM**

## *Board Members*

*Pastor Fred Tober (Chair)    Larry Javorsky (Vice Chair)*  
*Helga Roth (Treasurer)    Barbara Stenzel (Secretary)*  
*Daniel Pretzlaff (Past Chair)*

*Directors:*  
*Art Breier            Betty Scharff    Walter Epp*  
*Ed Retzner            Sandra Tober*

Honorary Member: Maria Wuschke

Contacts:  
Helga Roth (780) 464-4173  
HSGPV Membership: \$20.00/person

## HSGPV Library

Location: Room 11, Trinity Lutheran Church, 10014—81 Ave.  
Hours: 10 a.m.—1 p.m. every Thursday  
Librarian: Leane Evans

If you would like to visit the library outside of the regular hours, please call Leane at (780) 469-6118 to arrange access.

## Library Access

To access the library, please avoid walking through the daycare in the basement. Instead, take the entrance to the basement that is past the office and down the hallway.

**REMINDER: We are a registered non-profit organization and can issue tax receipts for all donations.**



## HSGPV German Cookbook

*The Following Recipe is a sample from the HSGPV Cookbook created from recipes submitted from members and friends. Copies are still available for purchase.*

### BBQ PASTA SALAD

#### Ingredients

- ½ cup Kraft Ranchers Choice dressing
- 2 tomatoes chopped
- 3 tbsp. BBQ sauce
- 1 green pepper chopped
- 4 Cups elbow macaroni cooked and drained
- 4 green onions chopped
- 1 can black beans rinsed and drained
- 1 can corn, drained

#### Preparation

1. Mix dressing and barbecue sauce in large bowl.
2. Add remaining ingredients, mix lightly.
3. Refrigerate 1 hour.
4. Toss lightly before serving.

#### Special Extra

Add chopped ham or chicken to salad before refrigerating

— submitted by Anna Arndt