

# 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

## HSGPV 2016 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Saturday April 23, 2015**

2:00 p.m.

Trinity Lutheran Church, 10014 – 81 Ave



**Calling all members!**

It's time once again for the AGM. Everyone is welcome to attend but only members in good standing can vote. Kaffee und Kuchen will be served!



### P R E S I D E N T ' S M E S S A G E B Y L A R R Y J A V O R S K Y

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

The Flight From Poland 1945 by L. & O. Tober	2
In Memory of Lorraine Yackulic	5
Cookbook Recipe	5
Donation Form	6

Another Spring is here after a mild winter with the weather warming up nicely. Soon the grass will be green, the trees will be sprouting new leaves and the blossoms will be out in full colour. It is time once again for the HSGPV Annual General Meeting (AGM) of our Membership and elections to fill the positions on the Executive Board.

We are fortunate to receive funding from the Alberta Provincial Government in the way of a financial grant. This is a

matching grant which requires support of our members and friends by way of matching donations of funds and volunteer time to carry out our project.

This project is planned to update and enhance our existing website; provide up to date computer equipment and software; install a dedicated internet connection; install additional shelving in our library; and to digitize some of our library resource materials.

The acquisition of new shelving is currently underway. The dedicated internet connection is in place. Members visiting the library can connect to the internet with their own computer devices to help with family history research of their German heritage.

We look forward to seeing familiar faces and new members at the upcoming Annual General Meeting.



## THE FLIGHT FROM POLAND 1945

By Leopold & Olga Tober, translated by Pastor Fred Tober

*The following is an account written by my parents of my family's flight from Poland during the Second World War. My Dad had been conscripted into the "Volkssturm" and had been ordered to report to Gombin, 7 km. from home, to be taken to the Front. As it turned out, he and a few others were told to go home. Dad's account continues below with additions from my Mother in italics. She wrote a more extensive account of our flight and gives more of the sense of panic everyone felt.*

One more truckload of men left for Plock and the rest were ordered to get some sleep. After we had slept for a while, we were awakened and ordered to go home quickly and to alert every one to flee. As it turned out, I and my family were the only ones to flee from our village.

*During the night of January 17 one daughter came home from the post office and said that we should pack because the Russians were already in Sochoschin. It was 12:00 midnight. I got up from my sleep. I felt sick and weak as though I had a fever. I was so terrified I did not know what to do. I fell on my knees and prayed that God would order matters in such a way that if it was not advisable to flee he would hinder it. If on the other hand if it was the thing to do, that he would lead us so that we could escape. I also prayed for my husband that he might come home and that God would give courage and strength for all that I had to do. Then I got up and started working.*

When I got home, all the children, except Edward who was in the army (*Arbeitsdienst*), were home already. The evening before, my wife's niece, Alma Meister, the daughter of Gustav and Karoline Meister, and their daughter-in-law, Emma Meister had arrived at our place with one horse and a small wagon.

We had already prepared two wagons for the flight. One had a large box with extra-high side boards and a tin roof. On this one we loaded everything—one smoked, two unsmoked pigs, as well as the sausages from them, six twenty-litre milk cans of lard, butchered geese and chickens, wheat and rye flour, as well as bedding and clothing and whatever else we could get on.

*With my husband home, we started packing in earnest. My husband took a hay wagon and inside it he put the box from another wagon. This box was filled with grain and on top of that bags with more grain were placed. Then the wagon was loaded with clover for the six horses. Into the clover a big basket with sealers of fruit, meat, juice, and bottles of alcohol were put. In addition, small cartons containing porcelain were also put into the hay. On top of the load were tied sacks containing woolen things, as well as a long basket with smoked goose drum sticks. The whole load of hay was held down by a strong pole at the middle of the top extending the full length of the load. To this pole all these things were tied. The load was very high. We also had prepared two other wagons, one with a tin roof and the other without a roof. The covered wagon was loaded with bedding, flour, meat, lard and syrup. On this wagon I was to travel with my two little boys of five and six, with the fifteen year-old driving it. The third wagon was driven by Emma Meister. She had two children, six months and six years old. Later during the flight, at the earliest opportunity, this wagon also received a roof. My husband drove the wagon with the feed for the horses.*

*By now I had ready one ovenful of bread and had started the second batch of dough. Also, I had started a good lump of cookie dough, and was baking doughnuts. Chickens were also butchered. They were plucked and the feathers left on the ground. The fire was crackling in the bake oven and the fat was boiling on the stove and the dough was already in the bread pans when the other daughter came from the post office and said, "Drop everything if you want to save your lives." Then we took sacks, and while one person held the sack open, the other emptied drawers into them. In the pantry things were done similarly—sausages, bacon and hams were all put into sacks. The beds were tied into the sheets, and everything loaded into the wagon. As for the remaining poultry, their heads were chopped off and the chickens thrown onto the wagon.*

*As we were rushing around like this, another order came, "Leave immediately! The Russians are in Gombin (seven kilometers away), and in Dobrzykow (three kilometers away) the telephone has been cut already and our trek is leaving." When we heard this, the horses were harnessed and we left our homeland. We hurried just like the children of Israel out of Egypt, or like Lot out of Sodom and Gomorrhah. The fire was burning in the bake oven, and on the cook stove that fat was burning in the pot. Furniture was left behind, as was the cattle in the barn, as well as the pigs and much of the poultry. There were stacks of grain outside, there was grain in the Scheune (barn). On the threshing floor there were even sixty meters (one meter equals one hundred kilograms) of wheat just recently threshed. The basement was full of potatoes. Also, sugar and feed beets were stored outside in long piles covered with straw and dirt. In the pantry most of the preserved fruit stayed behind, as well as seventy litres of juice and a butter churn full of pickled meat. Everything, along with buildings and land, was left behind.*

To the Meister women we gave a large wagon with a long box. They had to reload their things. We also gave them another horse so they could drive with two. Some feed for the horses was also loaded on their wagon. The third wagon was a hay wagon. First we put a smaller box inside it and filled it with oats for the horses. Then it was loaded with hay and alfalfa. Two Poles came

and helped us load the hay.

After everything was loaded, we hitched the horses to each wagon and started out. Left behind was one horse and all the cattle. All was left in the care of one of the hired Polish workers. The other hired man was away digging trenches. It was about 3:00 p. m. on January 18, 1945 when we drove off the yard.

About one kilometer from home on the main road to Dobrzykow, which was packed with German soldiers, low-flying Russian planes were strafing the military. Thank God, they must have recognized us on the wagons as refugees. All it would have taken is one pass at us with their machine guns and we, with our horses, would have been dead. With God's help we continued in the direction of Dobrzykow. Along the road there were numerous acquaintances and neighbors who said, "Tober, wohin? Unter die Bomben?" (Tober, where are you going? Under the bombs?) My reply was that I would keep going till I could go on no more or was forced to turn back. Thus we continued. The others reportedly turned back.

When we got to Dobrzykw, everything was jam-packed full. Slowly the ones in front began moving and we could keep going till we got to the road to Chechomitze. There everything came to a halt again. We turned off to the right and followed the road to Chechomitze because progress in the direction of Plock was too slow.

When we came to the brick works, located on the road from Gostynin to Plock, there was a detour because of railroad construction. By now it was quite dark and in the direction of Lask we could hear machine gun fire. Our plight was desperate. However, I noticed a man standing to the left of the brick works. It turned out that the person was our chief constable Michalak. He called out, "Leopold, is that you? Come quickly, we are all here." All together we continued to move on slowly all through the night. Next day we came to Leslau (Wloclawek). There we made a rest stop and fed the horses. All at once we had to be on our way again, and now we drove along the Vistula road through the small towns of Nieszawa, Chechyniek in the direction of Thorn (Thorun). Suddenly, as we approached Thorn, an officer stood there near the access road to Thorn. He called out to us that the Russians were three kilometers away and that we were heading right into their clutches. He advised us to go to the right in the direction of Thorn and to cross the Vistula and to hurry.

We drove as fast as the horses could go. It was getting dark. All those who had been ahead of us had already left. When we came to a bridge, German soldier were getting ready to blow it up and initially were not going to permit us to cross it any more. Ted was driving the second wagon and the Meister women the third. One after another they arrived at the bridge. As they saw us all and as we kept begging to cross, the soldiers finally relented. We were the last ones to cross.

In the city it was so dark so that we could not see anything.. Again our situation was desperate. Suddenly a man appeared to the right. I stopped and asked in German if he could give us directions as to how to get to the bridge in order to get across the Vistula He walked ahead of us, telling us to follow him. Thorn was a fairly large city and we followed closely behind him. Suddenly we were at the Vistula bridge. He approached the wagon and said, "Now drive where everyone else is driving," and disappeared. When we had crossed the bridge, we turned left. At this point there were quite a few other wagons. We tried to pass them whenever possible, till we linked up again with our Dobzykow trek with our police and the others. The police, five in all, ate with us..

Eventually we came to a very long bridge spanning the Vistula to our left. It was dark and a train was standing on the bridge. Slowly we drove over the bridge and luckily crossed back to the other (west) side of the Vistula again.

The police was taken from us and instead a person from our Dobrzykow municipality was appointed trek leader. One morning shortly after the police was gone as the trek turned right into a village for a rest stop, we continued as quickly as possible in order to get away from the rest of the trek. From here on we drove alone.

We were now traveling with four wagons. Earlier a certain Eduard Ratz with his wife and children as well as with an aged mother joined us. The old mother died and was buried on the way before we got to our destination. This family was from an island in the Vistula near Warsaw.

Eventually we came to the Oder River. We kept moving closer so no one would be able to get past us. When we with our four wagons came to the ferry, we asked that we be permitted to cross stating that our trek was already ahead of us. As we were preparing to drive onto the ferry, a German officer with guards and a transport of Russian prisoners boarded the ferry and would not permit us to go on. The captain insisted that we be permitted to board also since our trek already had crossed. The officer threatened to shoot our horses. At this the captain yelled at the officer not to shoot and ordered us to drive on. We drove on and were happy and grateful to be able to get across and get off the ferry on the west bank of the Oder. We kept going till we got to a small town where we rested for a day.

From reports we heard, the ferry continued taking vehicles across till noon next day. In the afternoon only people were taken across—no more wagons or horses. Then the Russians arrived.

*(continued on p.4)*

We arrived in Ladelund, South Tondern, on March 30. From there we went to Neupepersmark. Here we were billeted with farmers as follows: Emma Meister and her two children, Alma Meister, a single girl, Ted and two girls, along with two wagons and four horses with Nikolai Jakobsen; my husband, myself, the two boys and one girl, along with one wagon and two horses with Hans Jakobsen.

When we arrived it was evening and we were hungry and tired. The horses got good feed since these farmers had plenty of hay. The farmer Hans Jakobsen was away in the *Wehrmacht*. Only his wife and children and the Russian workers were at home. When we wanted to cook something for ourselves, she could not even spare a few potatoes, no milk, no bread. She had nothing for us. We had to cook a soup of flour and water and we still had a little bread. Next morning we went to the neighbors begging for potatoes and milk.

When we asked for our quarters the previous night, we were shown a small room in the attic with a small table and one chair. When we wanted to retire for the night, the worker brought in a bundle of straw. This was supposed to be our residence. Obviously it was inadequate. Later we went to the burgomaster and complained. He came and saw to it that we could move downstairs into a large guest room which had been empty.

Thus our flight ended. We fled on January 18, 1945 late afternoon from our home in Borki in the Parish of Dobrzykow. We arrived in Neupepersmark in the District of South Tondern, Schleswig-Holstein on the Danish border on March 30, 1945.

(The Tober Saga: The Story of a Family in the Ebb and Flow of History)



## What's Your Story?

### Call for Stories!

Do you have family stories you would like to share? 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.

### Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church

10014 - 81 Ave. • Edmonton • Tel. (780) 433-1604

*Wir laden herzlich ein zu unseren  
Gottesdiensten jeden Sonntag:*

9.30 Uhr - Deutscher Gottesdienst

Kinderkirche an jedem 4. Sonntag im Monat

11.00 Uhr - Englischer Gottesdienst mit Sunday School



#### 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)



*Even if I knew that tomorrow the world  
would go to pieces, I would still plant my  
apple tree.*

— Martin Luther



### *In Memory of Lorraine Yackulic*

*Dec. 14, 1943—March 1, 2016*



*Lorraine joined the HSGPV library in 2003. She organized and catalogued all the materials that we received from Mr. Ewald Wuschke. Many other books were soon donated; an inventory list was compiled by Lorraine and library volunteers. She also served as secretary of the board for many years before she resigned for health reasons.*

*She and her husband, George, wrote and illustrated 3 volumes of the early German Settlers of Alberta. Excellent books!*

*Lorraine was our library consultant for all these years. We shall always miss her helpful advice and friendly, kind nature.*

*To George and family, our heartfelt condolences.*



### **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.*

## Chili Con Carne

### **Ingredients**

- 1 diced onion
- ½ green diced, and pepper
- ¾ pound ground beef (350 g)
- 1 cup sliced mushrooms
- 1/8 tsp. garlic powder
- 1 cup canned, crushed tomatoes
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. pepper

### **Preparation**

1. Fry the diced onion, mushrooms, and green pepper with the ground beef on medium-high heat until the beef is a light brown color.
2. Add the remaining ingredients and simmer at low heat for 15-20 minutes.
3. Serves 1, but could be for 2 people.
4. Estimated preparation time: 25 minutes.

- submitted by Bruno Handel

# HSGPV

  
**WWW.HSGPV.COM**

## HSGPV Library

### *Board Members*

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

#### *Directors:*

*Art Breier                  Daniel Pretzlaff      Walter Epp*  
*Ed Retzer                 Sandra Tober         Erwin Pinno*

Honorary Member: Maria Wuschke

#### Contacts:

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

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.**

## Donation Form

### Historical Society of Germans from Poland & Volhynia

10014 – 81 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T6E 1W4

Incorporated as a non-profit association under the Societies Act of Alberta in 2000, the Historical Society of Germans from Poland & Volhynia (HSGPV) is a registered charitable organization run entirely by members who volunteer their time. Donations are appreciated, and will be acknowledged with the issue of a tax-deductible receipt.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Province \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of donation: \_\_\_\_\_ Cash \_\_\_ Cheque \_\_\_ (payable to HSGPV)

**AND/ OR**

Donation in kind: \_\_\_\_\_ Valued at: \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name

Signature

*Thank you for your contribution!*

**WWW.HSGPV.COM**