

Letter from Josef Primosch

by Anna Bischoff

My grandmother, Mary (Maria) Tschinkel, married George Krisch and they had two children. Anna was born in 1902 and Friedrich (my father) was born in 1904. Shortly afterwards, George Krisch abandoned his family and emigrated to America, to a place somewhere out west. He never supported his family.

Anna and Friedrich came to America in the 1920s and their mother, Mary, followed in 1929. She left the house and property [in Masern] in care of her cousin, Josef Primosch. This is one of the letters he wrote to her when she lived on Central Avenue in Brooklyn, New York.

Letter from Josef Primosch

Masern

January 7, 1934

Dearest Cousin Maria,

Finally I am in a position to answer your letters and hopefully this letter finds you in good health, as I can report the same for all of us in the house.

Maria, I understand many things from your letter regarding your husband. But if I were in your situation, I would not make myself sick over him, since it only creates more grief and you have gained nothing by it. What use is all that thinking and grieving since it will only be detrimental to yourself. And do not listen to the things that people are telling you about him.

I have just received a notice from the municipality (Gemeinde) that a foreigner who is absent from his birthplace and home for over 30 years will, in Yugoslavia, be considered a citizen no more. Because of this and since he fits into this class, he can no longer be reinstated and, accordingly, cannot sell property or wood on it.

Concerning the wood, prices are very low especially since there is no demand at present. We will see what it will be in the spring. Your son, Friedrich, told me that he asked you for a power of attorney so that he can sell the wood. He wrote me before that it was necessary that George, his father, has to sign off on

his half and he cannot sell the wood because of this. Friedrich told me this but you probably misunderstood what he meant. Apart from this, I do not have much more to communicate.

We had a very bad winter, very deep snow. We still did not bring home any firewood that we had prepared in the summer and fall, which we usually do for the winter. Because of all the snow this year, we did not get to it.

On Thursday, January 11, Erna Tschinkel's Franz from Masereben, number 5, will marry Angela Tschinkel of Masern, number 6. Our revered priest is still in Laibach [Ljubljana] in the Ihren Anstalt (mental institution) and will probably not improve. During the Christmas holiday, we had Herr Religion Professor from Gottschee. Otherwise the Göttenitzer priest takes care of us. It is very unpleasant without a priest.

With this I will close today's letter and send heartfelt regards to you from the family of Jos. Michaela Primosch with children. Same to all friends and family, also the best regards to you from friends, neighbors, and children.

Herewith I am sending the accounting for 1933.

Parthe still owes me house tax	640 din.
Maria Michelic still owes rent	365 din.
Total	1005 din.

I do not know when I will receive everything. ■

Note: The accounting ledger for 1933 is printed on the opposite page.

Veronika's Letters

by Wesley Perkins

Veronika Mausser Anderwald of Russbach (Blatnik) was my grandmother. She died of cancer in our home when I was seven years old. One of her daughters, Mary Veronica Anderwald Perkins, is my mother.

Veronika Mausser was born in Russbach, number 8, on April 23, 1893. She was the ninth of 11 children born to Josef Mausser of Russbach, number 8, and Josefa Mausser of Russbach, number 15. Three of the children died young. The other eight children, including Veronika, emigrated from Gottschee to the United States. At age 20, Veronika sailed from Antwerp with a friend or a distant cousin, Maria Spritzer, age 19, also from Russbach. They arrived at Ellis Island on July 20, 1913 and traveled from there to Illinois, and then to Montana.

Veronika worked as a waitress in a lime quarry near Georgetown, Montana, where she met Andreas Anderwald. Andreas, later known as Andrew, had arrived in the United States on June 23, 1910 from Austria. They were married on November 13, 1916 and lived in Opportunity, Montana near Anaconda, where Andreas worked at the smelter for Anaconda Copper Company for many years. Veronika and Andrew had five children: Mary, Veronica, Margaret, Andrew, and Sebastian. Veronika and most of her siblings did not return to Gottschee. Only the oldest brother returned to Russbach to visit their mother. Veronika's older brother, Rudolf, with his wife and children, returned to Gottschee, to live in Russbach on the farm of his mother. During the war, Rudolf was a prisoner in Russia and died in a concentration camp. His wife and children then returned to the United States and lived with Rudolf's older brother Franz and family. My mother Veronika died of cancer on December 20, 1949 at the age of 57.

The first three letters were written by Josefa Mausser living in Russbach to her daughter Veronika (1893-1949) in the United States. The third letter was written by R. Mausser (probably Rudolf) to his sister Veronika, telling her of the death of their mother, Josefa Mausser.

[Editor's Note: The tombstone of Josefa Mausser (born May 26, 1867) still exists today in the cemetery in Blatnik. See *Cemeteries and Tombstones of the Gottscheer Germans* by Mitja Ferenc, et. al., page 51, Slovenia, 2002.]

Letters to Veronika from her mother in Russbach

Russbach
19 January 1914

Dear child Veronika!
Now I will write to you a few lines and hope my letter finds you in the best of health. Dear child Veronika! I received your letter with the greatest joy and the two dollars for which I thank you a thousand times. Dear child Veronika! How you are in my heart, every minute I miss you! Dear child, I beg you from the bottom of my heart, do not forget God and be as devout as I taught you at home. What good does it do a person to own the whole world and lose his soul?

Dear child, I beg you, be faithful and don't look at others. I beg you, from my heart, when you have your travel money together, come home. I can't stand the loneliness any more. I am always home alone and miss you. I won't even mention Rudolf, he will not write to me.

Dear child, I beg you, watch out for your health. It is not good to be sick in a strange land. I can tell you things are not good for us. Everyday it gets worse. I cannot work any more.

Now I will end my writing. God bless you my dear child. Greetings from the bottom of my heart. Best wishes also from Johann Lukovitz.

Russbach
30 June 1925

Dear Daughter!
Your lovely letter, including the check, I received with joy. As I can read, you are all well but I am not in good health. As you ask me, how am I? I don't have it so good since I handed over the farm. The young lady is very mean to me and arrogant. When she cooks, not once does she ask, "Mother, what can you or what would you like to eat?" I cannot eat too much any longer, but nevertheless an old person is always weak.

Four months ago, she had another boy. Now I have to be always by her side for many days, and he is so bad. That bothers me, because before this, I had more

Veronika's Letters (*continued*)

peace. The two older ones, they are also very bad. If I would have known this earlier, I would not have asked Rudolf to come. I would not have believed that he got himself such a mean wife. They argue with each other all the time, and she always tells him that she had it much better in America. She always blames him for coming home.

Do not write back about what I have written, so Rudolf won't find out. Otherwise, they will treat me even worse. I only write you this much so you know how I am doing.

Russbach
16 December 1925

Dear Daughter,

Your dear letter with the five dollars I received with joy and thank you for it, the dear God give you luck and health, also a heart that would make you want to come home. It is not good here and people already talk of war again.

I also heard that you want to change property with J. Fink. I have already heard that many vines are missing. There are many empty places on that property.

I think it would make more sense for you stay on your property and what you have, because here, it is not good. High taxes must be paid. I also received the letter from Maria with the five dollars. Maria demanded her savings book and George, his as well.

I have given the books to M. Bukowitz, he will send them in. I also have paid the mass for your father, the dear God give you happiness still because you still think of your father who passed away. I won't live much longer. When I have died, think of me often.

I do know that Rudolf won't pay for a mass for me. As usual, it is not so good for me. I won't last long because I have many years now. Other news I do not know much to write. We have much cold that we have not had for a long time this year. The year will end soon. Soon the new wishing comes. For you all, a Happy New Year, so that you may live to see many years in good health.

You write about your brothers that they drink [their

money] all away. Tell them that they should look to their old age. In later years they won't be able to work and who will give something to them if they can't work? They should save money now to have some in their old days.

I will end for today with many kind regards to all of you. Your loving mother as always. Do write more often. Farewell and stay healthy.

Letter to Veronika from her brother in Russbach

Russbach
14 February 1928

Oh my God, my God, with sad eyes do I send you this note, that our dear mother died on January 21. She was sick for three to four weeks, just not feeling good. She died on the morning of 21 January. She was not in her bed. Everyday she has been in the living room where she had her coffee and tea with bread. She would not eat meat and eggs. I could not believe it, that God so easily takes some people. Mother was 79 years old. She was always pleased with very little, now she is asleep with God.

My dear sister and brother-in-law, I have to beg for something. Please be good enough and help me buy a stone for her grave, so when the other family members come home, they will know where our mother is buried. As the stone costs between 40 and 50 dollars, Rudolf will also give some money. I will give what I can.

Dear sister and all, I beg the brothers together can help so that we can have two or three soul services said for our loving mother. It costs a lot, about 40 dollars. We had a holy Mass for her. It is sad. She had nothing to give, so mother asked the Lord for all of his blessings. [There was no signature on the letter. The return address on the envelope was R. Mausser in Russbach.] ■

An Outing to the Moschnitze

by Fred Muschler

It was at our weekly junior Kulturbund [culture association] group meeting when our leader announced that one of our members' group from the village of Mitterdorf [Stara Cerkev] had organized an outing to the Moschnitze, one of the most easterly sections of our [Gottscheer] homeland. As they did not have enough members to fill the vehicle at their disposal, they wanted to know if some of the members of our group would like to join them.

While an outing as such was nothing new to our city people, to us living in the country, outings were known only from our school days. It seems to me that this new trend was started by the Kulturbund organization for the young people in our homeland and for one another. I think it is safe to say that up to that point in time, not one in a hundred could make the claim to have visited most of the major villages, and even fewer to have visited all of the villages.

When I heard the announcement, my ears perked up. First, because I had never seen that part of the homeland, and secondly, because I was ready to leave for America in a couple of months and might never get to see that part of our homeland. My premonition was right, because five years later, our people left our homeland for good. Even though I did get to see our homeland again, it was not the same as many others can testify.

Shortly before our departure date, we received our instructions where and when to meet. We were told to meet the other group at a certain place in the city of Gottschee [Kočevje] at six o'clock. Even though it was only a 20 minute walk from our village to the city, we left the village at five o'clock as we did not want to delay this important event.

When we approached the prearranged meeting place, we could already hear the friendly chatter. It seems they were as anxious to get underway as we were. We quickly boarded the vehicle and before we had a chance to exchange greetings with our immediate neighbors, we were on our way.

The first two villages were Grafenfeld [Dolga vas] and Lienfeld [Livold]. Since the driver knew we were all acquainted with these two villages, he did not even slow down. At the end of the village of Lienfeld the road splits. The right fork goes to the

Hinterland and to the Adriatic sea. We took the left fork which brought us to the villages of Mösel [Mozelj], leaving the villages of Hasenfeld [Zajčje Polje] and Schwarzenbach [Crni Potok] to our right. In Mösel, we halted briefly because it was an important center of the Unterland area with the township and parish seat, school, and all the official agencies associated with it. It also had an impressive church.

Our next stop was Maierle [Maverlen], a considerable distance away, probably a day on foot. While we must have passed at least 10 villages on our way we only traversed four: Graflinden [Knežja Lipa], Römergrund [Remergrund], Unterdeutschau [Nemška Loka], and Bistritz [Bistrica]. In Maierle we stopped at the Kobetitsch Inn. Here the travel leader informed us that he intended to stay awhile, to give us a chance to enjoy the beautiful countryside. The area was really impressive, with grapevines all around us as far as one could see, interspersed with a variety of fruit and nut trees which did not even thrive back home. We enjoyed the scenery as we ate the lunches that we brought from home.

After we left the village of Maierle, we traveled along a secondary road, passed a number of villages whose names I did not catch. Just before we came back to the main road, our leader decided to make a short stop at the village of Russbach [Blatnik]. Why he decided to stop there I do not know. Perhaps it was because it was situated quite high on a mountain slope from where one could look at the vineyards of Semitsch [Semič] and the lower part of the Tschermoschnitz [Crmošnjice] valley.

From Russbach, it took about 20 minutes to reach the village of Tschermoschnitz, the main village of the Moschnitze area. After traveling almost eight hours, and seeing a good part of our homeland, the leader decided everyone needed a rest. He told us to be ready to leave in two hours.

As the vehicle was parked at the Petschauer Inn, most of the adults in the group decided to go in and have something to eat. We youngsters were not very hungry but were very thirsty, so we went in and had something to drink. After a while, most of the adults left, probably to do a little sightseeing, while we stayed inside where it was nice and cool, and let John entertain us with his accordion.

An Outing to the Moschnitz *(continued)*

At a prearranged time, we boarded the vehicle and we were on our way. Our next stop was Pöllandl [Kočevske Poljane]. Along this stretch of the road, we passed many villages whose names would take up too much space to mention here. But perhaps it would not be fair not to mention Neuberg [Nova Gora] because of its size and extensive vineyards. Just as we reached Pöllandl, the sun was starting to slip down behind the Hornwald, and I was thinking to myself, how strange. All my life I was watching the sun come up over the Hornwald.

We only stopped briefly in Pöllandl because it was getting dark, and several kilometers down the road was the Ainöd castle. It was one of the castles of the Auersperg family, the last rulers of our homeland. We arrived there just in time to get a good look at it, and lucky for me, because the castle was destroyed during World War II.

It was now dark and, therefore, we could not enjoy the countryside. I did not care, however, as I had visited this part of the country before with my grandfather when he went to the gristmill. Shortly after leaving Pöllandl, we traversed Slovenian territory and only returned to Gottschee after reaching Langenton [Smuka]. Until very recently, there was a granite marker located there, which indicated the boundary between the duchy of Gottschee and the Slovenian lands.

The next village was Altlag [Stari Log]. With its 125 houses, it was the largest village in Gottschee. Since we had seen everything that we had set out to see, the leader told us that the departure time was up to us. We again stopped at an inn and with our friend playing his accordion, we were joined by some of the local youths. It soon turned into a lively party. I do not remember when we left Altlag, but it was after midnight when we reached our homes. [A photograph of the people on this outing in 1936 appears on the outside back cover of this issue]. ■

There Are Signs

by Fred Muschler

It was shortly after supper, while mother was still puttering in the kitchen, that I was sitting at the dining-room table, reading a book. Books were hard to come by, especially for us who lived on the farm. There were no public libraries, at least not as far as I knew of, and if there were, they probably would have been stocked with Slovenian books. I was lucky though; our teacher belonged to a private library, and she often loaned books to us.

In the living room with me were my grandparents. They were sitting on a bench built around a six foot square oven, which was located in the corner of the living room. The sides of the oven facing the room were covered with tiles. This oven was used mainly for heating the house and baking, and only to a lesser extent, for cooking. Most of the cooking was done on a woodburning range. The firing of the oven was done from the adjoining kitchen, where the opening was located. Since it was the middle of fall and the weather was getting cooler, it was only natural to see my grandparents sitting on the bench. They as usual were rehashing the happenings of the day and made plans for the coming day. I was not surprised when grandpa said that he planned to go and cut some bedding for the livestock. In this case, it was ferns, but other people used straw or leaves. Ferns were by far the best because it kept the animals dryer.

Since the field where the ferns grew was quite a distance from our village, he needed good weather, so the ferns would dry and he could bring the bedding home the same day. Grandma walked over to the front window and saw the overcast sky with some breaks in the clouds. As she finished her sentence, the moon broke through. She stepped back and ran to the side window. Grandpa noticed this and asked, "What is wrong?" Grandma said, "I don't know. Our neighbor just walked right past our window without looking up and was heading around the corner and I was wondering where he is going." "Bah," said grandpa, "this can't be. I heard that our neighbor was sick. It is probably one of the coal miners on the way home taking a shortcut through our property."

The next day when we heard that our neighbor died during the night, grandma reminded grandpa about the episode of the previous night. Although he did

continued on page 12

Surge Family of Obermösel

by Elizabeth Albrecht

On page seven is a copy of the birth certificate of Michael Surge, born August 25, 1879 in Niedermösel [Koçarji], Gottschee. The original legal size certificate has been reduced to fit the page.

In 1920, Michael was living in Brooklyn, New York. He signed an affidavit (see the next page), which gave the names of his wife, Mary Surge (born Maria Fritz) and their six children, who were living at Obermösel [Mozelj], number 14. He also states that from 1902 through 1908, he and his wife lived in the United States where three of their six children were born. They then returned to live in Gottschee (at that time it was the country of Yugoslavia). Michael now wanted to bring his family to the United States.

Michael was a bricklayer. Two of his sons, Joseph and Ernest, also took up the trade. Michael's wife, Maria, was a good baker (her favorite was apple strudel) as her father owned the flour mill in their town.

One of their children was my mother, Anna Spiedel, nee Surge, born 1910 in Reichenau, number 1. Her birth certificate is printed below. A photo of the family is printed on the inside of the back cover. Seated, from left to right, Emma, Mary (Maria Surge, nee Fritz), Anna, Emily. Standing, from left to right, Michael Surge, sons Edward, Ernest, William, and Joseph. At the time of Michael and Mary's deaths, the children lived in New York, California, Massachusetts, and Florida.

Birth certificate of Anna Spiedel, nee Surge

Pokrajina Slovenija. Provincia Sloveniae. Skofija Ljubljanska. Diocesis Labacensis.

Stev. 5. Num.

Rojstni in krstni list. — Testimonium natiuitatis et baptismi.

Iz rojstne in krstne knjige župnije (duhovni) *Koprivnik pri Kočevju*
 Extractus e libro natorum et baptizatorum *chiae*

Zvezek 6 stran 3 štev. 20
 Tomus 6 dazid. numerus

Leto, mesec in dan Annus, mensis, dies	rojstna natiuitatis 1910/1910 krsta baptismi 1910. 10. 1. julija	<i>Reichenau, st. 1.</i>
Kraj rojstva (ulica) h. št. Locus natiuitatis	<i>Reichenau, st. 1.</i>	
Ime otrokovo Nomen infantis	<i>Anna</i>	
Zakonski, nezakonski, sin, hči Legitimus, illegitimus, filius, filia	<i>zakonska hči</i>	
Krstno in rodbinsko ime, stan in vera Nomen, cognomen, conditio, religio	očeta patris <i>Michael Surge, 1/2 zemljak, rim. kat.</i>	matere matris <i>Marija ...</i>
Krstno in rodbinsko ime, stan botrov Patrini	<i>Marija ... krčmar</i> <i>Jera ... krčmarica</i>	
Krstitelj Baptizans	<i>Božji ... kaplan.</i>	


 dokaz resničnosti lastoročni podpis in uradni pečat.
 Idem fidem subscriptio manu propria et sigillum officii.
 * *Župni urad Koprivnik pri Kočevju, 5. I. 1927.*
 * *Ex officio parochiali*
Božji ...
Jupnik

Kotek in taksa
 Bol. cum taxa

St. 19. Jugoslovanska knjigarina, Ljubljana. — 1407 76

Surge Family of Obermösel (continued)

The information from the affidavit certificate of Michael Surge was filed in New York County. It is reproduced here just as it was written (including the spelling of names) and signed by Michael Surge on April 1, 1920.

AFFIDAVIT

I, the undersigned Mihael Surge, at present residing at No. 1493 Gates Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y., having been duly sworn, depose and say:

That I have a family in Jugoslavia, as follows:

My wife, Mary Surge, 38 years of age, and six children - Josef, 16 years of age, Edward, 15 years of age, Wilhelm, 14 years of age, Emilija, 11 years of age, Anna, 10 years of age and Erna, 7 years of age, at the present time residing at #14 Ober Mösel, Kranjsko, Jugoslavia.

I further say that during 1902 to 1908 my wife was living with me in the United States where my first three children, Josef, Edward and Wilhelm were born; that we returned to Jugoslavia in 1908, and that in 1914 I came back to the United States, leaving my wife and six children out there.

Further, that I desire to bring my family to this coun-

try now for the purpose of living with me; in view of which I bind myself to pay the fare of my wife and six children from Jugoslavia to New York, and to support them while they are living with me.

Further, that I have declared my intention of becoming a citizen of the United States and that I intend to complete my citizenship as soon as possible; that I have a steady position and earn a good salary, (\$10.00 per day); also personal property valued at \$900.00; accordingly I have sufficient resources to support my family.

For this reason, I, the undersigned Mihael Surge, respectfully request the U.S. American Consul to issue to my wife and six children the necessary papers (passports) which they will require for their journey from Jugoslavia to the United States.

State of New York
County of New York

This is to certify that there appeared before me, this 1 day of April 1920, Mihael Surge, who is personally know to me to be the person named above, who in the presence of the two undersigned witnesses, affixed his signature hereto. (The notary public signed the affidavit certificate).

Kronland Krain.		Geburts- und Taufschein				Diözese Laibach.
Nr. 189		Aus dem pfarrlichen Geburts- und Taubuche wird-hiermit amtlich bezeugt, daß im Jahre des Heiles				
Eintausend acht hundert acht und zwanzig (1918) am 25 August		hier in <u>Niedermösel</u> Haus-Nr. 1 geboren und nach römisch-katholischem Ritus getauft worden ist am <u>25 August</u>				
Name des Täuflings	Ehelich oder aneheulich, Sohn oder Tochter	Tauf, Zuname, Stand, Religion		Tauf, Zuname, Stand des Paten	Name des Täufers	
		des Vaters	der Mutter			
Michael	ehelicher Sohn	Josef Surge Unterwiesler	Margaretha Gubarnas Korndorfer	Johann Stampfel Christylen Gortwald, Kerscher K. K. K. K.	Travis Andrejak Pfarrer	
Urkund dessen meine eigenhändige Namensfertigung und das pfarramtliche Siegel.						
Pfarramt Mösel		Stempel und Taxe 3.00		J. J. J. J.		
am 7. November 1918						

Birth certificate of Michael Surge

Surge Family of Obermösel *(continued)*

Ancestors and Descendants of Michael Surge

Josef Surge

m. Margaret Verderber, had 12 children

Michael Surge (b. 24 August 1879 in Niedermösel)

m. Maria Fritz on 29 November 1903

Seven children: Josef, Edward, Wilhelm
(all born in the United States),

Ernst, Emilija, Anna, and Erna

(all born in Reichenau). The family eventually
lived in the village of Obermösel, number 58

Anna Surge (b. 1910, Reichenau, number 1,

d. 2000) m. Wilhelm Speidel (born in Augsburg,
Germany). Anna and Wilhelm had two children

Paternal Ancestors of Maria Fritz

Michael Fritz

m. Katherine Sterbenz

Andreas Fritzl (b. about 1809), son of Michael Fritz
and Katherine Sterbenz,

m. Katharine Mantel on 14 February 1827,
parish of Altenmarkt

Andreas Fritzl (widower), born about 1829

m. Magdalena Stiene on 20 January 1878 in the
parish of Nesseltal

Maria Fritz (b. 24 September 1882, Reichenau,

number 1, m. Michael Surge on 29 November

1903 in Obermösel, Gottschee

Maternal Ancestors of Maria Fritz

Parents of Maria Stiene (1826-1937)

Gaspar Stiene and Gertrud Stiene

Parents of Johann Stiene (1820-1881)

Johann Stiene (b. 1790, Reichenau, number 1)
and Maria Hiris

Johann Stiene (b. 1820, Reichenau, number 1)

m. Maria Stiene (b. 1826, Hohenberg, number 4)
on July 5, 1841 in Altlag parish

Magdalena Stiene (1848, Reichenau, number 1)

m. Andreas Fritzl, widower, on January 20, 1878

Maria Fritz (b. 24 September 1882, Reichenau,

number 1, m. Michael Surge on 29 November
1903 ■



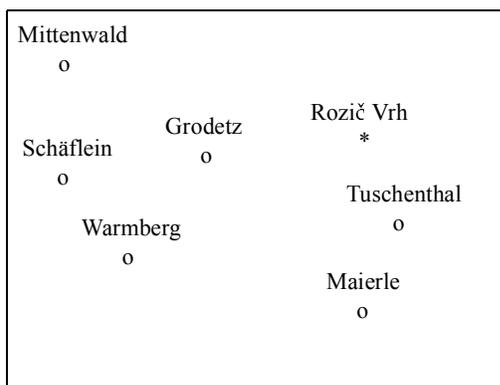
Village of Obermösel, prior to 1941

Walter Roschitz of Grodetz and Kansas City

by Anita Kay Schumann

Walter Roschitz was born January 31, 1934 in Grodetz, number 3. His parents were Josef Roschitz (born 1894 in Schäflein, number 13) and Franziska Rankl (born in 1897 in Reichenau, number 17). The family name was originally spelled Roschitsch.

The Roschitsch surname first appears in the early Urbars (land records) in 1593, in the village of Tuschenthal (Tušev Dol). Three individuals with the surname of Roschitsch (written as Rosych) are in the list: Georg Rosych, Marthyn (Martin) Rosych, and Petter Rosych). The village of Tuschenthal is located a few miles east of Warmberg (Topli Vrh) and a few miles south of Grodetz (Gradeč). A hill near the village is called Rozič Vrh. According to Stanislav Juznič, the hill was certainly connected with the surname of the Roschitsch family. The earliest marriage record with a Roschitsch surname in the Nesseltal (Koprivnik) parish is a Michael Roschitsch of Grodetz who married a Maria Kump in 1734 [*Marriages: The Parish of Nesseltal 1724-1941*].



Southeastern Gottschee, with the villages of Warmberg and Grodetz.

Walter and his family came to the United States on April 12, 1952. He became a United States citizen on May 28, 1957. Ten days after he became a United States citizen, he was drafted into the United States Army on June 7, 1957. He was processed in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and went through basic training at Fort Riley, Kansas, with the 1st Infantry Division, 9th Transportation Battalion.

In January 1958 he was transferred to Bad Kreuznach, West Germany, with A Company, 20th Transportation Battalion, 8th Division. As he boarded the troop ship to go to Germany, Walter

realized it was exactly like the troop ship he and his family used to come to America from Germany in 1952!

Walter's ability to speak German proved helpful during his service at Bad Kreuznach. In August 1958, the mayor of the nearby village of Wallhausen wrote to the U.

S. Army asking for assistance to move a two-ton rock from the nearby Soon Forests to a hilltop, near the village of Münchwald. Walter kept copies of newspaper clippings recording the occasion. One article was



Walter Roschitz in Germany, January 1, 1959. Photo courtesy of Anita Schumann.

printed in the August 1958 edition of *Stars and Stripes*. The other article was printed in the local German newspaper. It included a picture of soldiers with the rock. The villagers wanted the boulder to be part of a memorial for soldiers from Münchwald who died in World War II, but the cost of hiring commercial equipment would have been prohibitive. Pfc. Walter Roschitz was called upon as the interpreter "to bridge the language difficulties" (*Stars and Stripes* article). Because he could speak German, Walter was also assigned as a driver for trips around Germany. On one occasion he was assigned to drive a lieutenant with the company as far as Munich.

He served at Bad Kreuznach until his discharge on May 28, 1959. He was on active reserve for two years until he received his discharge papers on May 31, 1963. Four years later, he married Kathy Zlata Soptic of Zaluka, Croatia in 1967 in Kansas City, Kansas. They had three children. Walter died on November 1, 2001. ■

Note: See *The Gottschee Tree*, March and June 1998 issues, for additional articles by Anita Kay Schumann.

Spittal/Drau Museum Für Volkskultur

by John J. Bertalan

After departing the city of Kočevje (Gottschee) and the structured Discover Gottschee Tour 2002, my father and I traveled to Klagenfurt, Austria, via Trieste, Italy, to visit my European Gottscheer family members. My Kobetitsch relatives had located in Ebendorf, Austria, after the resettlement. Some still lived in Ebendorf and others lived in Ebenthal, about 30 minutes away.

We stayed two nights at the City Hotel Ratheiser in Klagenfurt, and visited with my cousins. They came to the hotel the first evening and showed us around the city proper. The next evening we traveled to their home in Ebenthal and feasted on traditional alpine food. My cousin, Irmgard Wressenegger, showed us around the Klagenfurt area, with its historic downtown sites and the nearby castles, throne, and historic churches. Incidentally, she is the person that introduced me to the term and location of Gottschee nearly 20 years ago.

Upon learning of our departure route for the Munich, Germany, airport via Salzburg, Austria, Irmgard suggested that we pull off the autobahn and visit Schloss Porcia in Spittal-on-the-Drau, Austria. She mentioned that her mother had donated some Kobetitsch Gottscheer artifacts to the museum. We intended to do as she suggested. Spittal was situated in a beautiful valley off the highway between Klagenfurt and Salzburg.

Schloss Porcia

First of all, just arriving at the museum was a treat. The museum was located inside of an Italian Renaissance style castle palace. The admission ticket was the size of a postcard and a work of art. On the front of the ticket was a reproduction of a painting of the castle palace from about 1500 AD.

In addition to housing the Folk Culture Museum and an authentic café, the castle palace also schedules musical concerts and recitals, houses a library and hosts other cultural events including an international choir competition.

The palace welcomes theatrical performances, literature readings and has a permanent art gallery and a rotating art exhibit. The palace has arcades in the staircases and Lombardo-Venetian sculptures. It is a magnificent man-made structure with green moun-

tains painted by nature as a backdrop.

Palace construction was started in 1533 by Gabriel of Salamanca, administrator of Spittal-on-the-Drau and the treasurer of Spain during the reign of Ferdinand I. The castle received its name from a noble family of Italy: Porcia. Fourteen dukes/earls lived in the castle from 1662-1918. Many of the owners were art lovers who acquired and preserved beautiful treasures inside the structure throughout the centuries. One publication even implied that the castle was haunted by the wife of Gabriel of Salamanca, the first mistress of the palace.

The Museum Für Volkskultur

The museum itself was great, and one of the highlights of our two-week central European tour. You do not have to trust the opinion of the author. In 1995, it won honorable mention as one of the best museums in Europe, and in 1999 it took first place as the best museum in Austria. The museum entrance is located on the second floor of the palace, and is full of artifacts of the inhabitants of the area. Most everything, including the publications, were in German (which I don't read), but there were a few exhibits with English explanations if you opened a little wooden door.

The museum of Alpine folk culture was divided into at least four sections: ancient winter sports equipment, Gottschee heritage, school equipment, and former Alpine life. One room re-created an entire school classroom with desks, books, school supplies, writing stages, a globe, etc. Another room was devoted to the people of the mountains and their lifestyle; another devoted to farmers and animal herders; and one devoted to Gottscheers. A third room had a theater presentation, demonstrating the agricultural life of the former inhabitants. There was a display of hand-carved masks, and crafts of the populace.

The museum abounded with artifacts in hallways and foyers that joined one room to the next. All items were displayed and explained professionally. This made all of the rooms flow into one another. There was a section devoted to glass making and another to snow shoes and foot attire. Two or three rooms of the original palace in all of its gilded splendor were on display as well.

Spittal/Drau Museum Für Volkskultur (*continued*)

On the Gottschee Tour 2002, two formal presentations were made to different Gottscheer groups, where hand-stitched replica alphabet samplers were presented. As an example of the vast multitude of holdings by this museum, four original samplers under glass were on display. The samplers dated from approximately 1875 to about 1909.

In the Gottschee room, there was a wall full of home-made baskets, tastefully on display. Affixed to a second wall were numerous hand tools. A large map of the Gottschee area was highlighted and placed on a third wall, locating it relative to the rest of central Europe. As the centerpiece of the entire display, there were life-size statues of a male and female Gottscheers in full traditional dress.

Around the bottom of the display there were remembrances and artifacts from Gottscheers around the world, including New York. There were also some genuine immigration papers, photographs, and other period documents, strategically placed in the room. Additionally, there were everyday household and farm implements and clothing, located in the corners of the room, entirely devoted to the lifestyle of the Gottscheers.

A small cement stairway led to a third floor. The museum docent invited us to climb up. The narrow stairway opened up to an immense third floor attic filled with large artifacts from what appeared to be the 18th and 19th centuries. There were huge wooden cargo wagons, a horse-drawn fire wagon, a re-created blacksmith shop, complete with tools and a hearth.

There was a wine making display and a baby nursery complete with hand-made wooden cradles and different maternity items. There were all types of large farm tools and gear for the work horses. There were hand-rolling crushing stones placed in hollowed-out trees for mashing apples into juice and sauce. It seemed like the artifacts would never end. Around each turn there were more large hand-made implements secured to the walls, displayed on the floor and on center posts.

An entire small, but cozy, typical log home was on display right in front of our eyes. The bedroom, living room, and kitchen, were re-created from authentic period materials. There was also a life-size

recreation of the interiors of a grocery store and local pub or inn. All of this was sitting in the attic of a 16th Century castle.

It was certainly worth pulling off the highway to visit the museum and the castle palace. We will probably always remember seeing the large Gottscheer sign welcoming us into a room devoted just to our people. We will also remember the small stairway opening to the third floor containing a whole world of mostly wooden artifacts. They had been amassed for the pleasure and education of the patrons. A stated goal of the museum was not to be boring. It wasn't.

Immediately after leaving the Renaissance palace, (which briefly, but completely immerses the visitor in a bygone era filled entirely with authentic Austrian period relics) reality began to set in. We entered the 95 degree world of bright sunshine, June 2002, and discovered we were out of traveling cash. The entrance fee had cleaned us out of the nine Euros we were saving for the toll road ahead.

In the 21st century world that we entered, with cars, concrete buildings, and crosswalks, there was a handy bank-o-mat machine right across the street. The machine gladly accepted my American ATM card and quickly and efficiently spit out Euro dollars in exchange. We were back on the road in no time.

One can read more about the museum and the castle in English or in German at the following web sites: http://www.museumonline.at/1998/schools/kaernten/KA_SPITT/narrate.html; <http://www.museum-spittal.com>; http://singkreis-porca.com/singkreis_porcia4.htm. ■

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

It was interesting to read the article *Visit to Rann* by Robert Rees on page three of the September 2002 issue. However, a historical fact was quoted incorrectly and a correction is in order.

The mentioned little packages that would explode were not dropped by the German Army but by the Allied bombers, obviously to demoralize the population. This explains why the sisters of Mr. Tramposch stated that they could not understand why the Germans would do such a thing to their own people.

The German Luftwaffe had an airport at Zirkle (Rann) which was a frequent target of Allied bombing runs. To my recollection, the airport never got a direct hit, since the only low-level approach to the target was along the Save river. That route was painstakingly avoided by the Allied planes, especially during the daylight hours due to the many flak (anti-aircraft guns) positions on the surrounding hills. So the favorite approach was under cover of darkness and over higher territory.

In the years of 1944-45, I was nine to 10 years old. We lived about 20 kilometers away and several hundred meters above Rann in a hamlet called Lorenzberg (Krska Gora). We had an excellent view of the area of Rann, but not of the airport at Zirkle. On many evenings we could see the Allied lead planes drop the flares and the following planes would drop their bombs in that general area, unable to pinpoint a specific target because of the high altitude. That also explains why some of our Gottscheer Landsleute got killed by stray bombs. In the daytime, several stray bombs were also dropped over the farm area where we lived, probably just to get rid of them, prior to returning to home base.

Sincerely yours,
John Jellen

Sophie Sandor also wrote about the error in the above mentioned article. "In 1944-45 we lived in the Resettlement Area, which was part of Germany at that time. It was the Allied planes that dropped bombs, flares, and packages of pencils and pens over the area, not the Germans." (Letter dated November 15, 2002)

Dear Editor,

There is some confusion about the names of the bicycle boys shown in the photograph on page 14 of the September 2002 issue of *The Gottschee Tree*. I am certain that the surname of the seventh and eighth boys from the left was Jeschelnig, not Jerschnig, as shown in the September 2002 issue. They were my wife's uncles. I have a copy of the same picture given to me by Frank Juran where he lists these brothers as Richard and Georg Jeschelnik. It is possible that they really were Peter and Heinrich, as shown on page 14 since Peter and Heinrich were the two youngest (born in 1922 and 1923) of the Jeschelnig boys from Rieg 21 (Mellamits's). Richard and George were a few years older (born in 1918 and 1919).

Sincerely yours,
William R. Gregory

There are Signs (*continued*)

(continued from page 5)

not comment on it, I had the distinct feeling that he was convinced that what grandma had seen the night before was our neighbor's ghost. Ghost stories and gossip were the more popular topics of conversation on those long winter nights back in our former homeland, and woe to the person who expressed doubt or questioned the authenticity of those stories. The favored reply from the storyteller was an interjection expressing surprise or disappointment. They were always ready to produce witnesses who could corroborate their story.

Children, after listening the entire evening to ghost stories, always insisted that a grown-up with a light accompany them when they went to bed. As soon as the person left, up went the covers right over their heads. The belief in ghosts in our former homeland was quite strong, although I personally never encountered one. The people who claimed they did said that only people with a certain gift could see them, and that they usually appeared only at the time when someone was about to die. Aside from seeing ghosts, other signs were dogs howling at a house, owls hooting, or when the church bell gave an extra beat. With a population of about 500, the odds were pretty good for the last prediction, sooner or later, to come true. ■

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Announcements

GHGA 2003 Annual Meeting will be held at the Radisson Cleveland Airport Hotel in North Olmsted, Ohio, June 27-29. The hotel is located off interstate 480, across from the Great Northern Mall, minutes from the Airport. The annual Board meeting will be June 27, with the annual meeting, program, genealogical workshops, held on Saturday, June 28. In addition to the Board meeting on Friday, there are plans to explore downtown Cleveland and other sites. To make reservations, call 440-734-5060 and mention GHGA to receive the special room rate.

GHGA has agreed to be a co-sponsor of the 2003 **Slovenian Genealogy Conference in Ljubljana**, Slovenia, September 7 through September 12, 2003. Presentations will be in the English language. Kollander Travel is the travel agent for the conference.

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About the Authors

Elizabeth Albrecht was born in Glendale, New York, and now lives with her family in LaGrangeville, New York. She works as a chef for Clove Valley Rod & Gun Club, an exclusive shooting preserve in Dutchess County. The apple strudel her Gottscheer mother taught her to make is the specialty of the house!

John J. Bertalan is a professor of Political Science and Education at Hillsborough Community College in Tampa, Florida. He has four children and lives in Tarpon Springs, Florida, with his wife, Beverly. He is the grandson of the late Anna Kobetitsch.

Fred Muschler was born in New York. At the age of two, his family moved to Gottschee and lived in the village of Schalkendorf. Mr. Muschler, at the age of 16, returned to the United States in 1936 and lived in Ridgewood, New York. He is retired from the meat industry and now lives with his wife in Dover Plains, New York.

A. Wesley Perkins, grandson of Veronika Mausser Anderwald, was born in Opportunity, Montana. This is the same community that Veronika lived in for her entire life. Wes was a high school teacher in Montana and in Oregon for 32 years. Since retiring, he has traveled and worked on genealogy. He currently lives with his wife in Portland, Oregon, near his mother, Mary Anderwald Carey, who is Veronika's daughter.

Anita Kay (Roschitz) Schumann was born June 3, 1968 in Kansas City, Kansas to Walter Roschitz (Grodetz number 3) and Kathy Zlatica Soptic Roschitz (Zaluka, Croatia). She has a BS in Nursing from the University of Kansas. She works part-time as a registered nurse teaching Disease Management. She lives in Boulder, Colorado, with her husband Don and their daughter Helena.

Photograph, next page, of the Surge family of Obermösel, dated prior to 1941. Seated, from left to right, Emma, Mary (Maria Surge, nee Fritz), Anna, Emily. Standing, from left to right, Michael Surge, sons Edward, Ernie, William, and Joseph. Courtesy of Elizabeth Albrecht.

