



THE GOTTSCHEE TREE

Newsletter of the History and Genealogy of Gottscheers
and Their Descendants

Volume 1, Number 2

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GOTTSCHER VOLKSFEST

The Gottscheer Relief Association of New York sponsors an annual Gottscheer Volksfest. Martha Hutter, secretary of the Association, provided the following information and description of this annual event.

The Gottscheer Volksfest (or Picnic, as it was called in the beginning), takes place every year on the first Sunday in June at the Plattdeutsche Volksfest Park, 1132 Hempstead Turnpike, Franklin Square, Long Island. Gates at the park open at 10:00 a.m. and close sometime near midnight. Admission is \$3.50, children under twelve are free. Sponsored by the Gottscheer Relief Association of New York, it is carried out through the coordinated efforts of seven member clubs.

Picnic tables under trees, outdoor and indoor dancing to oompah bands, traditional Gottscheer foods such as grilled roast sandwiches and pobolitsn (pastry) are some of the attractions. Other activities include the selection of a queen, the display of the "tracht" (the traditional garb of the people of Gottschee), and numerous raffles and games.

The Gottscheer Volksfest (folk festival), introduced in 1946 as a speedy fundraiser for relief activities to aid the Gottscheer people suffering the ravages of war, continues to be a popular social event for the people from Gottschee as well as their American children.

GOTTSCHER ZEITUNG

The Gottscheer Zeitung is a monthly newspaper published by Gottscheer Landsmannschaft, A-9021 Klagenfurt, Postfach 101, Austria. The newspaper is printed in German and mailed to Gottscheers throughout the world.

The newspaper reports on the historical and present events of the people from Gottschee. Births, marriages, deaths, and other life events are reported. Historical facts and photographs are valuable sources of information. Petschauer (1984:173) refers to it as a "printed family letter that appears regularly".

For subscribers in the United States and Canada, the newspaper is shipped from Gottscheer Hall in Ridgewood, New York. The annual subscription rate is \$16.00. For airmail service the rate is \$25.00. To subscribe to the newspaper, send a check made payable to "Gottscheer Zeitung" and send with name and address to Gottscheer Zeitung, c/o Gottscheer Hall, 657 Fairview Avenue, Ridgewood, New York 11385

SPOTLIGHT ON...

FRANCES (STALZER) KOBETITSCH
(1878-1941)

Frances Stalzer, born in Altfriesach, had five brothers, one of whom had a twin sister, a stepbrother and a stepsister. In 1895, two years after the death of her father, John Stalzer, Frances and her brother Frank left Altfriesach and traveled to New York where two of their brothers lived.

After five years in New York, Frances returned to Gottschee to be with her mother, Margaret, who was ill. Her brother Frank, who married a Gottscheer in New York, also returned with his wife and child and settled in Gottschee. Frances however, emigrated to the United States.

Invited by relatives, Frances went to Kansas City where she met her future husband, Mathias Kobetitsch (1878-1944). They were married June 24, 1905 in Kansas City, Missouri and had seven children. The surname Kobetitsch was changed to Kobets in 1937. Some of their descendants live in Kansas City. (Source:Alma Kobets, Kansas City,KS)

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FROM THE EDITOR

In the research of my "family tree" I have discovered relatives living in various areas of the world. The last week in May I met relatives living in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada; Josef Kobetitsch and his wife Karolina (Roschitsch), their three married children Ida Schober, Joseph Kobetitsch, and Erna Steffen. All were very kind to us during our visit. Ida Schober and her husband were especially generous to my husband and me as we stayed in their home during the few days we were in Vancouver.

Josef Kobetitsch and his family are all descendants of Simon Kobetitsch (1872-1945) and Maria Gregoritsch (1873-1968). Simon and Josef Kobetitsch (featured in the March issue of The Gottschee Tree) were brothers.

On the return trip to Colorado, we stopped in Portland, Oregon and visited with Frank Snyder and his wife Louisa (Kump). We talked late into the night as we had to leave the next morning. Both Frank and Louisa were kind in sharing their home with us. Frank's father was Michael Schniderschitsch (1865-1920) and his mother was Maria Kobetitsch (1875-1942). Maria was the sister of Simon and Josef Kobetitsch.

CORRECTION

In the March issue, page 2, the death date of 1920 for John Nick was incorrect. It should read as follows: John Nick (1886-1960).

CHURCH RECORDS

The following address is supplied by Dorothy Smythe, KCK. The church may possibly have records of Gottscheers who were baptized and/or married in Brooklyn, New York. All Saints Church Society of the Catholic Apostolate Pallotine Fathers
115 Throop Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11206.

GOTTSCHEE: ITS BEGINNINGS AND ITS END

In 1930 Gottscheers celebrated 600 years of the existence of their homeland. Gottscheers who emigrated to other countries returned to Gottschie, located in northwestern Yugoslavia, to take part in the celebration. Eleven years later, people living in Gottschie would be forced to leave their homeland. To understand the beginnings and ending of Gottschie, one must start with events that occurred more than 650 years ago.

Church records of 1177 indicate that German-Austrian overlords dominated the region in which Gottschie would become a settlement (Prince 1931). Count Otto von Ortenburg established a feudal fief, and brought in German officials and craftsmen. People who settled the area spoke a Bavarian-Austrian dialect. Petschauer (1984) believes the area was settled for private and economic reasons and not as a German settlement. Others believe the purpose was to Germanize the surrounding population. However each cultural group retained their own language and the Gottscheers developed their own dialect, forming a linguistic island surrounded by the Slovenian people.

After the rule of the family of Ortenburgs, Gottschie came under the control of the Counts of Cilli, followed by the Hapsburgs. Rudolf IV of Austria brought in large numbers of Germans (Clissold 1966). People living in Gottschie were Austrian citizens as the area was within the boundaries of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire.

The mountainous, forest land of Gottschie consisted of 840 square kilometers. To entice people to the area, the early settlers each received 20 hectares of land. Villages were established, some as small as three houses, usually within walking distance. A parish and/or township consisted of a group of villages. The major city, located in the center of the area, was also named Gottschie.

Gottschie became part of Yugoslavia in 1918 when the Austrian-Hungarian Empire dissolved and new countries formed. Slovenian names replaced German names. During the early years of World War II, the Italian forces occupied Gottschie. In 1941 Germany and Italy
(continued on page 4)

BENEFIT SOCIETIES

The formation of mutual aid societies by Gottscheers began in the late 1800s. Dues collected from members were used to aid members when they were ill and could not work. Fifty cent death benefit dues were paid to a member's survivor. The first society began in Cleveland, Ohio in 1889 and is known as the First Austrian Mutual Aid Society. It is also called E.O.U.V. which are the first letters of the words in German; Erster Oesterreichischer Unterstuetzungs Verein. (Source: E.O.U.V. 75th Anniversary Publication, 1964)

DATA EXCHANGE

(1) In the last issue of The Gottschee Tree, surnames of Gottscheers that settled in the Kansas City area were reported. The list was incomplete. The following names were submitted by Alma Kobets: Kump, Fugina, Roschitsch, and Stalzer. The Roschitsch surname was change to Roschitz, The Roschitz family was from the village of Grodetz.

(2) Joseph Kobetitsch and Agnes (no maiden name given), parents of Matthias Kobetitsch (1847-1938) birthplace Tanzbüchel. Mathias married Katherina Sedler (1847-1930) birthplace Warmberg. Mathias and Katherina had six children, all were born in Turn: Katherina (1873-1965), Matthias (1876-1949), Rosalie (1878- ??), Johann (1886-1886), John/Johann (1887-1975), and Marie (?? - ??). Data obtained from the records of the Morman Genealogical Library.

(3) Joseph Fugina, born in Austria, March 25, 1835, came to the United States in 1856. His brother Mark born in 1837 emigrated to the U.S. in 1857. In 1860 the brothers went to Fountain City, Wisconsin and established the firm of J & M Fugina. Source: History of Northern Wisconsin. Chicago: The Western Historical Society, 1881.

QUERIES

(1) Dorothy Smythe is seeking information about her grandmother, Maria Lobe, born 24 June 1866 in Rossbuchel - Stockendorf, Austria. Maria Lobe's parents were Peter Lobe and Paulina Fink. Mary Lobe came to the United States about 1886 and married Frank Sterbenz in 1889 in Brooklyn, New York.

Maria Lobe's sister, Magdalene Lobe (never married), born in Zmuk, Langenton, Austria in 1862, came to the United States about 1895. Both Maria and Magdalene lived in Kansas City in 1896. Any information from the Lobe and Fink families would be appreciated. Submitted by Dorothy Smythe, 1706 N. 77th Terr., Kansas City, Kansas 66112.

(2) Lorraine Kobett requests information on Jacob Kobetitsch and Margaret Rositsch. She has been told they are the parents of Ernest Frances Kobett of Kansas City, Missouri. Submitted by Lorraine Kobett, 10140 E. Olive Street, Temple City, California 91780.

FEUDAL DUES

Gottscheers in the 16th century had to pay "feudal dues" as was the custom. Each village had to deliver an allotment of wheat, rye, millet, chickens, eggs, cheese, and from some villages, cider and wine. (Petschauer 1984:65)

PETSCHAUER'S book, Gottschee and Its People Through the Centuries, can be purchased from the Gottscheer Relief Association, 657 Fairview Avenue, Ridgewood, New York 11385. The cost is \$20.00 plus \$1.50 for postage.

DEADLINES for Queries and Data Exchange are the first day of the month in which the newsletter is published. The deadline for the next issue is September 1.

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(Gottschee..continued from page 2)

agreed to the resettlement of German citizens and ethnic Germans. Gottscheers were forced to leave the area they had occupied for more than 650 years. Most were resettled in northern Yugoslavia. At the end of the war, those who could fled to Austria for safety as the former inhabitants returned. Many died, especially the very young and old. In Austria, the Gottscheers were put into displaced person camps. Most of them eventually settled in Austria, Canada, and the United States, joining family members who had emigrated in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Today the city of Gottschee is known as Kočevje. Most of the villages were destroyed during the war. Gottscheers who return to the area can sometimes locate the foundations of their homes. The current maps of Yugoslavia indicate the location of Kočevje (Gottschee), with a population of 5,819, is in the political district of Slovenia, just south of Austria's southern border. (Sources: Clissold 1966; Kikel 1947; Petschauer 1984; and Prince 1931)

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