

The journey to Hungary: in the footsteps of my forefathers

By Gottfried Stemmer

Introduction by Hans Kopp

When I learned from the " Batschentiwaner Heimatglocken" that Mr. Anton Rodi from Apatin planned a Danube cruise to our native country with a 3 day stopover in Apatin he promoted as „Apatiner of Danube Première“, I persuaded my wife Annemarie, since Batschentiwan lies only 7 km's from Apatin, to undertake this journey with me. This would be part of our 50 wedding jubilee. We had planned to do an ocean cruise for that occasion and now this „Apatiner of Danube Première“ should serve us as trip instead. The time was also just right for us, despite the fact I promised myself that I never would go back and set foot on that country from where we were expelled during the post war years of 1945 placed in death camps and suffered so much pain and loss of life as a result of it.

When Mr. Rodi found out that I was also a documentation-historian, he persuaded me to prepare a historic presentation together with Mr. Gottfried Stemmer for the trip. Thus I got to know Mr. Stemmer, a very modest, kind and admirable person with whom I had excellent conversations about our Donauschwaben history and whose knowledge impressed me very much. Thus we became good friends during the course of the trip. Here now I give the word to Mr. Stemmer.

Foreword

In my foreword I would like to mention: I always had the need to look beyond the horizon especially into the past. It is very intriguing to learn details about the lives of the people before us. Genealogy, the research of our ancestors is such an area. It is interesting to actually take a journey into the past like into the lives of my family, which has left some interesting clues behind. Although, I am, but one of many of the descendants of Hanspeter Stemmer and his wife Regina Wetzstein of Trulben, I took the time to undertake the trip with them and travel through the past to experience such journey myself.

Thus I looked for information's and references with regard to my forefathers, their life and their living conditions in their home country and what could have motivated them to leave it. It was an essential part in the life of my forefathers, that they were placed quite often between the grindstones of power-hungry landlords, this, however, they did not accept as an unalterable destiny, but attempted to change the destiny through emigration. Somewhere I have read the following: „Oh God what the poor had to suffer! “How confidently they have gone from their German native country to find a new home elsewhere; „why did they fair so badly in their old world? “ It is the question I asked and am was searching for an acceptable answer.

As years went by the aging woman Regina grieved often about that circumstance, that no one was there who would write down everything what they experienced, from the first hour of their trip to Hungary and about their home in Germany. Their father, Hanspeter, had no understanding for it, he meant, one should not look behind but forward. In retrospect the grandchildren would have plenty of time to do so once they were settled in the new world; in their new environment, their new property they now could call their home. „We should however, look, behind our self once“, said Regina. If no one is left to tell from where they have come and how their forefathers faired in the new land. „It will be someone “said Hanspeter about her concerns; „leave me in peace, my fingers are too stiff for such work. “ But the more Regina edged their every

experience firmly in her mind so she would be able to tell of those experiences to the grandchildren and great-grandchildren as they grow up.

My grandmother from the Lorenz family side still told me many of those historic stories. Other facts I have extracted from old books, especially from the writings of the Donauschwaben author Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn. Now and then I had to dig for information's by myself and take the freedom to read between the lines of the written material I found. Also newer sources became available to me that I found on the Internet, information available to me as a family researcher and historian and allowed this information to flow in. Because of these information's, I could find out that the historic biographies and experiences of the people cited here settling in the Batschka were very similar to each other. Thus I want to attempt to tell you the history of my forefathers with the hope and wish that you will also tell of the stories to your children and your children's children.

Gottfried Stemmer, Regau, 2006

Pre-History

The 30 year war of 1618-1648 with its disastrous consequences also reached the last remote place on the peninsula of Lake of Constance even 100 years after it had ended. The villages were looted, houses burned down and their fields destroyed, countless people killed and their way of life disrupted. While France, like other European countries, with centrally controlled power, according to the spirit of the times, found opportunities to annex newly discovered lands and colonies.

Tortured Germany in pieces wrapped in an unblest religious war, became vulnerable for opportunistic countries and their occupational forces. The result was disunity within the German empire divided in more than 300 principalities and lordships. Every ruler had wrapped himself in his own „house power“ and in their own perspective they wanted to live like an emperor. In addition, they pressed the wealth necessary from their subjects, and they still wanted to be called „father of the people“ and worried only about their own vanity, For the miseries of the subjects entrusted to them, there was no room in their hearts.

Thus it was to no one's surprise that France, after the world wide colonization which existed, had practically ended and in fact that there were hardly any more colonies left to be won and still having an existing strong military power which France now directed toward German land in which they could expand. France directed its power of attacks for such expansion to the borders towards Germany and pursued its military efforts, as well as, skillful diplomacy relentlessly to annex Alsace, Lorrain and the Palatinate (Rheinpfalz).

Morality is never questioned in political power struggles and France also formed an alliance with the largest enemy of Christianity at that time, the Ottoman Empire and was considered; “the sword of the sultan in the west”. During the time when “The Holy Roman Empire of German Nations” was threatened by the powers of the Ottoman Empire and the Emperor of German Nations required all the available military potential to defend against the danger directed toward Christianity, France used the opportunity, looted and murdered in the adjoining German lands.

With this dilemma the population points to the Emperor exclaiming: “The German Emperor cannot protect you”, and France asserted claims to these regions. But also counter attacks by the Empire had to be carried on the back of the population. In 1683 the Ottoman Empire pushed against Vienna and besieged the city. This left the Emperor not much choice but to engage the entire military potential against this menace. Duke Karl V of Lorraine, who is the commander of the Imperial forces also, has to bring his soldiers from Lorraine to defend against the Turks. It is now that the French King Ludwig the XIV ceases the opportunity using this military power to occupy the vacuum created by the removal of the Empires military forces in the German Lorraine.

Repeated raids and lootings by the French armies, primarily, however, among the economic-socially better situated people in the Palatinate was one reason to leave. In addition the extremely hard winter of 1708-09 had affected the agriculture catastrophically; “the fields lay sparse, it lacked on cattle feed and thus the field lacked needed fertilization and what one grew with much care and effort, was destroyed by the increasing numbers of wild game getting out of control which in fact was under the protection by cruel legislation of the royal hunters, thus destroying the hard labor of the countryman”. This certainly motivated many others to leave.

The churches were also involved regardless of which denomination, even they were striving and competing for power and the maltreated people could not expect help from this side either. Hence, in the church registers in some far remote places one could read: “because of war sufferings even people from the Palatinate flee from their land”. An early observer of this time writes: “There are so many stories one could tell, the population of the Rhineland had to suffer through?” They never knew who would get their next harvest, the French soldiers, the Swedes (the Swedish army presence in Germany) or the Imperials and how much would they be able to save for themselves. The wild game meant more to the Royals than did the farmers who worked growing crops. They would not be compensated for the damages caused by the wild game. However, the punishments should one help himself to wild game, were cruel.

The religions were not helpful: “regardless if they were Lutheran or Reformed they argued with each other and those who wanted to revert to Catholics again were despised”. Those who could buy themselves free from their tyrants moved away. Many befell deep in misery, regardless if once a proud farmer at one time with wagon and horses, or if a maiden or farm hand and they also would move if possible. Some acted amusing jokingly about the disarray in their native country, although leaving did break their heart. During the second half of the 17th century we find the first evidence of mass emigrations overseas, mostly to America.

What the village innkeeper thinks of America, someone wanted to know: “There are the Englishmen already sitting pretty and they do not care for the Swabian a bit. From the Rhineland many have returned home again as beggars, now he knew of a better land and one can go from Ulm on the Danube on a ship to Hungary, well there is the plague from time to time as a guest, but, otherwise, one could live a better life there in peace away from it all”.

In the world around the village of Allmannsdorf near Constance on Lake Constance, Hans Jakob Spindler was born about 1655. The desolation of the surroundings may have made young Hans Jakob to decide to leave his native country on Lake Constance in search of the northwesterly situated Lorraine, almost completely depopulated from the consequences of the 30 year war. There he married Catharina Bascho, in Walschbronn in 1688 and lived in the forest house number 57 as an active businessman.

Their daughter Annamaria Franziska married the son of the shoemaker Mathias Wetzstein from Wölferdingen, Lorrain in Walschbronn on November 7th 1707. Alsace was already annexed to France and the danger existed that Lorrain's destiny would be the same and in 1766 the threat became a reality and Lorrain fell to France, hence, they did not want to remain there and left their home in the forest house number 57 and settled in the Palatinate village of Schweix, in the County of Hanau-Bright Mountain. There Regina was born on the October 4th 1725 and christened in the parish church in Trulben.

From 1736-1793 Trulben was under the rule of Hesse-Darmstadt's ruler Ludwig IX (1736-1790) the Landgraf (duke) of Hesse-Darmstadt and count of Hanau-Bright Mountain. This county included the Reichsamt Lemberg consisting of the Schultheißen municipalities Trulben, Vinningen and the Schultheißerei Kröppen including Kröppen, Schweix, Hilst, Dammühle etc.). On June 1st 1741 Ludwig IX put up the Grenadier Company with 46 men. According with the unrests of the time he increased his militia so that by 1777 it amounted to 2350 men and 25 hussars, he added in 1758.

Let us look at the Stemmer-Wetzstein family now: Hanspeter Stemmer served many years in the imperial military; as a young soldier still under the order of the aging Prince Eugene of Savoy, against the French and Poles. Later he served in the imperial cavalry in Petrovaradin (Peterwardein), the most important fortress of the Empire of German Nation against the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans, besides; he came away with several wounds which remained, however, without any other health issues. In 1749 he retired as 40-year-old from the military service.

Like it was offered to all soldiers within the imperial military, Hanspeter was too offered to settle with generous equipment of house and land in Hungary near the military border. He, however, could not be persuaded since his longing for the Palatine, his native country was stronger. He went on to purchase the horse assigned to him for the past 3 years which he rode during his military duty from the military, a black stallion, he called affectionately "Schwarzer" (Black). Together with his companion Bruno, who like himself, wanted to rather go home, they rode on their horse's home. There Hanspeter lived for the time being as a farm-hand with his brother-in-law Josef Mundweil in Vinningen, who had married his older sister Katharina. In the pub "Zum Schwarzen Bären" in Trulben, he became acquainted with the innkeeper's daughter Regina Wetzstein and they married in Trulben on April 28th 1750.

At the time she was at age 25 not the youngest, but a very resolute innkeeper's daughter and many drunks had to acknowledge her strength and authority, should they speculate to become fresh and allowed themselves to make fun of her or other guests, she dealt with them quickly. She inherited the house where she was born in Schweix und several acreages located in the Palatinate. However, the house was located right on the border of France und would therefore be a constant target of raids by the French military. The couple settled there and lived of farming the land. They worked hard and industrious for their descendants. However, despite of their hard labor they never seemed to get ahead. Although regions to the south from them in Alsace had fallen to France earlier, the raids by the French military did not cease on their side in the Palatinate.

Written instructions to the French military by France point out clearly, that the lootings and destruction of villages in the Palatinate were not the results of the war, but the aim and purpose of the French militaries continued war efforts to harass the population in the Palatinate. Hanspeter too, had to suffer under the terrible experiences.

It was in October of 1757 as the evening fog already moved over the fields. Regina was still on the potato field harvesting potatoes with both of her daughters Anna *28.1.1751 and Veronika *28.5.1754. Anna was already a good help, however, Veronika was able to pick potatoes diligently from the ground into the basket. Hanspeter was with their 6-year-old son Johann in the stable to feed the cattle as they heard loud shouting in the street. He looked and saw, French soldiers coming into their court, the house dog which was attacking the soldiers was shot immediately and soldiers then attacked the stable.

Hanspeter positioned himself against them, but a blow with the rifle but on the back on his head knocked him down unconscious. His son Johann was brutally beaten also and knocked to the ground. The soldiers drove the cattle onto the street and burned down the house. As soon as Regina was alarmed by the firing of the house, she hid both girls under bushes and ran directly from the field home. The roof was already in flames; she rushed to the stables and found her son and husband on the ground. She dragged both of them from the already collapsing building to the outside; however, while her husband survived the ordeal their son did not and Johann died in her arms. The French had also burned down other houses in the village and the flames spread rapidly to the other houses, bursting into flames and burning to the ground. The robbers disappeared with the loot again over the border to France. Two days later the victims of the French raiders were buried; it was 2 men, 3 women and 2 children.

Only with the help of family relatives many people were able to survive. The Stemmers family was taken in by Regina's parents. Others endured their fate grieving for some time and like illness and death they accepted their fate as Gods will and were content with what they had to endure. However, for others again it was an injustice they wanted to avoid in the future if it was possible.

Thus, it was also the case for Hanspeter, the proud son from the Rhineland. It was simply too much what was handed to him and his grieve stricken family. He was a loyal citizen; however, the authority did not protect any of them. Everywhere during this hopeless time Emissaries' advertised in search of settlers for Hungary and found open ears everywhere.

On March 31st 1758 his wife's father Mathias Wetzstein and on May 3rd of the same year her mother Annamaria Franziska, nee Spindler passed away.

The journey to Hungary

As per instruction by the Imperial Court Chamber in Vienna of 7.7.1755, one was informed by the settlement emissaries' in many details about what would be provided for the settlers and their families should they decide to immigrate into Hungary. What type property the prospective settlers could or would have to bring along to Hungary. They were told that they would need written releases from the royal family under whose rule they lived. They would receive enough financial help, to at least allow them to operate a farm and could acquire certain farm animals and equipment as necessary to operate a farm upon their arrival, such as a horse a wagon and plough, a cow and poultry for their own use. It was also stressed that only Catholic families may apply.

Settlement emissary Anton Neuber announced and talked about these requirements in several villages in the Palatinate and Saarland. The imperial offer guaranteed a lot of rights and privileges, but also made certain that the applicants, the prospective colonists understood their obligations. They thereby would become imperial subjects with full privileges. They received a house lot and free land, as much as, they were

able to farm; however, it would be a so called endless lease. Only later in 1848 they were actually able to purchase the land they worked. They also would get the seeds required at the beginning for planting. Furthermore, they were exempt from all state taxation for full 6 years. However, only young, healthy and success promising people were accepted.

Countless people searched for a new future away from home and a reporter wrote at that time ; “it seems as if everyone wanted to leave the land”. Those willing to become settlers sold their property, to buy themselves free from serfdom of their rulers and with the permits in their possessions they left with woman and children to go on their way to the port of departure in Ulm. There they would step on the ships (the Ulmer Schachteln) which would carry them to the land to which you needed to bring supposedly nothing as determination to work and the most important thing, your health, and at that a lot of it.

In the pub of his father-in-law in Trulben, Hanspeter heard of the settlement program in the Batschka on Hungarian land. His decision was made quickly: He informed his family about the settlement in the Batschka, particularly since he knew the land from his military service time; therefore it was not foreign to him. It was not easy to sell their house and land being close to the French border and with the continued danger of the French military infringements and because of that situation very few prospective buyers could be found. He had to sell far below the value; however, with the help of his relatives he sold the properties and bought himself free from serfdom. This already took up several months. Regina’s brother Mathias took over the house lot with the ruins. He had married Anne Marie Sommer, of Walschbronn earlier and was willing to take the risk. He wanted to rebuild the house for his family, however, the hopeless living conditions had worn him down, and he became ill and subsequently died on April 28th 1752 in Riedelberg.

In the meantime, summer had arrived and the time for making a decision came closer. The departure from Ulm was now scheduled for Monday August 21st 1758, but they already had to report in Ulm by Wednesday August 16th, the day after the Catholic holiday “Maria of the Ascension”, for the passenger registration. The trip to Ulm was about 270 km a distance they would have to travel on foot. On Sunday July 30th, after the church service the relatives met in the inn “Zum Schwarzen Bären”. His brother-in-law Hansjörg came also to the farewell gathering and offered to transport the family to Ulm. If they should change their minds and wanted to return he also would take them back home again with his wagon. Hansjörg had always been the protector of his younger sister Regina and an affectionate relationship connected them.

He attached fruit cloths for the trip to Ulm on the wagon which would serve as a roof. He used branches from a hazelnut tree and mounted them in such fashion to be able to tie the clothes over it. Thus they would have protection from bad weather and could sleep the nights on the wagon as well. They took as much food as possible, because purchases on the way are expensive and wasted precious time. Illness was not included in their plan. Feed for the horses should be procured as much as possible on the way and only in case of emergency, hay and several bags of oats were loaded behind on the wagon. The following Wednesday, like so frequently now, many covered wagon with emigrants came through the village from all directions of the west, and everyone knew immediately in what direction they were heading; “in the direction of Ulm to board a ships and head for Hungary. They were asked by one family for directions and were told to see Hanspeter Stemmer in the old inn, were they were invited to stay overnight and feed their horses.

It was the family Conrad Busch with wife Margaretha, (nee Eich), and the children Hansjörg 14, Heinrich 13, Christian 11 and Ludwig 10 years of age. They came with their wagon from the Saarland and were on the road already for 2 days from Ormesheim, near Saarbrücken. A little later the family of Nikolaus

Kleiner with his wife Maria and the children Margaretha 17 and Nikolaus 15 years old, from Lorraine came on foot. They had very little possessions, only what they could carry. They were exploited by the French military and said; “now we were required to speak French and a French priest had already been assigned to us in our church”. They saw no future there and looked forward to Hungary to seek a future there.

They all wanted to join the group of Hanspeter. The most valuable piece of „Niklas“, they called him, was his fiddle. He unpacked fiddle every opportunity he found and played with it with deep devotion and emotions and always a suitable piece. Thus he played during this unforgettable hour of taking leave from their home and everyone joined in singing the so fitting song with emotions: „Kein schöner Lad in dieser Zeit, als hier das unsere weit und breit- wo wir uns finden wohl unter Linden zur Abendzeit“(There is no country more beautiful at this time – where we found each other under the linden tree at the twilight”). This old and very meaning full song, during many occasions; was so appropriate at this time, in particular for the German people who were faced to leave their homes behind, during their worst hours. (This song would also gain a meaningful popularity among the Donauschwaben after their expulsion from their homes after 1944-1945 who still sing it on many appropriate occasion on an annual bases.)

The necessary arrangements for the trip were made now and thoroughly discussed. They ate their last dinner in their home and opened their best bottle of wine they had saved for that occasion. It was time now for everyone to bed down and rest for the night.

Although, Hanspeter could well understand that if a poor devil who did not have the finances to purchase his freedom from the landlords and got on his way, hence, illegally. Nevertheless, he wanted to avoid difficulties for the group and had made sure that all necessary papers they had with them were in order. He also knew only too well that hooligans were everywhere who could stop unlawful emigrants with all kinds of shenanigans’, to rob them and possibly lock them up. The people from Lorraine had their paper written in French, however, no one could understand anyhow what it said on them and he let it count as a document. To issue permits in spite of an imperial decree, for the settlement-willing subjects and not to hinder them on their way, the authorities whether they were worldly or religious, increasingly objected to the enticement and departure of their good workforce. This was not only the case for the people leaving to Hungary, but also for those who left to the west, to America.

Administrative official complained over and over again about secret departures that took place which were rather significant according to figures. Any legal permission had to be approved by the authorities and payments of different fees were levied for the releases from serfdom. That is for the dismissal from bondage for which during the 18th Century in the Palatinate as a rule, one tenth of the property had to be paid. There was also a so-called post tax which was assessed on the property of the departing, as well as, certain office fees and documentation fees. On August the 3rd everyone went to the early mass in their local church together, which by the way had been dedicated to St. Stephan.

The priest knew of the continued struggle and the suffering of the people and offered consolation and his blessings. If the church saint St. Stephan which also is the patron saint of Hungary would watch over them and may take care of them. He still gave everybody his individual blessing and promised, he would also pray in the future for them. Then they went by the cemetery one more time and said farewell from their dearly departed, from their parents and their little son Johann.

Although, it seemed to become a nice day after the past several rainy days with a blue sky above, the people were, saddened though, to have to make the decision to turn their back to their beloved home in trade for a better future, primarily for the benefit of their children and generations to follow. They still ate a hearty

breakfast which Annemarie the wife of the Hansjörg had already prepared. Then they said their final goodbyes to all who were dear to them and were here to see them off. Now they were a group of three families and the brother-in-law Hansjörg with whom the count was 13 persons. They did not want more in their party it would only become a burden and could complicate matters, like staying overnight and providing for food.

Hanspeter knew the surroundings of the country very well which was a huge advantage for them and also know the way to Ulm he had traveled previously. He chose the way to avoid larger towns and villages wherever possible and where they could also stay conveniently overnight. Therefore he selected only small farm villages. The person at the reign of the horses, for the most part was Regina who was pregnant and the smaller children, or for those of them who could not walk any longer. Hansjörg, for safety reason walked in front of the horses. Most of them walked barefoot, not only to save the shoes but also because they were used to it during the summer months and therefore it was more comfortable for them during the hot temperatures in August. They rested primarily at locations where feed for the horses could be found on grazing areas or could be acquired inexpensively. Their path led them to the east, past red and orange colored sandstone rocks in the Rhineland forests.

Anna walked with the boys of Conrad Bush, the boys told amusing and interesting stories and rhymes and their dialect was also better to understand than that spoken by the children of Niklas. They reached Trulben on their first day– Eppenbronn and Fischbach and then they walked through the Rhineland forests and spent the night in Bobenthal. Here, Hanspeter knew his old comrade in arms, Bruno, from the military service. Bruno’s wife died during childbirth of their first child, a boy, who was also taken from him. He had a small farm on which he could barely survive and for the work in the forest he was already too weak. Hence, his joy was overwhelming, when Hanspeter gave him a grindstone, as a guest’s present. His stone was worn out and with this new stone he would get additional income by sharpening the woodsmen’s tools, Axes, saws, knives and so on. The horses found plenty feed on the pasture and could feed on the apples, fallen from the trees.

Bruno also had several beehives he cared for, now was the time for the harvest of the honey. To expel the bees from the beehives, he made a fire with moldering birch wood which provided plenty of smoke. This drove the bees out of the hive and they could harvest the honeycombs from the inside of the beehives. Bruno distributed richly from the honeycombs to the arrivals and if a child complained that it had been stung by a bee, the spot of the sting was treated with a drop of honey and a leave of Spitzwegerich (a blue blooming flower growing on the side of the roads) was laid on top of it to relief the pain and the sting was quickly forgotten and the sweet honey enjoyed with great pleasure. Thus, the still tired children were quickly refreshed and played joyfully.

Hanspeter and Bruno exchanged old memories with each other and then discussed the way on which they should continue. Bruno warned Hanspeter about the hooligans in Karlsruhe. They guard the Rhine Bridge to block it and stop the people who crossed it. Those who could not pay the requested passing fees by them they could be held up for days. Hanspeter replied; “Well beautiful, we will just have to outfox them and should accomplish that with an effective plan”.

The next day their path led them toward Wasgau in the fertile Rhine lowland covered with grape vines all the way to Wörth, there they stayed the night in the wagon at a place which was in the woods hidden from view of the Rhine Bridge and could not be overlooked easily by the people guarding the bridge

and could not see who was coming. Hanspeter plan was, to cross the bridge at early dawn even before the hooligans, intoxicated from the night before were up in the morning. Hanspeter and his groups were already over the Rhine, through the town of Karlsruhe and on their way in the direction of Waldbronn before the guards had awakened.

Two hours after reaching Waldbronn they stayed overnight, on a farm too and as a guest's present Conrad Bush left a nice Saarland butcher's knife with the farmers agreement. The following day was Sunday, despite that, they had to press on, their way led to the north of the Black Forest by Enzkreis; here acreages of farmland and meadows blended into landscape. Then they went to the south of Pforzheim past the last parts of the Black Forest, to Kelttern and Tiefenbronn.

In Ellmendingen they visited the Sunday mass in the old Barbara-Kirche. There were many emigrants from Elsass and the Black Forest to observe the day of Christ. The old cathedral priest did not approve of the people leaving their country and preached hard against it by appealing to their conscience: "Who has bewitched you" he said; "to leave and to give up your native country given to you by God? Do not trust to the emissaries they act as if you would like to be there where they would like to have you. They only want to get rich. They sell your souls to get their reward. For those who can return yet go home to the fields which God gave you! Do not believe that in Hungary milk and honey will flow in rivers. Do not believe that the ground there sprouts crops and grow fruits in a land still a wilderness untilled and that you do not have to work any harder than in your native country. Who tells you that from a farmer becomes a nobleman and from a craftsman a baron. I know that warlike raids have brought heavy grieve to your families and that your burden and cross are to be carried in your native country. I understand it is often difficult and that every earth-born has the desire to improve his life. Do you believe, however, that this land which the Turks have badly neglected should you get there in such huge numbers you will fare better? Who tells you that you can elect your authorities there you would like? Be careful whether you do not proceed into the slavery of foreign men and that your children and their descendant will curse you for giving up your native German country in exchanged with another and have squandered your innate inheritance. For those who still can and who have not broken off yet all bridges behind turn back. I do not curse those of you leaving your homes ill advised, I pray for your welfare, but I can only praise happily those who remain loyal to their native country, which preserve the obedience of their God given authorities. Amen. Finally; "To the enlightenment of all we recite three more of the Lord's Prayer".

After the service the priest blessed them at the end, and then they moved on, because none of the settlement-willing could be persuaded to stay. In the evening they reached Tiefenbronn and recited a thank you prayer in the Magdalenakirche. The next day they moved through Renningen, Sindelfingen and the following mornings they passed to the south of Stuttgart. They reached Aichtal in the Neckar lowland. Hansjörg went ahead and found out that the bridge over the Neckar was unguarded; therefore they still went across the Neckar Bridge to Altdorf. Now it went steadily uphill into the Swabian Alps to the highest situated village of Urach and to the south they already could recognize the Allgäuer Alps.

From the distance they could see the high stone tower built by Romans centuries ago. Recognizing that they came closer to their destination it made the last portion of their trip to the heights of Aglishardt near Böhringen easier. They stayed overnight in the castle ruins at Aglishardt, once a proud, active and famous monastery. A legend tells about a big black dog with furious eyes, which guarded a buried treasure chest, but they could not see any signs of it. Their road took them now to Blaubeuren and from there it went downhill to the relief of everyone. Here they met up with emigrants from Swabia and the Allgäu. Near the castle ruins of Helfenstein they stayed the night again at a farm. The farmer already had done business with

other emigrants and requested a fee per person and horse for the camp and the grazing on his meadows. The horses received good feed and this was worth it for the emigrants.

They had made good time during their since departure on August 13th and they arrived at the Ulmer Danube meadows near the Iller delta. Up to here the Danube is still a modest river, too small for a ship journeys; however, the influx of the Iller brings a lot of water from the Allgäu and doubles the volume of water flowing into the Danube. On the farms below the Kuhberg many emigrants camped already who were on their way to Hungary and they joined them now. For a low fee they could let the horses graze on the pasture, the local farmers sold their grazing meadows for good money. They sold vegetables and food to the people and hay for the horses. Others opportunists came because they hoped to make advantageous trades. Many of them were having doubts that they could not take all their belongings they brought up to here to Hungary. This uncertainty attracted even more clever merchants. They looked around for bargains; they could gain from the many emigrant. Such deals, as their horses and wagons and acquired them for a pittance. "Pah!" someone shouted: "I want to advise all, turn everything into money you can and save unnecessary burdens to carry burdensome property along". These merchants repeated their warnings and painted grim pictures, just to make profit from the emigrants gathered here prior to their departures.

Emigrants also bargained for good purchases among the emigrants and carried off whatever they could take along on their voyage down the Danube. Hansjörg still wanted to remain with the group up to the departure of the ship. It was also advantageous to stay the night on the wagon and keep the luggage on it. The next day they left the wagon which was their home for the trip here and Hanspeter, Conrad Bush and Niklas went on foot to Ulm to register at the settlement commission building to complete the official formalities for the trip and register on the passenger list. On the bank of the river it became busy with life, emigrants came from all direction and on the camping places, smoke rose, as the people prepared for breakfast.

Soon after the heavy drawbridge rattled at the Gänsetor and they were allowed into the imperial town of Ulm, the ships with the bug anchored upstream at the landing, were ready for the transport of the emigrants down the Danube. The ships were called "Ulmer Schachteln" or "Schwabenplätten" because they were built in Ulm; they were approximately 20 meters long and 5 meters wide provided with a hut at each end where toilets were located which allowed the excrete to empty directly into the Danube. The ships could take on about between 50-80 people, later they were even built larger.

Such ships already carried Swabian soldiers with equipment, guns and horses in 1683 to free Vienne from the Turkish siege. On October 4th 1745 a fleet of decorated ships with flags and all possible comfort took the newly crowned Emperor Franz I. and his wife Maria Theresa (her grandmother was also from the Palatinate) with a large entourage coming from the direction of Frankfurt to Ulm, to take the entourage down the Danube to Vienna. During their next Christian Holiday they visited the festival service in the Clarissenkloster to Söflingen and everybody received according to the customs a small bouquet of dried flowers.

This bouquet would remain in their possession in remembrance of their old native country for a long time. The next morning they attended an early mess in the church where they heard that this day is also the anniversary for Stephan, King of Hungary and the priest encouraged the colonists to preserve the Christianity in the distant Hungarian land. On Saturday the passengers were allowed on board with 60 passengers and their belongings. Thus they used the opportunity prior to boarding, to look around if they could still find

necessary tools and devices like a heel, a spade, a saw, a flint, a grindstone and odd pots and pans, string, scissors, needle, linen, thread, penknife, fishhook and fishing line.

Hanspeter purchased a new ax, spade and plowshare, however, also a good-quality Steinschloss-hunting rifle from the Regensburg gunsmith Jakob Kuchenreuter with plenty of powder and lead supply. He knew that there was wild game that could be hunted in Hungary and one never knew if one had to protect the family against robbers or Turks that made the region unsafe, therefore he did not want to be unarmed. Hansjörg said goodbye and steered his wagon homeward bound, however, the thought to emigrate did not let him go, until he immigrated too at the end five years later with his family to the village of Tschatalia, in the Batschka.

On the ship people came, from the Palatinate and Saarland, however, also from Lorraine, Elsass, from the Ortenau, the Black Forest and the Breisgau region, from Swabia and from the Allgäu. Some like the people from Lorraine had only very little luggage, other again brought as much as they could carry. Especially the Swabian had a lot of belongings and some took disassembled plows on board. Conrad Bush also wanted to take his new acquired wagon with him to Hungary, he gladly would pay the costs and he discussed a cost agreed upon with the ship master.

He could still get a good price for his horses here in Ulm. Horses could be purchased in Hungary inexpensive he said, however, a good plow or a wagon not very likely. About a seat on the barge, they should not worry about, because they would take a seat for themselves and the children on the wagon with their belongings. Thus the wagon was fastened on the foredeck, the wheels dismantled and now the covered wagon was much like a small hut, an additional resting place.

Plows and such were stowed according to size and weight. The weight was well distributed along the ship's sides, stowed away and fastened. In front, at the bug and the back were in each case a fireplace secured with stones, food could be prepared according to wind direction in the front or the rear to avoid the wind blowing smoke in their faces. The people took their seats on the front and the rear of the deck, the hut on the ship was planned for protection against storms. Departure was scheduled for Monday morning. As the first ones boarded the so-called regulars with regularly schedules to Vienna, many went still quickly ashore again to visit the Holy Mess and afterwards proceeded in God's name on board.

The ship master was the 40-year-old Christoph Held from Ulm. He was an experienced man on the Danube River, who traveled quite often to Vienna and sometimes to Budapest, and once even to Belgrade, however, he did not mention this, it sufficed that the passengers knew who the captain on board was. On his side were 4 oar-hands, one could tell already by their stature that made clear, that it was not advisable to tangle with them. Later the children and then also the adults recognized that these oar-hands were basically quite friendly. One was named Mathias, and called himself "Hies", in his free time he played the Dudlsack and everyone listened with pleasure to his music. The others name were Josef "Pepi" and then there was Lukas "Luki" for short, both of them knew many stories with which they kept the attention of the people on board. The last, but most agile was the fellow named Leopold, short "Leo", he played with the bigger children in his free time very quietly and but with great enjoyment.

Although, between the crew and the colonists developed a hearty friendship, it was the attachment which grew within the colonists brought together by fate. The ship master announced that he needed

temporary help to help the four strong oars-men, as compensation, their trip would be free. He did not need to announce this twice, because many immediately responded. The oar-hands took their positions on the flat roof of the hut and by orders from the ship master they operated the long oar poles. The barge was set in motion by pushing the ship with the bug and rear oars in parallel to the river bank. This was done against the current in the river and then turned with the bug oar of the ship in the direction of the rivers current.

One of the young men started to sing aloud: “Now adieu you my dear homeland, dear homeland adieu - I must go away to a foreign land” Many looked into the distance, so nobody would see the tears in their eyes. Like an endless motion picture, scenery upon scenery passed by and Ulm disappeared slowly from their view. Charming villages and fields passed like on an endless stage. It was a life full of activities on this stage, farmers on the field, women hung laundry in the wind, playing children cheered and waved to them, only they themselves could not take part in it any more, they were trapped on the ship surrounded by water.

As long as they felt ground underneath their feet, they still felt secure, but now, however, they were helplessly trapped on the ship and exposed to the elements. The “Ulmer Schachtel” in an irreversible river current now carried these much tested people on her back eastward, into an uncertain future down the Danube.

Hanspeter asked the Swabian standing beside him, why did they leave their native country since it is far off the French border? “Yes” meant the Swabian, “we have nothing but misery in our land! From where should a person get the money to live? The royal counts do not release any land to lease for the farmers to farm on and then they do not know how many frondienst hours (free working hours) they should ask for, if they do lease the land to a farmer. Those who do not own a house are not permitted to marry. The counts and monastery stewards should release land for farming and create happy couples and growing families instead of promoting forcible chastity. This will end badly. My oldest son had to become Soldiers and serves in Switzerland and I have not heard from him in years”.

He continued: “One son went to Holland, he supposedly immigrated to America. Two have to serve in the imperial army and I heard that they are now in Hungary. They are forced to be soldiers for life because the taxes are too high and the land too small to work on a family farm. For whom the next bullet is meant only God knows. In Hestia it is even worse, they put everybody without papers in a soldier’s uniform and sell them to the Englishmen and the English send them in turn again, as soldiers to America to fight their war. I want to save these my two youngest sons from such a fate. They shall as the empress wishes get an opportunity to become free farmers and to live a well organized life”.

The people from Elsass on the ship were very bitter about their royal rulers and complained; “Everyone wants to go away, the tyrants and slave drivers deserve that every one of their loyal subjects is leaving, that is for certain. They people do not want to become French, they go away instead from home to a new free country and 10% of their possessions they had to leave behind as a departure fee and to buy themselves free from the royal rulers. They paid the amount of the fees, one demanded of them, without hesitating”. Now many of the people are admittedly homesick it was not an easy decision they made to leave their homes. It was as if the heavens made a mockery out of them, as they were floating down the Danube pondering about their future in a foreign land.

They paid the fees asked of them in the beginning, so that they could leave voluntarily from their native country and yet, left with broken hearts. Quite a lot of them have torn themselves away from loved ones they left behind under the conditions they fled from. How will they go on and what would become of them? One man from Lorraine voiced his opinion; "This is what I say' there are too many powers in the world and not enough rights. The royal rulers call themselves protectors of the people; however, treat their subjects like slaves without rights". If one looked around on the ship, one barely saw older people, those loved ones were left behind and no one knew what would become of them.

The youngest, strongest generations, the enterprising and confident ones now the questions; "do the royal princes know what kind of labor force they lose"? They could not possibly have grasped it and they felt nothing of the people's hardship in their cold hearts. Perhaps, they would learn later when they have no one to work the fields. Here Hanspeter became upset and said; "Live well, helpless old German Empire which has tortured itself over many years in a relentless unforgiving religious wars (30 year war 1618-1648) which allowed taking away Elsass and Lorraine from its womb and cannot protect the Palatinate against rebellious raids by the French soldiers. Good bye so long, we move away, we cry for you - stepmother Germania".

While the women prayed for a good trip, the men tried it with encouraging song, but whenever the water began to foam more wildly, the songs did quiet down and the prayers became louder. Then the women had to look after the bodily welfare of their men and children and prepare simple dinners. Then the auxiliary rowers, two of them were the youngest sons of the man from Swabia, were instructed in their tasks as oarsmen helpers, so that they regular oar-hands when the waters were quieter could get a break. During such time only one professional oar-hand was in the front and rear, teamed up together an auxiliary rower.

The travelers sat tightly packed on the benches on board and tried to make conversation with each other, however, this needed some time and attention, because of the various different dialects spoken. However, they would slowly get used to the different dialects. More and more they became a community of people looking forward to the same fate. They all would become closer and closer to each other where everybody felt responsible for everyone, and that was a good thing. Memories of back home and experiences were exchanged and courageous support given to each other and things started to look brighter and they all looked forward to a new future on their voyage through the wild waters of the Danube toward Hungary, which would become their new homeland.

Some men brought musical instruments on board; one was the zither player, Siegbert Himmelsbach, from Michelbronn in the Black Forest with his 5 children and his wife Juliana who had a beautiful voice. Then there was, Niklas Kleiner, from Lorraine with his fiddle and there was a native of Baden, Mathias Kraus, from Marlen on the Rhine with a French horn and his young wife Katharina. Admittedly, this was not an ideal concert combination, but they played loudly and with enthusiasm. Quickly, singers of both sexes found themselves and sang in harmony but in recognizably different dialects; however this had absolutely no bearing on the melody which brought all of them together.

In Ulm they were already told that, whence they arrived in Hungary, land would be only awarded to those who were married and older than 18 years. What was forbidden to them in their native country as subjects without land, now this was required of them to work as free farmers on the land? Well, they wanted to get involved with pleasure, fellows and girls held a look out for a possible partner, wife or husband. The close conditions on the ship made it easier for them to get closely acquainted and getting to know each other very quickly. Other passengers threw out a fishing rod to land a catch, to supplement their dinner and their

success soon found imitators. Thus the menu was supplemented richly with fish from the Danube. By midday the bells of St. Martin rang from Lauingen and by the evening they anchored in Donauwörth.

As soon as the landing platform came into view in this quiet bay, the rowers turned the ship against the stream. The oar hand Leo jumped from the barge still in hip deep water and tied the rope twice around a strong mast, then he slowed the barge down until it was at rest. Everyone remained aboard and because light rain started to come down, the women and children went into the hut while the men and big children, despite the rain prepared a sleeping place for themselves on the open deck.

In the morning at first light, while the roosters on shore had begun their morning concert, the rowers turned the boat into the current again and the journey went on so that they could reach Kehlheim before dark by evening. The rain had stopped and the Upper Bavarian Mountains became clearly visible through the low ground fog, from there the Lech brought additional waters into the Danube.

In the afternoon they past the fortress of Ingolstadt and shortly after that they past the mouth of the Altmuehl and in the late evening they were ready to anchor in Kehlheim. Kehlheim was the harbor from where colonists, primarily from Franken, Hessen and Bavaria began their journey. In contrast to the "Ulmer Ships" the "Kehlheimer Plätte" was a large barge. By midday they reached Regensburg with its large well known ancient stone bridge.

Their journey continued on, through dangerous rapids to Straubing. Girls and fellows continued to sing the songs in their different dialects; "Als wir jüngst in Regensburg waren, sind wir über den Strudel gefahren". (When we were recently in Regensburg, we went over the great rapids). During the singing the musician played along and several of the young couples began to dance.

The journey was not without dangers, already before Passau; there were many hidden rocks and cliffs in their path, which already had capsizing some ships on previous voyages. The Iller, Lech and many other contributories' of the Danube brought huge water masses into the Danube and because of it; they made good traveling time according to opinions from some passengers as the ship made its way dangerously fast, through rough the waters. The ship went along the Bavarian Forrest past the town of Deggendorf and later that evening anchored in Vilshofen. The next day, two hours before noon they anchored in Passau, the tree river city where the Inn and Ilz emptied more water into the Danube. Here, people went on land making some purchases; some also went to the beer depot and returned with 4 barrels of beer.

A short stout man came on board with some passengers from the ship; several men helped bring his luggage, it was a suitcase and 2 big, very worn out and old looking crates provided with iron bands. The man introduced himself as Julius Schwab, with a noticeable Frankish dialect. He said that he is a teacher and also wanted to settle in Hungary and in the boxes were books he wanted to stow away in the hut of the ship to protect them from getting wet. He said that it was necessary that they would be stowed away immediately; in addition he took a place behind the entrance of the hut on the ship. Other luggage was then placed on top of the crates and no one could see them and suspect them to be there. The teacher was treated always polite by the ship master and with the utmost respects. The other passengers on the ship too, treated him likewise, with the necessary respect.

He was also a man of great experience who traveled often to Vienna and knew the route and could tell of his knowledge of the places the ship went past. Therefore his stories were quite interesting to the other passengers, because he knew of all the places already and since there were no descriptions of what they saw

on their way, he was seen as a welcome guide. He told many intriguing and sometimes romantic stories on their way, as the scenery passed by. He told them about the importance of Passau for the Christianization during the medieval times and long before the time when the east was colonized during the time of Karl the Great (Charlemagne).

Compared to the waters that poured into the Danube from the Isar and Vils in contrast to the inflowing Inn, was only very little as to the masses of water coming from the Inn. The mountains covered by dark forest did get closer again, the water masses rose high and thus the ship traveled at high speeds in the raging waters. Passed Engelhartzell was the customs office and the ship had to stop. The Austrian customs officials examined the belongings of the emigrants only briefly, they took the required fees and did not ask for papers while the teacher during this time occupied himself apparently intensely with fishing. Many of the colonists wanted to show the customs official their treasures, however because colonist's property was not required to be declared, the officials were not particularly interested in it and thus the ship went on promptly and one hour later they arrived in Wesenufer a short distance from the customs office.

The ship's crew prepared a fat roast for themselves, for the next day they had to confront Schlögener loop and this would require a lot of strength. It would require rowing very hard to master the strong current and to avoid the ship being carried on shore. Near Aschach the sand banks changed locations every day and one never knew where they were located. It required all the attention of the ship master so that they could pass safely and would get through in one piece. With the courageous assistance of the auxiliary rowers they did master the dangers bravely and by evening they reached Linz where they would anchor for the night.

Now the colonists were on their way already for 6 days without leaving the ship, here they had the opportunity to go on land and once again get the feeling of steady ground underneath their feet. Some of them went immediately to the cathedral to pray to the "Mother of God", for the accident-free journey and for their protection for an accident free continuance.

The teacher invited the crew from the ship for dinner at the local inn to show gratitude for the offer of help during the trip. The teacher also spent the night with the ship's crew in the inn of the; "Bayrischer Hof". It was important to get well rested and gain new strength to be able to master the journey through the dangerous rapids near Grein before they would reach Vienna in the next three days.

The passengers, however, did stay the night aboard of the ship. The journey continued but only to Grein, the town which was reached in the late afternoon. Here ships personnel went on land to walk to see and inspect the rapids firsthand and to study the ships approach of the dreaded rapids and to discussed them with local ship people. One more visit the next morning to the church and then they ventured on to what was probably the most dangerous segment of their trip. It was Sunday again; while the bells to the early service rang, the journey had to go on. The dreaded Greiner rapids and the island Wörth came into view. The water foamed violently as the waves hit the cliffs and only an experienced eye could see where the ship must be steered through to get around the turbulences' and not to crash.

There were three visible channels; the so called forest waters on the left, the wild turbulence waters through the middle and the so called Hößgang to the right. The ship master performed a masterpiece and steered the ship with the help of his ship's crew and their helpers despite the strong current and its dangers to the right side of the Danube through the Hößgang channel. Only a small bump could be felt as the ship made contact on the rear with the cliff. The ship brushed one more rock after that and luckily no damages resulted from it.

The town of Saint Nikola came to view with its cemetery, where many victims the Danube previously had claimed were laid to rest. The church bells rang to summon the faithful to church, however, the ship continued on its journey and the faithful could take part only in spirit. The strength of the rowers was tested once more near Persenbeug and the crew was totally exhausted when the double towers of the “Mercy Church” of Maria Taferl, high up on the mountain came into view. Near Melk they stayed overnight. The water rushed underneath them as the moon rose over the dark mountains. A chilly wind came through the Danube valley and the girls shivered, but admirers quickly and affectionately offered their own jackets to the girls to comfort them. Thus they sat long together and hummed quietly their songs into the night and were very considered as not awaken the people sleeping.

Then it went through the Wachau the most beautiful part of their trip. The waters had calmed down and the view of the vineyards on the hills trenched in the bright sun brought memories of the vineyards back home and tears filled many eyes, but on they had to go. Thus they could still arrive in Tulln that evening, while many of them pondered about their future again and a new home where they could grow vineyards on their own land.

From Tulln they it was only a half day trip to Vienna. By now everyone was curious waiting in anticipation and looking forward to see the sites of the imperial city. However, prior to reaching Vienna the Danube changed its direction into a southeast direction as they passed Korneuburg on the left and then on the right the Auwald of the Danube, the green roof of the dome of the “Augustinian Chorherrenstiftes” von Klosterneuburg became visible, followed by the Kahlenberg heights from where on September the 12th in 1683 Imperial armies stormed down on the Ottoman armies and subsequently freed Vienna from the Turks and forced them far to the south. In memory of this event, the bells from every church tower would ring at noon every day. Thus it became a most memorable experience as they heard the sounds of the bells from the Stephan’s Cathedral.

One of the bells was the; “Bummerin” which can considered as an equivalent to the “Liberty Bell” in Philadelphia, USA. The people from the Rhine had never heard such an immense sound of a bell and the teacher explained to them, this is the famous “Bummerin”. The Bummerin was cast from 180 conquered and smoldered Turkish cannons which at that time were threatening Vienna. They were cast in memory of the victory by the allied forces of the Holy Roman Empire of German Nation restoring the freedom of Vienna and saving Christianity in Europe, especially Hungary in the perusing years later. The sounds of the “Bummerin” which once were Turkish cannons creating havoc and hardship among the citizens of Vienna, now announcing hope and peace to all mankind.

The anchoring platform for the settlers was in Nußdorf, a suburb of Vienna. The ship’s crew quickly and with experience turned the Ship into the direction of the current and prepared for the disembarkation.

The first person going ashore was the “teacher”. Both boxes were carried ashore by the oar-hands. An unfortunate accident happened whether intentionally or not, when the second box was carried to the landing platform, the ship swayed, the box hit hard on the ground and its bottom came off and a part of the contents spilled out on the ground. Several people rushed to his aid including Hanspeter and they recognized that it was not books in the boxes, but glass ware and that the so called teacher was a fraud and managed to get his merchandise into Austria without paying duty. Now it was clear to everyone what some already suspected, this was no teacher but an independent trader with Bohemian glass products. The boxes were secured again with straps and were loaded onto a wagon and the self-proclaimed teacher was never seen again. At least, not on their trip, but all in all, he was a very entertaining travelling companion.

The stopover in Vienna provided for a welcome rest for everyone from the long voyage from Ulm to here and especially the adventures experienced through the many rapids on the Danube. An unexpected huge number of colonists arrived in the imperial city coming from many directions. "My god" the Viennese exclaimed; "from where do all the people come from". Every day emigrants arrived from Ulm, Günzburg and Regensburg among other ports along the Danube. It brought all curious Viennese to the landing platforms on the banks of the Danube, because everybody wanted to see the emigrants from the various parts of the Empire and many of their countrymen residing in Vienna wanted to see and speak to them. They wanted to hear news from the "West" from their native country.

The Viennese did not know, should they pity the emigrants and have compassion with the people who left their native country in such masses, or if they should courageously admire them for being so brave to leave their homes to find a new and better future for their families and future generations. The emigrants for the most part did not seem to look for compassion; on the contrary they looked for encouragements by the Viennese for the settlers did look quite confident with what they were confronted with and looked forward to meet all odds and challenges'. Indeed they would be challenged in the near future which did give many second thoughts as to what they allowed themselves to get into. When one Viennese asked an older Swabian, how he could find the courage and decided at his old age to still take the risks of such a huge step into an uncertain future and emigrate, the Swabian answered; "Oh my, everywhere where our lord resides, there is always a little place for a Schwäble".

Everyone according to a requirement had to come through Vienna first where a registration of the heads of the household of the settlers took place. They also had to give the numbers of their family members to the registrars, as it turned out years later; it was a huge mistake not to register all the family members by name too, as the names of the children would present a huge gap in the genealogy research of their descendants several hundred years later.

Here much preliminary paperwork had to be handled and the administration officials of both court chambers in Vienna; the Court Council of War and the City Council which had to provide for the accommodation had their hands full and had no idea where they should house the flood of emigrants during their transition. All the known hotels such as the "Nürnberger- and the Regensburger Hof" and also the "Donauhof" and the "Blaue Ente" were already overcrowded.

In the rural inns in the suburb outside of Vienna were still some quarters, but they soon would not be enough. If the monasteries and the army barracks would not have opened their doors it would be impossible to house all. It was simply almost impossible to provide lodging for everyone. The guests from the "Passauer Hof" already had departed and it promptly created room for 8 families, among them the Stemmer family. All the other remaining colonists from the ship found accommodation in the Monastery of the "Schottenbrüdern" (Scottish brothers). The ships crew was accommodated in their guild hostel.

Now, all the other passengers went on land and were asked by officials to go to the nearby passport control location. At the emigrants administration which was located in the Wipplingerstrasse was utter chaos and confusion. The German farmers with their families came in troughs to introduce themselves and their family members personally to the committee workers and to exchange the papers they did bring with them from back home, into a settler's passport.

The settlers also wanted to collect the three guilders of expenses money per person, as it was promised to them. There the committee workers wanted to count the family members themselves and not

take the words of the settler's head of household, before they issued the payment. All names and family relations had to be documented in the huge protocol book. Who belonged together, should also remain together. The people who came from the same village or a county should be also preferably settled in the same village.

Like "confession padres" the officials would question the people. With stern questions, the committee searched for the true facts to make sure the settlers would not cheat. The linen weaver who would say he is a farmer to get more money and land, he could be denied the opportunity to become a settler. Only married farmers who were ages 18 or older did receive land, although one could not really call it farmland like back home. All farmers were tax exempt for the period of six years while craftsmen could enjoy a tax exempt period of 10 years, because very few craftsmen actually emigrated and thus the ratio was about 80% to 20% in favor of the farmers. The people without any papers or people that deserted their landlords did not receive traveling expenses nor did they get the assurance to become settlers. They may come along to Hungary, however, officially one would not take them into consideration in Vienna, because this would have been seen more as reward for their unauthorized departure. For many people who do genealogy today, this could be a nightmare because of the lack of an official registration in Vienna, they may never find out from where their ancestors originated and there were plenty of those cases.

Many individual German princes already had protested, in Vienna; "one lures all their subjects away". However, if the misery of even a single emigrants, was too big the court chamber council Stephany, by name, intervened personally. He took a lot upon himself and his remark was; "The emigrants without a passport are the best new settlers. They will not return back home!" And the poorest among them received the travel money personally from his hand. Then the council Stephany turned to a true religious enlightenment; he himself was member of the Michael's brotherhood and as such obliged to protect and spread his Roman-Catholic faith. Who seemed suspicious to him, he would send to the priests in the "Minoritenkirche", where they would get lessons in the Catholicism and would become converted. (As we do know, many people from the regions of Elsass and the Palatinate, may have been Lutherans, Protestants, Reformed or Calvinists)

Hanspeter Stemmer too appeared with his family as the head of household before the official, who did asked him and I quote; "Yes we are Roman Catholic and married. His wife's name is Regina, their daughters' names; Anna Margaretha she is 7 years old and Veronika is 4 years old". The official further asked; "where do you come from" and so on. So far everything was in order, only one mistake crept in; when Hanspeter was asked from where they originated he answered in his Palatinate dialect: "from Trulben (this was the parish)", however the name of the village was Schweix and the official wrote down as he understood it. Later it was documented in a book of Hodschag; "the family originated from Trulbach in Switzerland". (Only after a long search for the actual origin of the Stemmers, it was found to be actually Schweix, as could be ascertained from the registrations in the parochial registers of Trulben, The Palatinate where he was baptized and married).

Then they were assigned to the village; "Hodschag", where almost all the other colonists in the group were sent. Everyone was provided with a settlement document and 3 guilders pro person so that they could purchase what they needed on food for the trip which would take them to Hungary. The family of Hanspeter Stemmer did receive 12 guilders; this was a lot of money. Hanspeter had money from the sales proceeds of his house and the fields along. Thus he was absolutely not a poor man, however, he had to handle his finances economically, because, in the end, they wanted to be successful settlers and build a new existence

and future in this still unknown land. The Conrad Bush, the Niklas Kleine and several other families were settled in Gaidobra.

The weather was pleasant and if the time permitted, the colonists in his group went sightseeing and toured the “Imperial City” of Vienna which they enjoyed with great pleasure. There was a lot to see; first of course the famous Stephan’s Cathedral, the markets, and the military bastions around Vienna and up to the Karl’s Kirche they managed to walk. They approached the castle of the Emperors residence with great respect. They visited many monuments and shops; the tour was quite impressive to them and they would still tell their children and grandchildren for a very long time many years later, of what they had seen in Vienna, the beautiful “Imperial City”. Despite the fact that the people here spoke another dialect, although one had adjusted quickly to the many different dialects, but here, one still had the feeling to be somewhere at home.

From here it would go into Hungarian land and although the Hapsburg Emperors where also the Hungarian Kings, since the death of its King Ludwig II, (King Ludwig II dies while crossing a river near Mohács without leaving a successor to the Hungarian throne. The Habsburg Ferdinand I, Arch Duke of Austria is crowned legitimate King and protector of Hungary after being elected by a Hungarian committee of landlords, while the royal Johann Zapolya is supported by the Turks as King.) However, regardless of being on their own land now, it felt still like a foreign land in many ways in which they were to build their new home. Gruesome stories also surfaced that there were many robbers who continuously plundered the properties of the new settlers. It was difficult for the powers in this new country, who could not quite master the elements and the big mortality which existed. They also had to content with the robber’s getting out of control, as well as, Turkish raids periodically.

One told a story, that several years after Peterwardein (Petrovaradin), an entire Kehlheimer Plätte with all aboard had disappeared without a trace and most likely the Turks sold the people into slavery. For safety reasons it was recommended and advisable not to travel for one ship alone, but with in larger groups of several ship the distance beyond Peterwardein. They were also joined for the coming segment of their trip through Hungary by a so-called Kehlheimer Plätte with emigrants from Hessen, Franken and Bavarians.

However, prior to the departure from Vienna several chores had to be finished in Vienna: The officials were stubborn and not allocate land to persons older than 18 year of age who were not married. However, the young people who would marry prior to departure did get a pass to settle and did get a land allocation and in addition they would receive a personal wedding present by order of the empress; of 6 guilders and at their destination 6 Metzen (222.3 liters) of wheat. Many of the young people knew each other already partly from home; however, many of them did get to know each other on the trip or in Vienna and married quickly, not least because of the imperial wedding present. How else in life could have a farm boy from Bavarian and a girl from the Black Forest, or a blacksmith from the Saarland and a girl from Swabia’s Lake of Constance ever meet?

Whether the pairs would be compatible? This was not certain, but their love could overcome every obstacle and as for their dowry the empress, who encouraged if not ordered such unions, was generously providing them with the necessary land. Thus the special concern of the empress, like child birth outside of marriage, was met in addition her subjects in the arms of the Catholic Church, however, possible escapades of her husband, a woman had to suffer through herself.

On Tuesday September 5th 1758 six couples were married in the church in the “Maria am Gestade”, who were on the Ulmer Schachtel and two came with the Kehlheimer Plätte. The wedding procession went

up the “Marien Steg” a narrow staircase to the church. It was appreciated by the couples that a young priest carried out the wedding ceremonies and knew how to interpret their quick decision of the bridal couples in a sensible way and foretold them that their marriage would last the rest of their life and endure all the hardship they would now face together: “All these uncertainties in your marriage you will face, should strengthen your bonds. Because it is a God’s will that you found yourselves here, firmly hold each other to the death”. The young couples promised each other to do that and the priest ended the ceremony with his blessing in front of the faithful congregated here as witnesses of their bonds.

After the wedding everything moved to the wedding celebration down to the beer garden of the “Passauer Hof”. Other couples mixed in with the wedding party and the entire affair took on picturesque flavor of national costumes from various regions the people originated from, as well as, flavorful dialects from all corners of the south and southwest of the “Holy Roman Empire of German Nation” and thus it became one of the most memorable events during their long trips.

However, then they had to say goodbye to Vienna and with it to the German-speaking countries they came from. It was Friday the holiday of “Maria Geburt” (Holy Mother Mary’s Birth) on September the 8th, 1758. After a confession, they received the Holy Communion and confided their fate to the Holy Mother for protection and gave themselves into God hand for their upcoming 2-week long trip on a different Ulmer Schachtel they were transferred too. A Viennese said mockingly like in an old farm clique: “Zu Maria Geburt fliegen die Schwalben furt” (On Holy Mother Maria birthday the swallows fly away), however he substituted the word Swabian instead of Swallows. Hanspeter replied to him; “yes, but they will not come back again”.

The most dangerous part of their Voyage from Ulm to Vienna with many dangerous rapids was behind them, now the Danube flowed more quietly and gentle in a more level land, although with several branches through the Hainburger Au. Taking advantage of the strength of the Danube, several water mills which were located and anchored in the Danube they past now were in operation. On this day they went as far as Pressburg today’s Bratislava, however at the time it was the capital city of Hungary where the Hungarian Kings were crowned. On the hill, left of the Danube, the castle and the Cathedral of St. Martin could be seen, but what was also seen was the lesser Carpathian Mountains rise up in the background.

In the evening they could still go ashore and take a short stroll through the town. The people in the town spoke, more or less well German. The following day the Danube took them into a southeast direction to Medvedov, where in the evening they anchored on the Danube Island there. Now, they were already in Hungarian country, and although the villages were less dense and located further from each other. It did not seem to be as bad as they were made to believe, but that statement was too early to make, because they still had a long way to go until they would reach their destination. It also appeared that the Kehlheimer Plätte, a flat barge that was following them, was more difficult to maneuver and thus arrived much later at the landing. In the late afternoon on Sunday they had reached the Komárno on the left bank of the Danube with its fortress and the Waag River a tributary from the surrounding mountains. Komárno, only in recent years was named by Maria Theresia a “free royal city” on March 16th 1745. The people here spoke Hungarian, however, they also could understand German well and it was an opportunity for many colonists to supply themselves with food.

The Danube flowed leisurely and broadly to the east from here, before it would turn into wildly stormy water with its rapids again. Now it was the paralyzing slowness that made them nervous and afraid and the next day they arrived in Esztergom. Quite early in the morning several representatives of Hungarian landowners with large estates came aboard to enlist colonists for their masters. The Protestant widower Karl Dietrich from Hesse with his three children was easily persuaded to go with them. Because of his religion, he

could not get a permission in Vienna to settle, however, it was up to him traveling on his own initiative to Hungary and had only a slim chance to settle in the Batschka. He entered the service with a Hungarian landowner from whom he would lease a track of land. Here the Danube apparently did not know in which direction it should flow and after several changes of directions it finally turned to the south into the direction of Buda and Pest.

In the late evening they reached the east side of Pest. Because of the darkness breaking in, they decided to anchor at the first best possible location prior to arriving in the city of Pest. In the evening the lights the old town of Buda on the opposite side was readily recognizable. Between the two towns; on the eastern side of the Danube, Pest sprawled into a distance extending to the country side of Hungary, while in comparison to Buda, where the mountains extend on the western side of the Danube with its St. Gellertberg and the so named „fishermen bastion“, dating back to a fishermen’s fortress, with its predominantly German speaking population. Hungarians called this part of the town Buda (named after the brother of King Attila the Hun). The next day the Danube carried the settler further down south. (in 1872, both towns Buda and Pest were united, to form the city of Budapest).

The journey took them into the Hungarian lowland. The Danube became much wider now and was very difficult to determine where the best and deepest part of the water was for the captain to take. One other reason for some difficulties presenting themselves was the many side arms overgrown with reed and the visibility hence suffered to find the best route through. The unexpectedly appearing sand banks required special attention by the captain. The shore for the most part often disappeared behind an endlessly stretching reed belt; there were no towns or villages, no churches one could see except for a few small fishing huts in a hidden bay. Far from any settlement they had to anchor near an island and the ship, as well as, the Plätte was leaned against a reed belt in the absences of any possibility to find a solid anchoring location. They simply had to find such location in a weak current area. In the morning they had to row the ship with the help of the side oars back in the main current of the stream.

Already in the early morning they passed Dunaujvaros on the right side of the Danube. In the evening they reached the old settlements port Paks. Many earlier German colonists took up resident here (among them one of our forefather Michael Hofscheuer with his family). The people from the ship told them that it is still a tree days voyage to Apatin. They also inquired about the best stopover and anchoring spots for the days they still had to travel. They were warned to pay good attention and look out for robbers, especially in shallow waters. Quite a lot of sips failed to arrive in the Batschka, but who actually did ask about lost displaced people, no one would miss them should they disappear? Those who did not arrive -just simply were not here. The tightness on the ship with so many people, the food they were not used too, in addition they had to take the drinking water from the Danube and consequently illnesses took their toll, and several people became quite ill and even many more now were suffering from homesickness.

In hope for a better life, they have left their native country and their families, however, now doubts slowly crept in and questions arose whether this would not be ending in what they were searching for, and would lead to awful death, like several people had warned them about at home. Several children and a man already had contracted fever a few days ago and no one knew how to help them. The strange land and surroundings also lay heavy on the mind of the colonists. The next evening they reached the old fortress Baj (called Frankenstadt) also lying on the left side of the Danube. The nights were chilly, however. by about midday no one knew how to handle and protect them from the hot burning sun bearing down on them and the

countless mosquitoes surrounding them. After 7 hours they passed the town Mohács lying on the west side of the river.

In the afternoon storm clouds piled up on the horizon from the west. They just made it in time to anchor the ship in a bay as strong wind and strong rain caused by a thunderstorm created havoc among the people. They worried about the people on the Plätte which was still out of sight. The thunderstorm lasted throughout entire night, however, in the morning the Plätte with her freight came safely into view and was greeted by everyone, though the joy was clouded; a man and two children on the Plätte had died of the malaria.

The food run short now or had already gone bad for them as they arrived on Sunday September 17th 1758, and laid anchor in the harbor of Apatin they had finally reached. The people were happy to set foot on their destination port of Apatin, the center of the settlement administration for the Batschka under Baron Anton von Cotemen, a Hungarian nobleman, who's far reaching understanding and fair treatment for all people of all nationalities and religion would earn him the recognition "Father of the Batschka". They were received by the settlement commissioners in Apatin and met with German speaking colonists again, who gave them encouragements and new hope they needed quite urgently, now that they had arrived. The people who died last were buried here, however; to be sure that nobody was buried alive it was customary to trust a knife into their heart. As soon as everything was unloaded from the ship and the Plätte, the Plättenschinder (Ship salvagers) already waited to take the vessels and disassemble them so that they could reuse the valuable wood again as we learned that wood was scarce commodity in this part of the country.

Early in the morning of the next day the party went on foot inland into the direction of the newly created settlement of Hodschag. A flat level, endless wide path lay before them littered with wild briars and groups of acacia bushes. There were no hills in sight and one could not orient himself from the topography of the land. Outside of a village, hidden away between the shrubs a Serbians settlement was nestled consisting of dwellings underground covered with roofs made of reed as cover. Their path only recognizable as a wide strip between bushes, otherwise no roadside chapels like they were used from home and as far as their eyes could see only desolate overgrown land left and right. Sporadically there were wild cherry trees, as well as, crab apple trees, but nobody knew how to craft them here with good branches apparently. Blackthorn and rose hip grew rampant in oaken- and acacia woods in which wild bees and beehives existed.

As the sun rose increasingly higher it became hotter and hotter, the ground had dried up and was dusty. The vegetation was overgrown with thorn bushes and dried out marsh grass. Marshes appeared in holes scattered about with stinky decayed water. One of the settlers said what many were already thinking: "Where can we find drinking water here? The stinky broth in these pools not even the horses will drink. How can one live here and what can one grow here?" Many thought now about the cool forests and the clear brooks in the country they came from. Here however, there was no breeze of fresh wind, the air laid heavy like lead on ones face and the sun burned down relentlessly without mercy.

When the sun stood the highest they stopped for a short rest. However, menacing storm clouds appeared on the horizon again pressing them on to depart and continue, so that they may still reach the village which was recognizable to the south. The lightning and the noisy sounding thunder hastened their steps. All of a sudden strong wind rose and thick clouds of dust took to the air hampering their view and stifled their breath. Closely packed to each other for some protection they followed their guide quickly and they were lucky, because the first raindrops fell when they reached the village. Searching for protection they

aimed for the church before the thunderstorm bore down on them. It was the monastery of the “Mother of God” the consecrated pilgrimage church of Doroslau.

This appeared as a good omen to them, they found protection with the “Mother of God” while a storm raged outdoors with heavy rain a violent winds. To go any further now was out of the question and thus they did stay the night in the monastery. The rain and storm continued throughout the night and the dry ground could not absorb the water, but also could not run off because of the level land and thus the dry ground changed into wide mud puddles. The colonists wondered how they could go on further; Hodschag was still about 12 km, away from here, which could be reached by good weather in 3 to 4 hours, however, under these conditions this became much more difficult and would require a lot more time.

Regina was pregnant with her 4th child; the long and difficult trip on the Danube had already given her problems. For her, as well as, the children to go the distance from here to their final destination Hodschag, was not recommendable. A monk from the monastery, he knew a German settler family where they could stay. There were only few German speaking people in Doroslau and most of them already spoke better Hungarian then German, as most of residence in this village did. This family agreed that the Stemmer family could stay here as guests. The quarters were small and confined, however, clean and the family’s hospitality was heartfelt and generous. The other people who could not go on further, found shelter with families in the village for little money and departed as the weather cleared a few days later.

These people had many questions for the newcomers about their old country from where they had once come from. On Sunday October 1st 1758 Regina bore a son and was christened in the church of Doroslau as Johann Adam. The Stemmer’s meanwhile stayed in their residence in Doroslau and Hanspeter took on the chore of walking every day from Doroslau to Hodschag and back. He wanted nobody to know that with his 49 years of age his best years were already behind himself. In this world one should sit down at his age. Never should they have to return unsuccessful home to their native country, their children should never have to think about returning again to a land they have left.

Creating a new home where they could live peaceful lives, Hanspeter and his wife Regina were determined to provide for them, although it caused many sleepless night for both. They did not confessed to each other about their sleepless nights and that they lay awake and could not go sleep because of worries which plagued them. When no one watched, tears flowed down of Regina cheeks. She did not want to make her husband aware of her worries and the hardship she endured, she needed to be strong for the family. She would show a happy smile and gave him courage and said to herself: “Here we must force our luck against all odd and overcome what we have to face”.

Under the guidance of the imperial surveyors, the village of Hodschag was planed, besides the settlers house lots, it would include a lot for a church, the city hall, a school and a village inn. In addition the assignments of the fields, (a session land = approx. 16 ha) was given to every farmer, at no cost, a community meadow called “Hutweide” was set aside for the villagers’ for the grazing of their cows, horses, sheep and pigs.

Many other things one would receive from the Imperial Court Chamber which was mentioned by the people; everybody should receive on loan 4 horses, a cow and 2 young piglets, in addition to all conceivable agricultural tools and utensil required for the necessary farming and housekeeping. Nothing which was done by human hands was free of charge, but one got it inexpensive and on advance. Some of the houses in the new settlement were already inhabited by earlier arrivals. A water well for the village had already been dug

in the Hungarian style (Schwenkelbrunnen), a well with a balanced counterweighted beam which offered richly good water.

Here met Hanspeter, Jakob Faller from Littenweiler near Freiburg in the Breisgau region, Martin Fuchs from Hagenau in Alsace and Friedrich Artzner from Herrischried near the Swiss border. They were all men he already knew from his military service in Peterwardein. The people were happy about the new arrival of colonists, they were messengers from the old country and some brought news from their family members. They offered every possible assistance to the newcomers as one helped each other mutually as best as one could.

When starting a new settlement in a village it was usual customary to first settle some old settlers from villages founded earlier. These colonists were very competent and proven people who could give the new colonists an example and contribute with their rich experience greatly to a new village, as some sort guarantee of social security and welfare for such a village. In such capacity our forefather's from our Michael Hofscheuer family, from Paks came to Hodschag.

Carefulness was very important especially with the purchase of domestic animals; such as horses, cows, pigs, goats, chickens. These animals were offered by nomadic Serbian cattle breeders offering their animals for sale. These people knew of the financial power of the newcomers and tried to use this for their advantage. Hanspeter purchased a one axel wagon and a horse from a Serbian dealer; it was a good natured brown mare. He also purchased a wooden plow with a wooden plowshare at a bargain. He substituted the plowshare with the iron plowshare he brought from home. With it he began to do his work. He could now drive the way from Doroslau to Hodschag and back with his small single axis wagon and on top of that take his family along if needed.

The Serbian residents which did live in the village before at their own requested supposedly, wanted to relocate in village of Stapar where other Serbian families had settled earlier, this was agreed upon by the officials from the Hungarian government. Thus Hodschag became a purely German settlement which was the desired by the government, to segregate the individual nationalities such as Hungarians, Serbians and Germans was preferable among themselves undisturbed. Thus the different nationalities would not interfere with each other, they could live their lives in their own communities which did guaranty a peaceful coexistence among each other and create an active trade between the nationality groups for the benefit of everyone.

Besides the building of this house, Hanspeter also had to look after the tilling progress of the fields assigned to him and did purchase the necessary tools and several domestic animals. Therefore it was very good that he, besides the money provided by the Imperial Court Chamber, still had some of his own cash to acquire the necessary items and he also could be a little more generous with the purchases.

Part of the assigned land Hanspeter already tilled in the fall with the help of a Serbian day laborer and with the grain provided by the settlement committee, he planted his first seeds on his own land. Another field he was able to till in the spring, on it he planted corn as recommended from other colonists and also with the seeds the settlement commission had provided. The housing and general living conditions corresponded only partly to the promises made by the emissaries and the settlement commission back home. The construction of the houses for settlers was awarded by the Imperial Court Chamber to a construction company; however, the construction company could hardly keep up with the huge work load and was quite overloaded with the housing demands. They often lacked the necessary timber and also the craftsmen were

rare. The work moved only very slowly ahead and the houses for the settlers could only get partly done on time, hence, they themselves had to lend a hand to get things moving and to make the houses inhabitable.

For the frame work of the walls, a network of reed was used and the space was then filled with wet clay from the center of the house which was later filled in when more time was available from a little pond nearby, known as Grundloch. The walls were smeared smooth with the clay much like stucco. The Danube had deposited this clay or muck for thousands of years and now provided an exceptionally good building material for the walls of the houses which would stand in many cases for hundreds of years.

For Hanspeter and his family, in spite of all difficulties connected with the building of their house they were lucky because it would take whole year for the walls of the houses rammed from clay to dry. Hanspeter wanted to build his house, if it was possible himself. It should not be house ramped with clay which would remain damp for years, he wanted to build his house with bricks, Such a house could dry out in about one winter, meanwhile his family could still live in Doroslau. He bought timber and built a big shelter with it, without cutting as much as even one of the so valuable boards. Here he could store hay for his horse and everything which had to be protected from the rain. A sort of a small construction hut in which he could stay overnight and sleep now and then when it rained and could not get to Doroslau. Next to the big clay pit for his house construction he dug a small clay pit, in addition he procured several loads straw. He then added straw into the wet loam; the loam would bind with the straw, god for making bricks necessary and thus would provide a good insulation for the house.

He prepared wooden forms that would be filled with the loam - straw mixture. He took the filled wooden forms to a sunny place and there he carefully emptied the wet formed bricks and laid them out for drying. This was probably more work, but then his house was dry and he could move his family in much earlier. After a couple of days the bricks were already so firm that he could take them in his wagon to his house lot and store them under the roof for final drying by stacking them loosely. His wife and the children also helped with the making of the bricks and he could make quite a lot of bricks with everyone's help. Yes if the bricks he made could have been placed in a kiln it would have been perfect, but a brick kiln was not available as yet at that time.

By spring he Hanspeter was at the point that with the assistance of his friends could begin the building of a house. The colonist had received a loan advance of 200 guilders from the Imperial Court Chamber for building a house. The loan would have to be paid back within 6 years. It was quite advantage if one could save costs during the building of a house on labor and material.

The typical settlers house; consisted of a room, kitchen and a chamber. It had to be build to a certain given plan and specifications with which the gables had to be oriented toward the street: the length was established at 12 meters for every farmhouse 5.7 meters wide and approx. 2.3 meters high above the ground. One knew only of an open fireplace at the time and hence one created an open kitchen under chimney. One also could not forget to install provision in the chimney for smoking meats, like ham and bacon. The kitchen doubled at the same time as the entrance of the house. Also the floor was made from loam and under the roof was an attic. The roof framework was covered with reed which was in its natural stage waterproof.

The beams were made from oak trees which were crooked and hewn only roughly, however, they would outlast many generations. Hanspeter got the necessary craftsmen according to his needs from the construction company. The carpenters sat together with the farmers with great pleasure, because they were proud and well respected. Carpenter Fritz Artzner from Herrischried who had settled in Hodschag was a

great help. He did not get a large house lot and fields were allotted to him. Smaller houses were allotted to the craftsmen; however, they would have 10 free tax years.

After more and more immigrants came in numbers the population grew quickly, a small house of worship was built in 1759 and consecrated to St. Michael. The first priest assigned to the village parish was Josef Prucker from Güns/Burgenland. "He never thought that he would once work at the end of the Christian world. But the villagers called him and since he was a priest he was gladly accepting the parish of this Village. However a real church was his stipulation; without church no priest he did let them know. There the people went on to work on a church, but now it seemed to him that he had to order his Welschriesling from Austria earlier as anticipated and the grapes had ripened, this however was less important as he could celebrate his first Holy Mass in the new church ahead of schedule.

Hanspeter purchased a dozen different fruit-trees from the committee that had to be planted. From a neighbor he received two grape vine plants, which he located on the south wall of his new house. He cleaned his fields once again from the overgrown weeds prior to planting the seeds during October for the following year into the ground. He observed the falling of foliage from the trees and since it fell early one might expect a fertile year. In October on St. Gallus Day it should not be raining nor should it be snowing in November on St. Andreas's day. His wish was fulfilled because it did not rain or snow on these days. Then in fall of 1759 he was so far along with his house that he could move his family from Doroslau to Hodschag into the new house. The house was not quite comfortably inside yet and a lot of work was still to be done, however, this frightened nobody, as long as, they could see a recognizable and successful progress.

His wife began her work on the spinning wheel spinning sheep's wool into threads and knitted warm jackets for Hanspeter and the children and a cape for herself. The winter came and the howl of the icy easterly wind the howl of the always hungry wolves mixed while they were circling about the area searching constantly for food, so that there was always the danger that they would prey on the fowl. Because, since craftsmen were very rare and in demand it was practical to do whatever one could yourself and there were many chores that had to be completed inside of the house. If you were skillful enough you could save plenty; first he made a fodder crib for the stable and a hanging lattice for hay for horses and cows that they would be able to feed themselves from there and not off the ground. Next he made a table, 2 benches, and shoes and his wife's assisted him with these items.

He used reed grass to make three beehives and in May he stocked with several swarms of bees. The fields were often turned up by wild boars and Hanspeter with some of his neighbors took his new hunting rifle and they began to hunt them with great passion and the wild boar meat added to their daily diet during the winter months. They always celebrated after a successful wild boar hunt and there was now plenty of meat to go around. Since only three men had rifles to hunt and the front loading rifles took a lot of time, they usually were satisfied with three boars.

Some of the new settlers had passed away during the winter, as a result of the general inhospitable living conditions and were buried in a cemetery prepared for the settlers outside of the village. As soon as the sun melted the snow and the ground frost thawed, Hanspeter was on his fields again. The Grumbiera (potatoes) had already sprouted in their storage and were divided in halves before planting. The ones that sprouted were placed into the ground and the other half ended up in the frying pan and eaten. Hanspeter spaded a garden around the house for convenience for his wife and for what she wanted to plant like she did in her native home back in the Palatinate. Many of the women did exchange all kind of tips especially from

those women who had been here longer and thus had gained experience with the weather and climate. The seed they purchased from Serbian women or were passed on to them by wives of earlier settlers. Many of the vegetables they did not grow back home, such as corn, tomatoes, pumpkins, melons and peppers.

During the first year everything went well, they harvested grain from their own fields and vegetables from their garden. By the end of the summer they could already eat from their own potatoes and his wife made the very popular “grumbiera with noodles”. This meal was often referred to as the poor men’s dinner and yet it was a quite satisfying meal especially during the winter months when meat was scarce. How delightfully every piece of bread tasted from one’s own fields! Eating from the apple from their own tree, making their own wine was very satisfying in particular since nothing had to be given away from the crop to the royal rulers. The chickens and some goats developed admirably but for the horse and cow, it was still difficult to provide enough feed. They also purchased a female pig and raised it carefully carefully for breeding.

All the animals had free outlet and the people had to pay attention by themselves to know in fact which animal belonged to them. By the way, the big meadows (Hutweide) was “spared” for a hay harvest and one used the waysides as pasture for the cows or allowed them to graze on a small remote meadow. It was the task of the children to look after the animals, besides; they got to know the dangers around them, as well as, they learned to distinguish the good fruits of the land. From the gypsies living in the area, they became acquainted with some of the natural plants used as remedies and their application which was very valuable for them.

All types of berries growing in the region were collected, but also plants which were foreign to them like the midget elderberry, Attich and black berries. The Attich was collected in autumn, filled in a brawn and squeezed. The juice was slowly heated up in a kettle under constant stirring. The forming foam on top had to be spooned off constantly so the contents would not acquire a bitter taste. The boiling continued until no foam would form any longer. The boiling usually took half a day. The Attich was filled in earthen pots and placed into the Backofen covered with linen and then stored for the winter. The marmalade made from Attich is very sweet and used as a sugar addition as spreads on bread and it did become a welcome remedy for colds, although one had to be careful since it did stain everything one touched, like fingers, teeth would get black. (After consulting with the author and several members of the DVHH group I learned that Attich is a smaller variety of Holler-Hollunder which is Elderberry)

The bees found plenty of nectar from many thorny bushes and therefore honey was quite plenty. After several years of famine and hardship a silver lining seemed to show on the horizon and one could look toward a good and prosperous future. Settlers from Ortenau brought hemp seeds with them and planted hemp and to their surprise it grew better and taller as back home.

The hemp became a success story in itself as it was found, products made from this hemp, not only in Hodschag but several other locations in the Batschka, like Batschsentiwan in today’s Prigrevica, was better in tensile strength, water resistant than any other in the world. Thus farmers from the Batschka would now plant 25% of their land with hemp which was used for linen, ship ropes or shipping sacks, among other of the many known uses. But also the wine growing the found was becoming more profitable and every house stored several barrels of wine, enough to last through the winter months into the spring and summer.

On Sept 29th 1760 Christine Stemmer was born. In 1762 a school was opened and its first teacher was Josef Plondo. In 1764 the new church was finished and consecrated to Archangel St. Michael. The architect was the master builder who designed the church. Not high enough one exclaimed; “we have to see

our church steeple from far distances”. The whole village was on edge and when they celebrated their first Kirchweih.

Here, their beloved Kirchweih festivals like back home could be celebrated and they finally had set Christian and worldly roots on this foreign soil. To see their children marching up to the church brought pleasures for young and old. The young priest claimed up the stair to the pulpit and spoke with uplifting voice: “Beloved in Christ, you have been blessed, now you no longer stand alone away from home, now God has his house in your midst and the strange land has become your homeland now”. With this trend of thoughts he brought encouragement to people from the various parts of the Empire of German Nation. Now the 6 tax free years also had ended in 1766 for the first settlers and they could now elect and form their own local government.

During the following years many older people had died but also children died of swamp fever and other illnesses, however, with toughness and untiring diligence the colonists transformed the marshy and overgrown land into fertile arable land which would sustain generations after generations. Since 1763 more and more newcomers came with the so called “Second Great Swabian Migration”, among them also the brother of Regina, Hansjörg Wetzstein with his family to the Batschka. However, he would settle in Tschatalia located further to the north.

On October, 25th 1765 my forefather Johann Peter was born. He was married in the church Hodschag on February, 1st 1785 to Magdalena Waldor or Walter (the manner of writing is not consistent). As their first child of this marriage my forefather Josef was born on the October, 19th 1785. On the December 27th, 1788 Hanspeter Stemmer, the first settler of our family passed away at the age of 79. When he arrived here he was not the youngest man anymore and yet he would live here in Hodschag for 33 year knowing he had actually succeeded in creating a new home for his family, children and the generations that would follow. From Regina I was not able to exactly find out when she passed away, assuming, however that it was after the death of Hanspeter.

As the population of Hodschag increased, so did increase the demand for land and the demand grew beyond its village limit. However, there were plenty of offers in the new established municipality of Parabutsch. Thus it was only natural that several of the Stemmer children resettle in Parabutsch. Josef Stemmer, who had married Anna Hofscheuer in 1804, established a new home there after the birth of their 3rd child Michael.

The constant flooding in Parabutsch and high waters became a real issue. The waters were placed under control by the construction of several drainage canals. Despite of disasters created by the weather and unyielding will power paid off, the fields became fertile and gave good yields and thus the children and the grandchildren with economic backing from their parents could also make good existence and life.

During the spring came an awful guest, one knew but rather hushed up. They said; “Just do not paint the devil to the wall”. However, suddenly the devil was here; the cholera. The epidemic was disastrous created it havoc and held rich harvest among the people. The epidemic lasted 6 months until it was contained again. Thousands of colonists paid with their lives rebuilding this land. In the empire this land of the Batschka would now be called: “the graveyard of the colonists”.

During the summer one hardly planted or harvested. The immigrant's stream had ended, only death held its postharvest among the malnourished people. However, the following year it would get better again. The survivors worked on their fields again and where it was necessary, the fields of their neighbors who had died did the work for their surviving children and other family members. The little bell used for announcing a death in the village, did not ring as often anymore and one began to celebrate the Christian holidays and Kirchweih again on St. Michael Day.

Everywhere new courage awakened and everyone wanted to remain here where they were. They plowed furrows in the fields again and transformed the land with toughness and untiring diligence to convert marshes and overgrown land into the; "breadbasket of the monarchy", and into a blossoming garden, fertile and with rich harvests.

Epilog

Many years and years have passed now; wars have come and divided the country of the people who became known as Donauschwaben, the youngest "Germanic Volksgroup". The land of the Donauschwaben was divided among three countries Hungary, Romania and Yugoslavia, in which they became a minority and whose inherited rights from the time of their settlements were taken. During the First World War they suffered many setbacks from which they discovered with admirable resilience despite all the odds they were confronted with.

Many of their schools were closed and many of the younger generation who searched for a higher education were forced to go to Germany and Austria to study. Unfortunately, once here they would be exposed to the National Socialistic Movement of the time. Upon their return they wanted to right many of the wrongs they experienced in their divided country. However, powerless to the political environment around them they experienced many wrong doings by their new governments at the end of the Second World War. Especially during the post war years when most of them were expelled from their land and homes, the generations before had wrestled from the swamp they had settled.

Thousands of their people in their prime were deported by their new countries to the Ukraine, in Russia. In Romania they were exiled to the Baragan Step in the Danube delta, in Hungary they were relocated on lesser land and finally expelled to Germany. However, in Yugoslavia approximately 240,000 civilians were exposed to the Tito Partisans after the conclusion of the war. Most of them were placed into slave labor and death camps were more than 60,000 of them lost their lives. Reference; "Genocide" ISBN 3-926726-47-9.

Today, we find most of the descendants of the Donauschwaben living in Germany and Austria in their ancestral land from where their ancestors left because of the reasons cited in the above article. But many of them also live in other countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, Brazil and Argentina, France among other countries. Today, only 1% of the once total population of Donauschwaben is living in Yugoslavia (now Croatia and Serbia), according to a census taken prior to the turn of the Century.

The Donauschwaben, known as the youngest Germanic Nation, are prosperous again in the countries they live now, because of their inherited characters, acquired by their ancestors through determination and hard labor and then were passed on by them over many centuries and generations which are instilled in them even today. However, one cannot stop the assimilation of their children in the countries they have settled after the Second World War, but we hope and pray that their "Leidensweg" - "path of pain" from their

ancestral home once in Germany to the post war years of the Second World War, will remain in history forever.

Hans Kopp