

DR. ANTON LEHMANN

RUDOLFSGNAD

Chronicle of a German-Banater Boundary Community

1866
1966

Published on the 100th Anniversary of the founding of Rudolfsgnad

Translated by Wilhelm (Bill) Dornstauder
Additional translation by Frank Dornstauder
Edited by Frank Dornstauder and Glenn Schwartz

This book is written in collaboration with Director-Teacher Franz Kirchner, Franz Schneider, Volker Lehmann, Andreas Hirt, and Maria Lehmann

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Rudolfsgnad –

Symbol of Donauschwaben industry and stamina, -

Symbol of vigorous growth and proud heritage, -

Symbol of Donauschwaben suffering and endurance.

FOREWORD

Bill Dornstauder was born and raised in Vibank, Saskatchewan where he learned the German dialect spoken by his family and learned about his family's homeland by listening to the stories of his parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles. Thus, he was perfectly qualified to translate the German language history of his ancestral village. In 1977, he received permission and produced his handwritten manuscript. It found its way into the Saskatchewan Genealogical Society Library, but was otherwise not widely distributed.

Bill died in 2007. I was reminded of his translation and approached his brother, Frank, about the possibility of putting Bill's translation in an electronic format that would make it more widely available. Frank agreed that this would be a fitting tribute to his brother. This is the result.

Frank edited the original manuscript and added several sentences which were inadvertently omitted in the original translation. He noted a few cases of political incorrectness by today's standards, but they were retained because they are true to the original book and reflect the times in which they occurred.

You might find the structure a little odd. In the original, the epilogue and contents follow the list of householders, followed by the pictures. We wanted to remain true to the organization of the original German book in our print version; however this resulted in some page numbering issues. Pages 1-73 are translated pages. These are followed by photocopies of the original householder lists on the original pages 85-163. The Epilogue, Contents, and the picture title page are on translated pages 74-76. Finally, the pictures follow on unnumbered pages. In the PDF version, the translation, householder list, and pictures are in three separate files.

Glenn Schwartz

INTRODUCTION

Bill wrote the following letter to his brother, Frank, in 1977. In it he describes his feelings about discovering his family history through translating Dr. Lehmann's book. It serves as an appropriate introduction to the book itself.

Redcliff, Alberta
July, 1977

Dear Frank:

I have finally managed to complete a draft of the translations I have made of Dr. Anton Lehmann's book on Rudolfsnad. Since there was no access to the necessary tools for translation, such as dictionaries, etc., I was forced to rely mainly on my own knowledge of the German language and context of the story itself to try to bring out the meaning and intent of the author. I am rather hazy about many of the references he makes regarding governments and have attempted to generalize them in a way that will not disrupt the meaning of what he is trying to tell us.

In some sections the meanings were somewhat obscure for me to translate accurately. This was due mainly to the long, rambling sentences and the inverted phraseology often found in them. My mind simply refused to grapple with the involved verbiage that sometimes emanates from the pen of a Doctor of Philosophy, which author Lehmann is.

In the translation my intent was merely to capture Dr. Lehmann's story as nearly as possible in his own language and perhaps a little of his style. I am very much impressed with the mood and setting of the story as told by him in the original. I am not sure that this has been faithfully portrayed in the translation and I am interested in hearing from you sometime when we get together how the story affected you and perhaps others who might read it.

With my own background, having been much closer in age to the generation of our Grandparents Dornstauder and having some rather vivid memories of them and the things they believed in and the things that they did, the story had a very gripping effect on me, almost as if without this story I had some knowledge of what had gone before. This is, of course, only an impression that I have. The knowledge that I did have before this comes from very real and solid sources such as the grandparents, our parents and relatives. It is made of bits and pieces picked up during the course of my association with them. This story welds them into a complete whole and this is very gratifying.

The chapter on the "Christkindlspiel" evokes memories of several Christmas Eves spent at the Dornstauder grandparents' house in my early childhood. Many of the elements portrayed in this chapter actually were a part of the program that our grandparents prepared for us kids on Christmas Eve. It was customary for us to present ourselves at their house several hours before midnight mass for the annual pageant. This died out when Grandfather passed away and Grandmother went to live with Aunt Annie Fink.

Some elements of the pageant were carried forward at Kleckners for some years but gradually the Canadian way took over and the old way completely disappeared.

There are many other customs that were carried on in the Vibank community that are portrayed in the book. These have to do with church ceremonies and other celebrations and were common to most German Catholics of central Europe who settled in the Vibank area. Their rituals varied but all had the same common purpose.

I have found, in reading the story, that Dr. Lehmann was far from being objective regarding the history of the Rudolfsgnaders. He is constantly being swayed by their heroism, their suffering, their achievements and especially their intense desire to be, above all else, German. (Shades of the Quebecer and his preoccupation with his “culture”.) He does not have much sympathy with other peoples who had identical preoccupations and who were considered by him to be enemies.

However, in spite of the foregoing considerations, he has managed to give us a rather complete story of the Rudolfsgnaders and their Swabian forbears. In this he had succeeded rather well.

There was one facet of the lives of these people that comes to us only by inference, or in bits and pieces. We have very little direct knowledge as to the kind of persons these people were. We do not get a very good look into their houses, their relationships with each other, etc. Perhaps it would have taken another volume to write this side of the story. All we know about them is incidental to other things. Perhaps the novel by Adam Müller-Gutenbrunn “The Lost Sons”, referred to in the beginning of the book, would give us the necessary insights as to their character.

Perhaps the greatest disappointment in this book is that we get so little information that has to do with the Dornstauder family, as such. The list of the residents in October, 1944, contained in the book, contains no name in the Dornstauder surname. There are probably relatives included in the list. I remember Dad often referring to Koller, Keller, Hoffmann, Schneider, etc. These names are all included. The only identifiable name is that of Dominic Keller, his wife and daughter. This man apparently died during the time of the death camp at Rudolfsgnad. All other relatives seem to have died or were dispersed or emigrated. There are many names that we have heard about but which ones in the list that are related, we do not know.

It would appear from this chronicle that Grandfather Dornstauder moved out of Rudolfsgnad in 1895 or 96 probably after the third flood. He seems to have moved from there to Szyzhydorf [Zichydorf – ed.] and remained there to the end of 1897 when he and the family emigrated to Canada. It appears that dad was born in Rudolfsgnad, now Knicanin in Yugoslavia.

This copy of the translation is somewhat improved over the original which I am keeping. This copy is your to keep but I would be pleased if you would allow other family

members to read it if they are interested. I think that perhaps Al and Gordie would be more interested than some of the others. I would especially like them to have a look at it.

I believe that I detected a lively interest in Nora Ann and I would especially like her to read it, and perhaps someday get her reaction to it.

All in all, this has been an experience that was extremely interesting and rewarding. It has given me a lift that is difficult to describe. It is as though a large brightly lit tunnel has opened into the past. And it has given me a sense of history, my own history, an enlargement of my own existence and being.

This is very satisfying and I hope that it will give you and all those who read it a similar sense and feeling of our origins.

Bill

"Rudolfsnad, Rudolfsnad, -
Days of the Imprisonment!"

These words were written by Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn in 1907 in his diary after having made a side trip to Rudolfsnad, while on a journey by steamer on the Danube from Budapest to Peterwardien, which at that time as a consequence of the sabotage of a pumping station had just emerged from the effects of the resultant flood.

The battle of this village community against natural forces and against Magyarization and the loss of political rights consequently became the main content of his new novel – "The Bells of the Homeland."

He named the surrounding parish "Karlsdorf", after his beloved national hero, Archduke Karl, the victor over Napoleon at Aspern.

The daily life, speech, habits and customs in the novel are derived from the native village of the author, - out of Guttenbrunn in the present day Romanian Banat.

The original theme of the novel "The Lost Sons" appears only incidentally in the novel. It is these, the Swabian children who became alienated from their people by the Magyarized schools, and those Swabian students who studied at German universities and then did not return to their Banat homeland.

EARLY HISTORY

Emperor Karl VI, the father of Maria Theresia, negotiated the Peace Treaty of Passarowitz with the Turks in 1718, after the Emperor's armies under Prince Eugen had defeated the Turkish invaders and had driven them back over the Danube.

After 166 years of Turkish domination the Banat, in consequence of the interminable war, lay depopulated and ruined. Many communities had completely disappeared, others lay shattered and in ruins, surrounded by swamps and morasses.

But since it was desirable that the land should be settled and cultivated, a call was sent to German artisans and farmers in the Reich to come as colonists to Hungary.

Thousands accepted the invitation, moved to and settled along the Danube in order to escape the congestions and privations at home and to become independent farmers on their own land.

Swabians, Lorrainers, Hessians and Pfalzer, Badenens and Austrians came.

“The first ones reaped death
The second, deprivation, and
Only the third generation were able to provide their daily bread.”

This was the experience of the first colonists in the Banat. Swamp fever, incursions of Turkish hordes, plague and cholera took their toll in enormous human sacrifice and suffering. Whole populations were wiped out, families and family groups disappeared. It was a calamitous visitation. The survivors, however, were healthy and prolific people.

The descendants of the colonists became heavily involved in the building of new settlements and almost half of the Swabian settlements in the Banat were not built by the original colonists from the Reich but came into being by way of new settlements, called “daughter” settlements, created by second and third generations of incumbent German farmers in the Banat.

In educated circles in Berlin before the war, the Banat Germans were considered the outstanding example of a healthy force for life and progress which was to be found among German peasant farmers.

At the time when the colonization of the Banat was officially brought to an end in 1804, approximately 70,000 Germans lived there. By the year 1900 those had increased to almost 500,000. In scarcely a hundred years they had increased sevenfold.

The German colonists were not always settled on land that could be held in complete ownership. Many large estates were in the possession of landowners who settled immigrants on a part of their holdings, on the basis of lease agreements, mostly for a period of 30 years. These were the “Contractual Settlements”. The living and progress

in these settlements was for many decades no more difficult than for those who received their land from the state. They enjoyed the same prosperity and almost the same rights.

First with the abolition of Urbarialism by the Hungarian parliament in the year 1848, the situation changed to the detriment of the “Contractual Settlements”. While the Urbarialists (those on state lands) became masters and owners of their land and buildings, (in the process of the overall freeing of peasants and the abolitions of serfdom), the conditions of the “Contractual farmers” in the privately owned estates became more and more insecure.

The owners of the estates feared that a similar law would one day be passed making their “Contractual farmers” owners of the land which they occupied – some of it worked and leased for generations.

After the expiration of the leases, most of which were for 30 years, they resorted to tactics such as postponements until new surveys were made, offered only short term renewal leases with reduced acreage and with more stringent and unprofitable terms.

The dissatisfaction and contention with the owners lasted for decades. Several contractual settlements lodged lawsuits against their landowners. Foremost among them was the German settlement of Etschka.

The upright colonists were no match for their powerful opponents who had influential “friends” in the courts and the government departments, and who also were not reluctant to falsify or pervert the colonists’ original claims.

In the course of four decades of litigation the cause of the German farmers was defeated. It is true that during the litigation they once won a case. In the end, however, they lost everything, not only their case, but also all their assets, their houses and vineyards, which they had bought for cash from the evacuating Slovaks in 1801 and 1802 – and were required to pay in cash “the unjust debt”. This “unjust debt” consisted of a retroactive levy on leases of land of which they had been deprived by the swindle and repression of the landowners.

The end result was a termination, that is, material dispossession and expulsion from house and home – almost as at the end of the Second World War – only not with the bloody circumstances which our people had to endure in 1944-45.

The colonists at that time were allowed to retain their lives, their healthy ability to work, their farm tools and implements, feed and seed, and their starving livestock. All that was left was to begin anew somewhere else and from the beginning.

The settlement of German Etschka was by 1856 in fact already deprived of land. Since that time most of the inhabitants eked out a living as “half-share farmers” and had to be grateful if such an arrangement was offered to them by their landlords. Their hopes lay, however, in the prospect of moving out of Etschka.

Through hunting parties in the Theisz lowlands it was known to many that the flood plains of the Theisz to its mouth at the Danube consisted of good grazing land, that with the building of dykes, could be converted to valuable crop land.

The attention of the persecuted now became focused on the Perlasser pasture land across from Titel on the Theisz and across from Slankamen on the Danube.

The prospective land chosen for settlement belonged to the state at that time, that is, to the emperor, and which was administered by the War Department in Vienna. As a part of the Austro-Hungarian military boundary it was leased for a low rental by the company commander in Perlesz to Serbian cattle raisers.

The neighbouring Serbian settlements of Perlesz and Tschenta, then Farkasdin, Orlovat, Idvor, Baranda, Sefkerin and Opovo had the option in 1859 to take over ownership of those grazing lands used by them by a payment of only 20 Gulden per Joch – and in contrast to the German settlement of Jabuka – had not taken up the offer. The German-Banat Boundary Regiment alone administered over 111,345 Katastraljoch of grazing land.

The desperate inhabitants of Etschka now began to look for an allotment of a small portion of this enormous flatland – in the corner of the confluence of the Bega, Theisz and Danube rivers.

After many appearances before the Emperor in Vienna in which the ordinary peasants from the Banat displayed astounding perseverance in overcoming difficulties in their audiences before the Emperor, their petition, after an original denial, was eventually agreed to for settlement on the flood plains.

The first petition to the Emperor that had been signed by 200 Deutsch-Etschkans was dated January 28, 1864. The denial followed on December 10th of the same year.

The second petition to the Emperor, that in addition had the signatures of 85 settlers from Sigmundsfeld and 50 others from an additional 17 German settlements of the Banat, bore the date of April 1, 1865. On the same date various letters of request were directed to all government ministries in Vienna. The eventual approval for the settlement of Rudolfsgnad, and the permission to name the settlement “Rudolfsgnad” after Crown Prince Rudolf was given in December 8, 1865.

The decision of the Emperor concerning this matter reads as follows:

“I approve the settlement of the settlers of German Etschka and Sigmundfeld on the Perlesz grazing land under the jurisdiction of the German Banat Boundary Regiment under the terms listed in this order, and grant that the boundary settlement hereby created adopt the name Rudolfsgnad.”
Schönbrunn, December 8, 1865.

Franz Joseph M.P.

The most important conditions that had to be fulfilled by the German settlers were:

1. The release from the Hungarian state order, whereby the “unjust debt” was to be paid in cash to the Etschka owners. One of the reasons for the release is the fact that the Hungarian authorities had offered no support to the German farmers of Etschka in the time of persecutions by the Hungarian landowners. [Author’s note: The payment of the “unjust debt” before release from the Hungarian State authority can be seen as a precedent for the later “payment for release” demanded by the Yugoslav labour camp Tito – KL Rudolfsgnad, when they wished to emigrate after the closing of the camps in 1948. With the AVNOJ Law of November 21, 1944, the Yugoslav partisan rulers deprived all the Germans of the nation of their Yugoslav citizenship and complete property holdings, and declared them to be without rights and free to leave – in order to claim 12,000 Dinar per head, for release from Yugoslav citizenship from the survivors of a once great ethnic group to emigrate to Germany or Austria.]
2. The obligation to build in three years and with their own power and resources the required dams and dykes. This great undertaking required an enormous variety of skills and power which led to the inclusion of some 85 families from the neighbouring community of Sigmundsfeld in the second application for resettlement that was submitted to the Emperor.
3. The payment of 20 Gulden per Katastraljoch as a transfer fee for the land turned over to them from the grazing lands.
4. The building of a school, church and parish house.

After the site was surveyed and the lots were numbered, the individual units for settlement were distributed by lot on March 13, 1866.

At the same time a start was made to clear the overgrown, weed infested grazing land, to plough the virgin soil, and to seed the first seed.

What emotion our grandfathers must have felt when they drew the first furrows on land that had, since the beginning of the world, not experienced the turning of sod by a plough!

That they had received their land from the hand of God – a jubilant feeling which for them was reward enough for having endured the suffering they had experienced, for all the difficulties that jealous and evil men had inflicted upon them throughout the decades.

On Easter Sunday on April 1, 1866 they were bid farewell in the church at Deutsch Etschka by their friend of many years and loyal supporters of the persecuted farmers, Ferdinand Löschardt, Chaplain, and Director of the high school and public school of Grosz-Kikinda.

THE SETTLEMENT

On Easter Monday April 2, 1866 the actual founding ceremony of the community took place at the new site.

In the future center of the village, on the place reserved for building the church a large wooden cross was raised. In the excavation which was prepared to receive the cross, a capsule containing a founding message was buried. In front of this a field altar was erected on which Pastor Löschardt celebrated the first mass in Rudolfsgnad.

The founding message encapsulated in a sealed glass tube bore the following words:

“Franz Joseph I Emperor in Austria was
and Bonasz Bishop in Temesvar,
Phillipovich of Phillipsberg
provided for the defence preparations.
He of Striningen rules this land
and Bigga is the commander
to ensure loyalty to the flag.
There moved, plagued by great need,
here, out of Etschka all the Germans
also Sigmundsfelder in addition
and founded on Kirchner’s word
here on the Theisz a new community.
so Rudolfsgnad was named,
because Crown Prince Rudolf sponsored it.
And as the Master went to Emmaus,
to build this village was begun.
At first was planted the cross
from which the world received its healing.
Before the cross in open field
The Priest Löschardt celebrated Mass,
at the same time were heard trumpet call
and jubilation from happy hearts.
According to Master Kraft’s surveyor’s plan
the building round about began
where German men’s honest industry
with great effort and much perspiration
the Theisz and Danube waves
were forced away from these lands
and denied to the flood waters.
All happened after Christ’s birth
after a thousand years already the world
had counted eight hundred and sixty-six.”

On the afternoon of the founding day a celebration of the people took place, at which participated many friends of the settlers and representatives of the authorities and at which the music was provided by the military band of the Tschajkisten Battalion of Titel.

After the Easter holidays temporary living quarters were built and the resettlement to Rudolfsgnad was completed. For the spring seeding each family received four Joch to begin with.

At harvest time most Rudolfsgnaders hired out in many other communities of the Banat and Sylvania as cutters at harvest, in order to ensure a living for the coming year, because on the partially prepared new land in the fields of Rudolfsgnad it was barely possible to raise enough to feed only the livestock.

Besides the exceptionally hard battle to satisfy the needs of body and soul, it was significant that in the founding year of 1866 a school house of two rooms and a simple pastor's residence was built. The school served in the first years as a house of prayer and a temporary church. Already on November 1, 1866 school could be held and regular religious services.

The first village judge and mayor was Heinrich Kirchner, the courageous and fearless petitioner to the Emperor. Included in his duties was also that of getting the dykes built.

As a community in the Military Boundary District, Rudolfsgnad had, besides the local authorities, a senior lieutenant as area commander. This double tiered authority came to an end when the Military Boundary District was dissolved in 1872.

The new village had a length of 2,199.36 meters and a width of 796.32 meters. The three longer main streets were named: "Church Street", "Middle Street" and "Back Street"; then there was the old "Enschicht Road" along the dyke on the Theisz and the "New Row" on the east part. Added to these were six "cross streets" or avenues.

THE FIRST TWO FLOODS - THE BATTLE FOR SURVIVAL

According to the plan to which the settlers had obligated themselves the dykes were to be built in three years.

In spite of unforeseen difficulties satisfactory progress was made in the first year of settlement. Yet, in the first winter in Rudolfsgnad they experienced high water somewhat earlier than usual and thereupon began a month-long battle between the village community and the onrushing waves of the Theisz and the Danube – and also against the incursions of hostile persons.

The planned three year works for the erection of the dykes along the Bega in the north, the Theisz to the west and the Danube and the Karasch in the south were barely half finished when on January 21, 1867 the first report of high water on the upper Theisz arrived.

Thereupon the work on the main dyke was halted and the forces were put to work to throw up a coffer dam around the village. The dam was erected in two weeks.

In the middle of the work on the coffer dam the news came on January 29th that the Karasch dam at Tschenta had been breached by sabotage and that the water was streaming in.

What else was there to do but rout the people out of their beds and after a journey of two hours in rain and darkness to try to stem the danger? Actually the combined efforts of the whole village succeeded after a four day battle to close the breach.

Yet the loss of time and effort were not the only results of this encounter. The weight of uncertainty following this hostile attempt to destroy lay heavier on the people, especially since such attempts were later repeated.

In the same fashion on the morning of March 30th the Karasch dyke was found to be breached in three places. Since the work party was at the same time on the way to this dyke to strengthen it, it was possible once again to avert a great catastrophe. The men heard the roar of the invading waters from a distance and began to run. It was only to this circumstance which one can thank for the success of their superhuman efforts. Since that day the dyke had been guarded by the military with fixed bayonets.

After having believed the danger to be over after fearful weeks of continued flood threats, the “floodgates of heaven” opened in the middle of March, 1867 and for four weeks “the rains came down in an almost unbroken stream” as stated in the old monograph.

With the application of all resources, day and night was spent in strengthening and raising the dykes, with the hope of saving the seeded stands of crop in the fields from destruction.

After, in spite of all efforts, the dyke did not withstand the raging flood which breached the weakest part of the dyke at the confluence of the Theisz and the Danube – and after a second and third parallel dyke had been erected on the higher ground behind it, which held for only eight days, - the struggle for the fields was given up and all effort was restricted to the defence of the village itself, which consisted of the raising of the coffer dam that surrounded the village area.

The request of the Commandant of the German-Banater Boundary Regiment to the neighbouring Serbian communities remained without response – even though the dykes would also protect their grazing lands from the flood in the future.

Not one community responded to the request. Finally three individuals from Botosch, Ivdor [Idvor – ed.] and Perlesz sent workers and wagons.

However, out of the Banat German communities of Setschan, Stefansfeld, Modosch, Rogendorf, Molidorf, Tschesterlek, Lazarfeld, Ernsthäusen, Neuzin, Fodorhausen and Heideschütz came altogether 325 wagons and 1225 workers.

In spite of this, catastrophe ensued. At sunset on April 29, 1867 a strong east wind caused a wide breach in the coffer dam through which the waters of the flood fields raged into the village of Rudolfsgnad.

The monograph of the 25th jubilee of the community tells about the progression of events which are reminiscent of a brave man described in the songs of the people.

On Holy Thursday in 1867 when all the forces active on the breach in the Danube-Theisz corner were already forced to work on a third parallel dyke, a young man was sent as messenger to the breached main dyke. After he had fulfilled his mission and started to return, he found that the dyke behind him had also been broken and found himself trapped on an island of doubtful safety. His endangered position was noticed, but since there was no boat available, an expert rider swung on to his horse, took a second horse by the reins and succeeded in swimming to the endangered comrade. The endangered man mounted the second horse and both succeeded “in saving themselves after several times being drawn deep into the flood.”

Another event was no less dramatic. It was reported as follows:

“in the night of Easter Sunday to Tuesday the Theisz broke out in one location where the dyke carried over a depression. Almost immediately several houses were surrounded by water. The breach could be contained in a hurry literally only by the bodies of men. Actually two rows of men stationed themselves breast deep in the cold water and pressing body against body and building a living wall, held up the flood long enough until a hurriedly piled up earthwork was able to withstand the pressure”.

It was easier to suffer the damage to the temporary houses than was the loss of a rich harvest of some 5,000 Joch of wonderful winter and summer crops, which had a value of 250,000 Gulden.

The most bitter disappointment for the hard-pressed settlers was that instead of bringing in their own record harvest, they were forced once again to go as harvesters into strange fields to earn their bread requirements for the year.

They found some consolation in the sympathy and help that they received from many sources.

“Many kinds of collections, including the Serbian Boundary communities, achieved valuable success. The friendly attitude of the boundary folk toward the stricken brought with it the satisfaction that the hostile acts against the boundary settlements were not to be found in the ordinary folk but only in a few hostile nationalistic hearts.”

After the restoration of the temporary homes all effort was again turned to the task of improving, raising and strengthening the dykes. How important these works were, was shown in the following year 1868 whose high water mark not only overtook that of a year earlier but exceeded the highest known water level of 1830.

The water remaining behind from 1867 flood and the oozing of the water in the 1868 flood and the following extraordinary high water up to 1870, resulted not only in difficulty to feed themselves but also took persistently heavy toll on their strength and health because of the efforts expended in building dykes in every kind of weather and circumstance.

We older ones know from our own experience that the Rudolfsgnad horses lived to be barely 18 years of age, as compared to the horses elsewhere which lived to be over 20 years old and were still able to do a full day's work.

A similar situation existed with the people. The year long dyke building depleted their vitality and resulted in many men and women going to an early grave.

In the years 1874 and 1875 it was possible for the first time to fully cultivate the fields so that they were able to store provisions for the future.

How important such foresight was, is shown already in 1876 when Rudolfsgnad after 10 years of existence suffered a second total flood loss. Rudolfsgnad was the last victim of the numerous catastrophes that occurred in that spring. When high floods, at the end of March in 1876, broke through both the Theisz dyke above the village and also the dyke on the Karasch in the south, all the other seven boundary settlements were flooded. The most of these were never again rebuilt.

The resultant damage was enormous. In almost all of Europe collections for the flood victims were carried out, which brought in significant amounts of money. But

Rudolfsgnad was largely overlooked when these gifts were divided among the flood victims. The local authorities reported to the central authorities that the Rudolfsgnaders had, at the evacuation of their community under the eyes of the local authorities, carried away with them more provisions than was to be found altogether in all the other communities of the Perlesz region.

The Rudolfsgnad community in other ways was often treated as a step child by the Hungarian authorities. Since the Military Boundary Authority was dissolved in 1872 it fell completely under the jurisdiction of the Hungarian provincial administration. With these the hard pressed fathers and grandfathers had no good experiences while still resident earlier in Etschka. Their descendants were completely delivered into the hands of these chauvinistic little masters.

When the Hungarian parliament, after the catastrophic floods of 1867, awarded large grants and loans to the water control organizations for the rebuilding of the dykes, the Rudolfsgnaders received nothing because they did not belong to such an organization. Because they were most concerned and interested in flood control they undertook the building of the dykes with their own leadership, their own resources and under their own control.

Of the eight boundary communities settled in the years 1866 to 1868 on agrarian grazing land, Rudolfsgnad was the only community that had demonstrated its capacity to survive.

For this the Rudolfsgnad settlement was often portrayed by the authorities as the ideal community.

The grandfathers have repeatedly stated that their eventual success; that is, it was to be credited to the fact that the construction work was not turned over to some developer or consortium, but instead had been carried out at minimum cost under local control. The remaining seven communities in the lowlands took the opposite course – and were for the greater part dissolved.

During all of this Rudolfsgnad expended double the amount of land for the building of dykes as was required under the terms of the original settlement agreement.

The Rudolfsgnaders were not permitted to assume obligations that could be a debt against their property, “because the authorities, in a manner not easily understood, had neglected to carry out the terms of the Rudolfsgnad founding contract.” One of the orders of the Emperor regarding this contract was carried out only 17 years after the event.

Therefore, the elders were forced to borrow on personal credit and had to obligate themselves to high rates of interest. 20 per cent and more had to be paid in advance to the private money lenders. When the amount of the loan was 6,000 Gulden, the community would receive in cash only 5,000 Gulden because the interest was included in the amount of the loan. There were also cases in which interest at 30 per cent was part of the deal.

Under such condition to settle, and despite of all difficulties, to build such a blooming community borders on the miraculous!

The elders complain that in the colonization a “works of a kind that would be useful far into the future was created”, but it was constrained by having it dressed in restricted, old-fashioned military uniform. The old bureaucratic administration of the Military Boundary, where everything was handled in military fashion, and the succeeding Hungarian provincial administration took no notice of the special needs of the community.

Rudolfsgnad was attacked especially by certain Serbian Pan-Slavic circles in the Banat.

The same circles, who from the beginning were opposed to the influx of the Germans into the Military Boundary area and who also were successful in defeating the first petition for settlement to the Emperor, persecuted the colony relentlessly even afterwards with their nationalistic hatred.

The Pan-Slavic Serbian weekly newspaper “Pancevac” was the special mouthpiece of these chauvinists, who already before the founding of Rudolfsgnad planned its destruction.

How the Pan-Slavs depicted the German settlements of the Banat, can be seen in an article of the same newspaper of January 31, 1871. A quotation reads as follows:

“The Greater-Germans are very political; their politics supports the words of their most notorious men who work toward the annexation of the Orient to Greater-Germany. But in order to be successful the Greater-Germans need a bridge. This bridge is only possible when the compact mass of people in the lower Danube are split and penetrated. This penetration is undertaken by the War Ministry into which the Greater-Germans managed to ingratiate themselves – by setting up German colonies in the German Banat Military Boundary regimental area. In order to achieve a place for the colonists it was necessary to dry up the flood lands, and in order to develop it and settle the strangers, it became necessary to confine the Danube with dykes to a controlled river bed. This is, of course a difficult and costly undertaking, but which is very close to being unsuccessful.”

A k.u.k. Major, Johann Ritter von Stefanovics, appeared as a special enemy and persecutor of the German boundary colonies. How great his influence was and how far his tactics reached, can be seen, that in the Viennese “Press” of January 4, 1883 he revealed himself in the shameless demand, “that the village of Rudolfsgnad in the flood plains also be destroyed.”

A significant persecution and plague for the Rudolfsgnaders in the first years of settlement were the activities of Serbian cattle thieves from across the Danube. In this

regard the Sarmian villages of Surduk and Slankamen had an especially bad reputation. In a report regarding this, the following is quoted:

“Numerous Rudolfsgnaders horses were stolen by the aforementioned thieves at the difficult dyke construction works, where the exhausted construction workers with their tired draft horses often had to spend the night out in the open. In very short distances they could, at opportune moments, capture the grazing horses in the thick scrub and transport them to a nearby island.”

Despite all difficulties and misfortune, the security of the new colonies was assured after the second flood of 1876 and the flood waters of the following four or five years.

The persistent application to work and the untiring industry of the settlers resulted in identifiable progress and improvements on the virgin land. It was possible to identify reasonable progress in all aspects of life.

According to the conclusions reached by the president of the Commissariat Torontal, Josef v. Hertelendy, Rudolfsgnad at this time was already rated among the best administered and richest communities in their area. He named Rudolfsgnad as an ideal community and recommended it to other villages as an example to emulate.

In these years some more attractive houses had already been built, larger barn shelters and business places; the Rudolfsgnaders could afford better clothes and had become a satisfied and happy people.

GROWTH, DESPITE THIRD AND FOURTH FLOODS

The crowning event of their progress was seen by the thoroughly Catholic settlers to be the erection of their own church. The prayer house in the school had long since failed to meet their needs.

The foundation stone of the new church was laid by their Pastor Ferdinand Löscharde in June, 1875; it was possible to get the church roofed over before the flood of 1876. And eventually there was success, in spite of the overwhelming damage of this catastrophic year, in completing the large, attractive church – whose layout was in the form of a cross with a long wing and a cross wing – in the year 1877 so that Pastor Löscharde could undertake the blessing of the church on November 1st of the same year.

On the left side of the main entrances to the church there was inlaid into the wall, at eye level, a tablet of red marble, which had the following inscription in golden Gothic letters: “In commemoration of the 25th Jubilee of His Majesty, Emperor and King, Franz Josef I – The Grateful Community.”

This was intended as a permanent remembrance by the grateful citizens of Rudolfsgnad. Yet the times changed and for later rulers the open proclamation of gratitude to the Emperor was a thorn in the eye.

Upon orders from the Belgrade Minister of Culture and the Belgrade Archbishop the tablet had to be destroyed.

A great oversight in the progress of the community was the absence of a chronicle or record just during the first half of the beginning decade of the fight for survival. The irresponsible neglect of the Military Boundary Authorities was followed in 1872 by a ten year sabotage by the succeeding Hungarian authorities.

Eventually, the Principal-teacher, Josef Kirchner, who had been pensioned off during this time, undertook to have the oversight corrected. He traveled at his own expense several times to Budapest, spoke before various ministries, was received in audience by the justice minister, and was successful in getting all obstacles and misunderstandings put aside, so that after 1882 the setting up of the Rudolfsgnad records was begun. After their completion in the spring of 1883 it was placed in the custody of the records authorities in Pantschowa; after 1886 it was forwarded in the court house at Perlesz.

In the year 1886, Rudolfsgnad received its own post office and in the year 1887 a cooperative savings association was founded, whose benevolent activity worked for the good of the people to the end of the First World War.

At this time a large steam operated mill was built, and the trade in grain produce began to cover a considerable trading area. On the bank of the Theisz near the village center, a number of ships year round were loaded with produce, some of which had been brought in from neighbouring communities.

In the year 1888, the first mayor and founder of the community, Heinrich Kirchner, died at the age of 70. He was not spared the ingratitude of people, but was privileged to see the final success of his efforts, and to live to experience the growth of the new village community.

A year later in 1889, a volunteer fire brigade was created which had 70 active and 100 supporting members, and which had its own young people's band.

It is not possible to determine in which year the "Bauernverein" (Farmers' Cooperative) was established. It is known that after the flood of 1895 "140 farmers' cooperative members had dealings with their two members in the legislature" in order that these "would obtain justice for them."

The repeated yearly return of the flood waters of the Theisz became a part of the life cycle of the Rudolfsnad residents. Each year there occurred one or two periods in which the citizens were under stress and fearful day and night with the question: Will it go well again this time?

But twice in the future it would not go well again. In 1895 and 1907, Rudolfsnad again experienced the catastrophic floods, so that one can say, that it took almost half a century until the dykes were so high and strong that in the second half of existence of the community the dykes held fast.

The third flood in Rudolfsnad took place on April 19, 1895. The exceedingly high waters caused the collapse of most houses.

The destructive event broke quite suddenly over the community. By reading the old reports one receives the impression that a certain lack of foresight was present, and that a lack of even minimum precaution could be blamed for the catastrophe.

During the exceptionally high waters of 1888, there was a warning and the knowledge that the Karasch dyke in the south was not high and strong enough in the event of a combination of higher than average floods, persistent rain, and gale force winds from the south.

On the site of the former endangered location, where also the sabotage by digging up the dyke in the first years of settlement took place, the lay of the land was so low that no trees could be planted as shelter against the erosion of the waves. The intervening flood land to the Danube was so wide that the Koschawa wind had a whole flat lake surface at its disposal to blow with unhindered force.

The work of raising the dyke had been postponed for too long, and as the feared combination of events took place, the newly emplaced two feet of the earth was not firm enough to withstand the attacking waves the height of a house, for an extended period of time.

In 24 hours the new earth was washed away, the Karasch dyke burst and the floods of the Danube rolled over the fields and toward the village, destroying and burying everything before and underneath it.

The evacuation of the village had to be hurriedly accomplished if human lives were not to be lost. Over five hundred homes and business structures collapsed, fruit gardens and vineyards were destroyed as well as the crops in the field. But not only were the Rudolfsgnader fields, but also the fields of the neighbouring Serbian communities engulfed in the tide. This damage, however, was suffered for the most part by Rudolfsgnader large farmers who had leased this land from year to year. The total damage this time was to be calculated in the millions.

M. Schwarz, the editor of the Gross-Betschkerek weekly, wrote on April 27, 1895, among other things in a report:

“The 19th of April, 1895, will be the Black Friday in the history of Rudolfsgnad ...”

“With painful emotions one stands before the ruins of this community; only an occasional house stands as evidence of earlier progress...”

“But Rudolfsgnad will rise again, it will raise itself out of the floods....”

“Have courage, have determination, you settlers; you will still overcome the forces of nature.”

After the third catastrophe had been overcome and when the water had flowed back through the breach into the Danube, the work of rebuilding the houses and the restoration of the fields was undertaken. In the repair of the breach in the dyke this time it was not enough just to restore it to its former state but to make it higher and stronger.

Through bitter experience one came to the conclusion “it cannot continue like this” and the Rudolfsgnader Flood Control and Drainage Cooperative was organized. Along with the original aim of flood control, a second responsibility was assumed: namely, drainage. Accordingly one turned back to a plan by the original surveyor of Rudolfsgnad, Képešy, who, even before the settlement had proposed a canal to be used for the purpose of drainage.

The lay of the land was suited to the plan since the Rudolfsgnad layout had a natural slope from north to south. The difference in height at the junction of the Bega and Theisz as compared to the junction of the Karasch with the Danube was three feet (about 90 cm).

This advice from a true friend of the settlers was now followed, so that there runs a main canal approximately through the middle of the flood lands, beginning in the north, gathering the ground and swamp water by means of feeder canals and carrying it south to

the Danube, where a large pumping station delivers the water into the Danube, day and night.

The Serbian communities which shared the flood lands: Perlesz, Orlovat, Ivdor [Idvor – ed.] and Tschenta joined the Rudolfsnader Flood Control and Drainage Cooperative as members. The leadership, however, was not assumed by an interested local person, but by a person holding high office; namely, in the upper echelons of the Komitats Torontal.

This “president” began by appointing only officials who were beholden to him to the administration but who had no personal stake in flood control and were interested only in per diem allowances and meeting indemnities.

The administration decided to borrow on credit. By and by the debt grew to over 1 million Gulden. The canal works and the reinforcing of the dykes however, proceeded only at a slow pace.

Since the money manipulations of the president became quite incomprehensible, the Rudolfsnaders began to raise “distress signals”. “Many an intervention was made, “wrote Josef Blees, - “also personal approaches tried, but all fell on deaf ears!”

Finally the matter was made public in the press, “wherein the illegal activities of the president were severely criticized.” Besides this the Rudolfsnads Farmers’ Cooperative turned to their representatives in the Hungarian parliament, who through their inquiries brought about a painful investigation which resulted in the dismissal of the top administrator level.

Josef Blees writes, “If he had not been such a prominent person he would have had to pay 100,000 Gulden. But you couldn’t do that to him, so the cooperative had to take the loss.”

“The canalization afterwards was carried out by the Rudolfsnaders and was completed except for the pumping station, where an area was too low, and only after six years was it built up. Then the water could get to the pumps. It had been slowed down on purpose.”

Finally the pumping station operated in a satisfactory manner for some years, until 1907 a change in operating personnel took place.

The director of the Rudolfsnads Flood Control and Drainage Cooperative “at that time was Engineer Biles, “...not a great person, but a Magyarized Betjar.” This youngster at the time carried out a peculiar administration at the pumping station.

After the administration in the fall of 1906 had chosen a new machinist from among the employees, Biles would not allow him to assume the position, but replaced him with his Magyar favourite, the former fireman of the steam engine; provided him with a recommendation stating that he had run the system in a satisfactory manner for three months, sent him to Temesvar for exams and succeeded in getting the approval of the

administrative committee, so that the “quickie” machinist became the machinery foreman.

At times when the pumps were in round the clock operation, it was necessary to provide an assistant mechanic so that the master mechanics could be relieved every six hours.

On May 22, 1907 at the end of the shift, the assistant machinist, as he had many hundreds of times earlier, took over the steam engine while the newly certified “master” went out to the gates on the dyke where the starting of the engine required the simultaneous opening of the gates in order that the water could be forced through the pipes into the Danube.

The machine was started. Why the favourite of the “Magyarized Slovakian Betjar” did not open the gates at that time will probably remain an eternal mystery.

At any rate the powerful 250 psi machine, after being started, built up pressure in three enormous pipes of a dimension so great that the gates along with the cement works were blown into the Danube. Immediately the waters began to stream in through the loosened pipes.

For four days those responsible took no serious measures to control the breach. Concerned farmers who had heard what had happened and who wanted to view the damage, received only evasive responses to their urgent questioning regarding measures to be taken. The responsible engineer did not even make an official report.

Eventually on the fourth day the pipes were completely dislodged, the breach widened, and the dyke collapsed. Rudolfsgnad suffered its fourth flood.

There was plenty of time to evacuate since the water did not come in too quickly. In spite of this, odd circumstances became a part of the scene as so often happens in a catastrophe. To top it all off, a rain of flood dimensions set in which worsened the situation of these unfortunate people many times over.

My mother often related to us children later that my older brother, Franzi, who was a nursing baby in his cradle and who had been temporarily placed under a cover near the dykes, “almost drowned in cradle on account of so much rain water.”

Also this time no lives were lost. All animals, the produce from the storage bins and the various moveable goods were saved. Since the water was not too high this time, few houses collapsed. Just the same, the damage sustained was considerable, such as the crops in the fields, and with them, the harvest was lost.

Rudolfsgnad was one experience richer. It was, however, not the last bad experience. Fortunately, though, it was the last great flood.

After the restoration of the dyke and the construction of a new pumping station, there was from year to year a concern and a battle to use the pumps at the right time and in the right manner. On the one hand it was desirable to save on fuel; on the other hand, those farmers who suffered most from ground water or ooze kept demanding greater use of the pumps.

Besides that, the Hungarian authorities as well as the Serbian authorities after 1918, pressured the officials of the Cooperative about operating and financial matters, which was regarded with extreme resentment by the long-suffering farmers and led to many differences of opinion.

No one forgot that the catastrophe of 1907 was caused only by the unthinking and improper handling of the pumping station works.

It was the conviction of many that it was deliberate and that the sabotage was condoned in high places to slow the pace of phenomenal growth of the Swabian community – as contrasted with the condition of many of the poor Magyar settlements.

The blossoming of Rudolfsgrad was not to be deterred. Even though the acreage of 18 Katastraljoch for each family was small, the Rudolfsgraders were able to make ends meet.

The four floods and the continuous battle with the corrupt authorities and courts, and the deadly enmity in the neighbourhood, did not break the spirit and persistence of the Rudolfsgraders, but instead spurred them to an even greater application of their strengths.

As one reads carefully in the old chronicle of 1891 the dramatic chapters of the history of settlement, one eventually asks oneself, with wonder, the question, how the swindled, unjustly deprived German farmers of Etschka, after their expulsion from house and home, had not opportunely complained to the Emperor during their audiences with him in Vienna about the injustices inflicted upon them; nor asked to be compensated or helped to have their rights restored by the almighty Emperor, their “Most Gracious Master.”

After several humble petitions had he, “the All High and Generous” condescended that the beggarly, homeless German people were allowed to build in the swampy corner of the Theisz and Danube, a new village on flood lands, with their own resources and at their own expense.

In the first petition for settlement which was handed to the Emperor on January 28, 1864, the deprived farmers asked for a release to them of 16,000 Katastraljoch of flood land in Danube-Theisz corner – out of a total available area of 111,345 Joch of floodland in the region of the German-Banat Boundary regiment.

The petition of the farmers asked that the Boundary Military undertake to build the dykes on the flood plains and then turn the land over to the settlers. Since the military authorities did not wish to carry out the building of the dykes, it was not difficult for the

hostile powers, whose influence reached into the Ministry of War in Vienna, to achieve the denial of the petition on December 8, 1864.

But when the settlement, after two wasted years, came into being anyway, each family received at first only 12 Katastraljoch, and finally – “after repeated requests by the settlers” were given a total of 18 Joch; added to this they received 580 Joch pasture and village streets, for a combined total of 7,010 Katastraljoch.

One can see from the foregoing that the mighty Emperor in Vienna acted in a very niggardly fashion at the distribution of flood lands to his unjustly persecuted subjects. Because 18 Joch per farmer in the Banat at that time was the minimum requirement of a farmer if he should be able to make a living on his own land.

How much easier the forefathers would have had it if the emperor would have given them the requested 16,000 Joch that they had asked for! It would have provided each family with “a whole Session” – as in the time of the originally planned colonisations in the Banat; namely, 32 Kastraljoch cropland and a considerable grant of village pasture and community grazing land. The later generation of sons would not have found it necessary to emigrate to America after the second generation.

By about 1930 there were already over 200 persons in their best, and most in their younger, years gone overseas. In the writings and in the mind of Adam Müller–Guttenbrunn, these Americans constituted the third group of the “lost sons” of the Banat.

POPULATION TRENDS

For the consideration of population trends of Rudolfsgnad there are fortunately a whole series of statistics at one's disposal.

The first table of figures on the census of Rudolfsgnad show the following:

| Year | 1866 | 1881 | 1891 | 1901 | 1911 | 1921 | 1931 | 1941 |
|----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Census | 1902 | 2205 | 2971 | 3329 | 3419 | 2967 | 3069 | 2891 |
| Increase | | 303 | 766 | 358 | 90 | - | 102 | - |
| Decrease | | - | - | - | - | 452 | - | 178 |

Table 2 shows the totals of births and deaths, increase of births over deaths, and the marriages for each decade from 1881 to 1940.

| Date | 1881 | 1891 | 1901 | 1911 | 1921 | 1931 |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | to | to | to | to | to | to |
| | 1890 | 1900 | 1910 | 1920 | 1930 | 1940 |
| Births | 1557 | 1554 | 1281 | 932 | 965 | 565 |
| Deaths | 939 | 889 | 732 | 549 | 562 | 377 |
| Increase | 618 | 665 | 549 | 383 | 403 | 188 |
| Marriages | 275 | 259 | 334 | 325 | 335 | 259 |

On the basis of Table 1 it can be seen that, in the first fifteen years of its existence, the population of Rudolfsgnad grew by 303 persons. This took place in spite of the enormous economic uncertainties, and despite the enduring unresolved circumstances regarding their rights. Unfortunately, the increase of births over deaths is not known, so that one could determine the birth increases in the early years of settlement. Similarly it cannot be determined if and by what numbers how many Rudolfsgnaders in this period emigrated because of marriage and other reasons.

It is assumed that the birth increase in the first 15 years was equally as great as in the years between 1881 and 1900. In the period between 1881 and 1900 an increase of 24 persons per 1000 of population per year is shown, e.g. each year there were on the average 24 more births than deaths. The same statistic applied to the period between 1866 to 1881 indicates an increase of births over deaths of 740. Actually the population increase during this period was only 303 persons. Either the natural increase was considerably less than in the following decade, or one can speculate that approximately 440 persons emigrated out of Rudolfsgnad for reasons of marriage, attendance at advanced educational institutions and not having returned, or who went elsewhere as artisans and farmers to make their living.

The reverse is true of the circumstances in the decade from 1881 to 1890. During this time the village population grew by 766 persons, but the increase of births over deaths

account for only 618 persons. From this it is evident, that in this period there occurred a significant amount of immigration. In this respect this decade in the history of Rudolfsgnad is an exception. In questioning for the reason for this increase one can only assume that the attraction and economic possibilities, combined with room for expansion evident in Rudolfsgnad, after having established the settlement, had developed to a high potential

But it appears that Rudolfsgnad was soon populated to the full extent of its capacities. In the decade between 1891 and 1900, the growth of population in the community became slower; the increase was only 358, while the birth over death increase amounted to 665 persons.

With 3419 population, Rudolfsgnad, as far as it is possible to determine, had arrived at its highest point in 1911. In the period between 1901 and 1910 the birth over death increase of Rudolfsgnad was in the process of decline, and the growth of the community was even more reduced. In comparing the birth over death increase with growth in this period of time, it is evident that approximately 460 persons emigrated out of Rudolfsgnad in these ten years.

Where the Rudolfsgnaders of that time emigrated to is no longer possible to determine. In any case some of them moved to Budapest and other parts of Hungary, perhaps as teachers and officials and possibly many more became members of the armed forces. An outstanding example of this is the case of Heinrich Werth, who became General Officer and Chief of the Imperial General Staff in Budapest. In later times there appeared in Belgrade a whole Rudolfsgnader colony.

The outmigration overseas occurred for a variety of reasons. D'Bleese Dicker (the fat Blees) wrote in 1936 that approximately 200 Rudolfsgnaders lived in America. Reference to America does not mean only the United States but includes also Canada, Mexico and South America.

In the First World War, 94 Rudolfsgnaders fell in battle. The world war also affected the population in other ways. During the war years the marriages and resulting birthrate was reduced. In 1915 there were only two marriages and 67 children born. In the following year there were three marriages and 42 births to report.

The end of the war brought about the return of the young men. The result was that in 1919 in Rudolfsgnad there were 112 marriages and 127 births. It is noteworthy that in the following year the marriage total was reduced to 37 while the high birth rate continued into the middle of the 1920's.

The overall population trend in the decade of 1921 to 1930 shows an increase of 102 persons. The increase of births over deaths during the same period was 403 persons. From this it can be determined that in the 1920's a total of 201 Rudolfsgnaders must have moved out of the community.

The 1930's, in comparison with the previous decade, show a reversal of the population trend. The population count is reduced by 178 persons, the increase of births over deaths shrank from 403 to 188; i.e. it was reduced to less than half.

The eventual world wide - one child system – even though practiced later than in other German communities, had brought Rudolfsgnader population numbers to a standstill and eventually to a reduction. This reduction would have been felt even more had not, as statistics show, the number of deaths gradually shown a reduction. While in the decade from 1881 to 1890 there were 939 Rudolfsgnader deaths, there were in the years from 1931 to 1940 only 377 deaths.

Therefore the reduction in the birth rate and its effect on the population was offset in the life span of the people.

Had this trend continued uninterruptedly and had the birth rate remained at the low level of the 1930's, we would surely today arrive at an enormous reduction in the population of Rudolfsgnad, not considering the extermination camps and dispersals.

It may be that the time period of the dispersal corresponds with the time period in which the levelling off in births with the reduction in deaths would have come to a natural conclusion. There would have been an irreversible downward trend to population numbers, - unless there were to come about a change in the spirit and attitudes that would once again opt in favour of children which would result in a renewal growth in population.

The “Lord of Battle” decided otherwise. Our young comrades lie in the battlefields of Russia, the Balkans, Italy, North Africa

According to a report of April 1, 1966 by Franz Schneider, Rudolfsgnad suffered the following war casualties: dead, presumed dead, died in captivity – 226; civilians – murdered, starved, died as a result of torture and abuse – 252. Altogether there were 478 persons who lost their lives as victims of the war.

NORMAL DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS

A prospect for the extension of their own acreage even before the turn of the century for the Rudolfsgnaders lay in leasing a large part of the grazing lands owned by the neighbouring Serbian communities by way of long term agreements. Later this was extended by actual purchase, and little by little quite extensive tracts went into German ownership. According to a report by Franz Schneider the following land allotments existed before the dispersal:

From the grazing lands in the Rudolfsgnad general area the following distribution existed:

| | |
|-------------|----------------------|
| Rudolfsgnad | 7319 Katastraljoch |
| Perlesz | 2791 “ |
| Orlovat | 1722 “ |
| Tschenta | 1690 “ |
| Idvor | 236 “ |
| Titel | 167 “ |
| Total | 14,275 Katastraljoch |

Besides their allotments the Rudolfsgnaders occupied in:

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Titel – approximately | 1100 Katastraljoch |
| Perlesz – over | 400 “ |
| Orlovat – over | 1000 “ |
| Idvor – approximately | 120 “ |
| Tschenta – approximately | 60 “ |
| Total | 2,680 Katastraljoch |

Altogether the Rudolfsgnaders accordingly owned 9,999 Katastraljoch, add to this the approximate 1,700 Katastraljoch of long term lease land in the Pantschowaer flats (with their own houses on them) so that the Rudolfsgnad farmers cultivated an approximate total of 11,700 Joch of farm land.

The growing of rape seed, besides wheat and corn, was, before the turn of the century, the crop that brought in the most money; after 1910 there was a considerable increase in the growing of the crop sorghum.

It turned out that the black earth of the Rudolfsgnad area, still with much of its original and unused fertility, was especially suitable for the growing of sorghum. In good years it was possible to raise two very good crops on the same piece of land. First of all, the sorghum seed, when ground, could be used profitably for cattle feed. It was also purchased by the distillers. The straw of the sorghum, useful in making brooms and brushes was delivered to manufacturers in Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Bohemia. There occurred years when poor years were experienced because of lack of markets, - but then things would reverse themselves and money came in abundance. There was rarely a

crop failure as compared with the raising of other crops, because the seed alone as a feed was in itself a complete and successful harvest.

In Rudolfsgnad they also raised hemp and tobacco; then sugar beets, clover and especially in the earlier years, alfalfa; and for some years they also grew castor beans and soybeans, at times sunflowers in large quantities, - but none of these could displace sorghum as the prime money maker. But in total, the growing of wheat and corn as elsewhere in the Banat occupies by far the largest area of cultivated land.

Even though in Rudolfsgnad grapes for wine were grown successfully and that each house had its vineyard; less at the house than in the vineyards to the east and south of the village, the custom was to raise only enough for household use, some very good varieties for eating and wine making.

In the period when grapes were ripening between August and the end of October, an enormous amount of grapes was eaten. It began with the Magdalena grapes, then Gutedel, Muskat-Geisstuttle, and Slanka-white and Slanka red, Schiller grapes and Riesling as special varieties, which we children preferred over the ordinary table varieties. I remember the Portuguese and the Smederevka and the last in late autumn the large, dark blue Ochsenaugen (oxen eyes), which were hung in spikes under the rafters of house right up to the roof top.

Rudolfsgnad was rich in fruit trees; mostly they stood in front of the house and in the garden attached to the house, a few in the vineyards. All kinds of Middle European varieties were harvested far in excess of family requirements.

At the beginning markets were established in Titel and Perlesz, and after the First World War, Belgrade, which became the largest market. Vegetables, eggs and poultry were also marketed there.

Cattle raising was also an important and flourishing branch of the farm operation, but on the average only enough livestock was raised for the household and for the requirements of the farm operation.

Foremost were always the horses which were considered to be of prime importance in all Banat farming operations. One loved the horse while cow and pig were considered only for their usefulness and were treated accordingly.

The horse was the only draft animal recognized in our area. Should a Serbian or Wallachian span of oxen lose its way into Rudolfsgnad, the children ran from their yards, looked astonished, laughed, - and ridiculed the lumbering, plodding mode of transportation. It was already very plain to us children that driving oxen was to waste one's time. Our lighter, strong-boned "Nonus" horses moved at a trot even with loaded wagons of sheaves.

Because there was no large regular market for milk and dairy products, one kept on the farm only one, at the most two, milk cows, mainly for the needs of the household. Besides there would be one or two yearlings and calves kept in order to have an animal to sell should there be a sudden need for money. It was the same with pigs. When the cold weather arrived in December, in each household two or three were butchered and also as many as five or six fat hogs. This produced fresh meat sausage and liver sausage, head cheese, smoked bacon and hams for the whole year. Until 1927 only the lard hog Mangalica breed were kept; then there were added to this through the German Cooperative "Agraria" the German Landedelschwein. They were fattened almost exclusively with corn, only during the early stages was barley being fed.

Poultry was found in every farmyard, mainly chickens, but also ducks and very many geese which thrived very well in the waters of the neighbouring Theisz River.

There were no sheep in Rudolfsgnad and goats were rare, because even the labourer was able to afford a cow.

A very interesting part of the production of cloth was the culture of the silkworm. All houses had, on the street, in front of the houses one or two rows of mulberry trees. When the old trees were cut down it was mandatory that immediately young trees were to be planted in their place.

In the spring as soon as the mulberry trees became clothed with their lush green leaves, the wives and children of the labouring families received from the silk factory a supply of young, newly-hatched silk worms; very tiny worms which were able to feed themselves entirely on mulberry leaves.

In the first 14 days the picking of leaves was a relaxed activity, but then the appetite of these voracious insects grew from day to day until the caretakers in the last 14 days ran out of breath and were barely able to gather enough leaves for them, - and in many cases the trees stood there, stripped of all their leaves. This was not a pretty sight for many weeks, because the new greenery could never regain the lush appearance of the first growth.

Finally the worms were grown to maturity and no longer hungry, and began to spin their cocoons with silken threads. In three or four days it was accomplished, then the trays were delivered to the silk factory, - in Titel there was only a delivery point. The product was weighed and paid for according to the kilogram.

The mulberry tree was also much prized in Rudolfsgnad for its fruit.

Where the black - somewhat tart - sweetish berries ripened in June, we boys climbed the trees and feasted on the fruit. If the girls were good to us we would throw some down for them. But when the very sweet, white variety, then the grey and the brownish-red ripened, it rained mulberries day and night, so that one could not walk down the street without stepping on mulberries.

This was also a great time for the ducks and geese who didn't want to eat anything but mulberries, but became so weak because of them that they hardly knew how to find their way home and were very prone to stagger when they walked.

We children were fed up by this time and picked only the best varieties. Now began the serious business of the grow-ups. In the morning and in the evening, at least once each day, the ripe berries had to be shaken in a tray and be brought to ferment in a large open barrel. What fell out of the crate while being shaken or had earlier fallen to the ground was left there for the pigs, which were driven daily out under the mulberry trees.

By the time of the harvest, at the latest while hauling manure to the fields after harvest, there was ready a new mulberry whisky (Raki). Many a town dweller pulled up his nose at the unique taste of this ordinary alcoholic beverage. For me it was the most preferred of all the whisky I have ever tasted.

The somewhat unstable economic developments in the newly organized kingdom (Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia) in the 1920's had along with the educational programs of the Swabian-German Culture Association and of the German Party resulted in the organization of a Rudolfsgnader producer cooperative.

So in 1927 the Agricultural Credit and Cooperative "Agraria" came into existence, featuring a trade cooperative with an economic saving branch and transportation of goods component. 94% of the families were members.

The "Agraria" had weathered the world economic crisis of 1929-32 in good condition – (as in contrast with the hog raising cooperative). This provided a real support for the German population of Rudolfsgnad in this difficult time.

The present generation of economic wizards has no idea to what depths of poverty and lack of power the whole population had been reduced in those years. One was hounded from one money problem to the next, went half dressed in rags to work, had to do without all new discoveries and improvements, because of lack of money.

During this time the upkeep of the farming operation with new machinery and goods came to a standstill.

The Rudolfsgnad farmers certainly were progressive operators: Here one could find before World War One almost self-operating American binder-harvesters (McCormick) and threshing machines with self-propelled steam engines.

The first tractor ploughed in the Rudolfsgnad area on October 4, 1925. But now there was inertia and hopelessness.

Even though the economic crisis had its crippling effect in all areas of life, it none-the-less did not succeed in destroying the community spirit and cooperative enterprises.

The fire brigade established in 1889 and which disappeared in World War I was re-established in 1926 and besides the locals of the German-Swabian Cultural Society and the German Party, there were a number of other societies in Rudolfsgnad. There was a men's choir, founded in 1919, for the preservation of German song, an art society, a hunter's society, a sports society with football teams, and a bee-keepers association.

A special organization became active among the German speaking peoples of central Europe resulting in the founding of a welfare association of Germans in Yugoslavia. In the spring of 1935 the manager of the Central Welfare Association in Neusatz, Johann Wüsch in collaboration with the Rudolfsgnad community physician, Dr. Gustav Kirchner, established a branch of the welfare association in Rudolfsgnad. This had a section for hospital care, its x-ray machine, and its own pharmacy, set up a regular pre-natal clinic for mothers, and organized child care services.

The Rudolfsgnaders were accustomed from early childhood to work hard. From the spring until late autumn the work day of the farmers began before sunrise. The field work was rarely confined to an 8 or 10 hour work day; in the summer the custom was 12 to 14 hours and in the harvest period in July and August understandably more.

Because of that there was a strict observance of Sundays and holidays. With the same gusto as one worked, one also ate and celebrated the holidays.

Christmas, Easter and Epiphany were the corner stones of the church holy days. Resurrections and Eucharistic processions were the high points, of which the whole population of the village took part, and which demonstrated their attachment to the Christian religion of their forefathers in an open and public manner.

There were celebrated, especially in the quiet time of the winter, the "namedays" of friends and relatives, weddings and pre-Lenten "Fasching". The high point of the festivities was the "Kerweih" (Kirchweih). This always took place on the last Sunday before Advent, late in the fall when the year's work was largely complete, the fields having been harvested and seeded with new winter wheat. The usual Kirchweih lasted three days, but when "held together" it lasted from Saturday to Wednesday. In the latter case the big boys chose from among their own number a first and second treasurer who was appointed "master of the money", and whose girlfriends prepared a spray of rosemary and decorated them with ribbons. Every lad who joined the group found himself a girl who would decorate his hat with flowers and ribbons.

The political fate of Rudolfsgnad is closely tied to the many changes and alterations which, particularly since the end of the First World War, in history and content, were common throughout southern Europe.

The community was created in one area in 1866, which was a part of the so-called "Military Boundary". Already after six years of settlement the Military Boundary was

dissolved in 1872. The result was that the community was made part of the Hungarian state and was put under the jurisdiction of the Komitats Torontal.

After the First World War the Banat was separated from Hungary and partitioned between Romania and Yugoslavia. Only a few villages near Szegeed remained with Hungary. The Rudolfsgnaders became citizens of the kingdom of the Serbs, Croatsians and Slovenes, which was the official name of the state from 1918 to 1929.

After the Balkan invasion by the Wehrmacht in 1941 the Yugoslavian state was practically dissolved. There appeared the "independent state of Croatia", large boundary areas were attached to Bulgaria, Hungary and Italy; south Steirmark was attached to the Reich, while as a conquered area only a rump of a Serbia existed, including the autonomous Banat, all of which came under the control of the German Wehrmacht.

During this time physically fit men of the German men of Rudolfsgnad were drawn into the German Wehrmacht, the Waffen S.S.

In October, 1944, Rudolfsgnad, in the advance of the Red Army, fell under the control of Tito's partisans.

All of these political changes can be followed when one considers the history of the name, Rudolfsgnad; and its history of being attached to many different states.

A complete picture emerges out of the fact that the Rudolfsgnad men, in the relatively short time of the history of their village served as soldiers in a great variety of national armies and had sworn allegiance to many monarchs, dictators and governments.

Rudolfsgnad, in the course of her history, had received three different names, but had its name changed five times.

1. From the founding in 1866 until 1911 the community was named on the basis of an edict of Emperor Franz Josef I "Rudolfsgnad". The same name was carried by the community after the First World War from 1918 to 1924, and during the Second World War from 1941 to October 1944.
2. In the year 1911 the village was given the Hungarian name "Rezsöhaza" which it carried to the end of its attachment to Hungary in all official correspondence.
3. After Rudolfsgnad along with a good third of Banat was attached to the newly created state of the South Slavs, and after the Serbs who considered themselves to be the final authority, in 1923 closed not only the German middle schools, also gave the Swabian villages Serbian names. In this manner Rudolfsgnad became Knicanin in 1924, even though it had nothing in common with the General Knicanin from Old Serbia who came to the aid of the Serbs of the Wojvodina in 1848/49 against the Hungarians. The village carries the name Knicanin to this day.

The citizenship of the Rudolfsgnader citizens changed as often as the name the village bore.

Before 1866, the German farmers, who founded the settlements, were in their various home settlements the subjects of the Hungarian crown, since the year 1526 was carried by the Habsburgs of the Austrian line.

With the founding of the settlement in the area of the Military boundary the settlers became the unquestioned subjects of the Emperor in Vienna. They had nothing to do with the Hungarian authorities until the dissolution of the Military boundary in 1872.

From 1872 to 1918 the Rudolfsgnaders were ordinary Hungarian citizens, somewhat like they were in their original homes before resettlement to Rudolfsgnad.

From the end of the First World War in 1918 until the actual dissolution of Yugoslavia after the Balkan invasion of 1941, the Rudolfsgnaders were citizens of Yugoslavia.

Since the rump of Serbia between 1941 and 1944 had the status of an occupied country and because the Banat was an autonomous attachment to it, one can say, that the Rudolfsgnaders at this time had practically no citizenship in any state. There was no longer a Yugoslavia and, even though German, were not automatically citizens of the German Reich. It followed that Banat German soldiers who at this time served in the German Wehrmacht, e.g. the Waffen S.S. became German state citizens upon the basis of an edict by the Fuehrer, provided that they applied for citizenship, which in most cases was not done.

The Yugoslavian Provisional Partisan parliament (AVNOJ) abrogated on November 21, 1944, the citizenship of all German Yugoslavians and declared them to be without rights and free to leave.

Only four years later, in 1948, when the death camps were dissolved, the surviving Germans and along with them the remaining Rudolfsgnaders, had their Yugoslav citizenship restored, - but without making it public. The clearest manifestation of their newly acquired rights to Yugoslavian citizenship was the fact that their young men could now be drafted into the Yugoslav Partisan army.

And finally, equally as changeable as the place names and the citizenships, are the array of various armies in which the Rudolfsgnaders served, and the loyalty oaths which they had to swear.

From 1866 to 1872 the Rudolfsgnaders who were required to serve, regularly joined the Boundary forces, that is, in this case, the German Banater Boundary regiment.

In the years from 1872 to 1918 they were regular soldiers or served with the Hungarian Honved.

In the time from 1918 to 1941 they were drafted to serve in the army of the Yugoslav Kingdom. The loyalty oath was made to King Peter I from 1918 to 1921, from 1921 to 1934 to King Alexander I, from 1934 to 1941 to the Yugoslav Regency, and in April, 1941 for three weeks to the young King Peter II.

Those who served in the German troops were bound by oath from 1942 to 1945 to the Fuehrer and chancellor, Adolf Hitler.

Since 1948 the few Germans of Yugoslavia who enter military service give their oath to the communist state of Yugoslavia; i.e. to President Tito.

THE HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL

Immediately after the founding of the colony on April 2, 1866, the building of the school was begun. It consisted to begin with the two classrooms and a small teacherage. In a corner of the building an altar was set up; so that the school house at the same time was also a prayer house.

Instruction was begun in November, 1866. The first teachers were: Joseph Kirchner and Johann Schummer. Both came with the settlers from Etschka to Rudolfsgnad. Principal Kirchner, along with his brother, Heinrich, and with Pastor Löschardt, was initiator and founder of the colony.

In the time of allegiance to the Military Boundary Authority the colony elementary school came under the supervision of the regimental inspector of schools. He was required to inspect the school at the very least once a year. He prepared his report in the form of a regimental order in which the qualifications of the teachers were also reported. Various matters were reported to the Staff commandant and to the teachers.

By decree of Emperor Franz Josef I dated June 9, 1872 the 12th German Banater Military Boundary regiment and the Titeler Tschaikisten Battalion were dissolved and the Boundary Security system was relieved of its duties.

By a law in the year 1873 the Banater Military Boundary Zone was “provincialized”, i.e. a total integration with the existing Hungarian Komitats authority. Only the community schools were for the time being were not integrated and carried out a completely German course of study.

Only in the year 1877 did the Hungarian state with a “Statutes of the rights of Schools and Teachers of the former Boundary Area” declaration take over top level control. Thereafter the community elementary school in Rudolfsgnad was administered by a school committee, the teachers, however, were appointed by the Hungarian education ministry. Then also began the introduction of Hungarian language instruction.

A ministerial order, dated November 29, 1897 eventually brought about the conversion of the Rudolfsgnad community school to a Hungarian state school which actually was put into practice on January 1, 1898. This had the effect that Hungarian became the language of instruction while German was being pushed aside, - until through the Apponyi School of Law, beginning in 1907, the Hungarian school in Rudolfsgnad taught German only after the third grade as a foreign language.

As unbelievable as it may sound, that in a purely German village, Hungarian instruction began in the first grade, it was nevertheless a daily occurrence throughout the years. Instruction during my time in the first and second grades (1915-17) by teachers of German origin who had a good command of the language, was used to a considerable extent for the purpose of helping us to learn the Hungarian language. The readers were written in Hungarian.

The anxiety the Hungarian authorities had about German instruction, as a "foreign language" from the third Class on - a troublesome irritant in their plans for Magyarisation - becomes obvious in that in the Rudolfsgrad Volkschule, up to the end of WW1, German instruction from the third Class on was given by Frau Margit Horvat, the only teacher in the school that did not know German.

That we were able, in the eyes of the state and the authorities, in this praiseworthy enterprise to make good progress and actually already in the first years were able to employ whole sentences, in the Hungarian language relating to daily life and being able to communicate freely with our teachers, was attributable to the intensive preparation of the Hungarian kindergarten, the "Ovoda".

During this time a fine "Ovoda" was built in Rudolfsgrad at state cost, where we Swabian children (40 or 50 to a class) at three years of age began to learn, to speak, pray and sing in Hungarian. Here there was enkindled in our childish hearts a flame that by and by burned brighter and recognized only one loyalty – Hungary, Our Fatherland. There was no greater idealistic aim than love the Hungarian nation, to serve her, to contribute to her greatness, and to die therein!

In 1891 there were in Rudolfsgrad about 500 children of school age, the outcome of which was the addition of another class and the extension of the school building. The school had from this time forward five classes which became official on January 1, 1898.

Because in the year 1901 the first class enrolled 124 children, this class had to be split and a sixth class was opened by the Hungarian education ministry. One of the classes had to be accommodated in rented facilities since there was no further space available in the school building. To build new facilities, was a decision that it did not seem possible to make despite the fact that such plans already existed in 1875 and which were heartily supported by the people.

Only in 1907, as a consequence of a flood, that rendered the old school unsafe, the Hungarian government decided to build a large, modern school building in which were included eight large classrooms, an auditorium and two teachers' residences. A small dwelling was erected in the school yard for the caretaker. To the cost of the school the Hungarian government contributed 60,000 Crowns and the community 25,000 Crowns.

The unfortunate – fortunate end of the First World War in 1918 resulted, ironically, in the termination of Hungarian plans for Magyarization. At the beginning of 1919, Hungarian was still taught as a foreign language but by September, 1919, it had been totally dropped.

Now we had once again in Rudolfsgrad purely German instruction. This desirable circumstance, however, did not endure very long, because as soon as the peace treaties negotiated in Paris were finally completed and the new masters were secure in the saddle, it was demanded that the learning of the language of the current master race was to begin.

Immediately, the learning of the Serbian language as a foreign language was introduced into the public school of Rudolfsgnad.

This “foreign language” popped up later as the language of the state and demanded for itself, and Serbian history, first priority in the curriculum.

The plans of the Belgrade education ministers to make out of the Rudolfsgnad public school a Serbian, “Yugoslavian,” or only a “Yugo-swabian” school and to have her play a role, which was the reverse of the role played by Belgrade before 1918, were shattered by the opposition generated by a strong renewal which was taking place inside the German-Swabian cultural society.

With the occupation by the German Wehrmacht in April 1941, the whole school system of “autonomous Banat” came under the control of the German population. In the process of a large expansion of the German school system, Rudolfsgnad also received under superintendent-teacher, Franz Krifka, in 1943 a central school; that is, a four room high school in addition to the four lower grades of the public school.

Unfortunately, this central school in Rudolfsgnad, as also other middle and high school in the Banat, was not granted a very long existence. The crashing catastrophe in the fall of 1944 carried everything to destruction, including the German schools of the Banat.

The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 brought with it great changes for the population of Rudolfsgnad, but with even greater changes at the conclusion of the same in 1918.

The great events fatefully affected the condition of Banater Germanism, and Rudolfsgnad was no exception. The physically fit men moved into the field with the Imperial Army or as soldiers in the Hungarian Honved troops, fought on the Russian front or in Italy, while the women with half-grown boys and Russian prisoners tilled the fields.

It was for everyone a long and difficult time, - the time of separation, - and 94 Rudolfsgnader soldiers did not return from the war. They had fallen for a fatherland that no longer existed at the end of the war.

How stunned one stood before the ruins that remained from the centuries old Habsburg monarchy, and before impossible new conditions, - the smaller homeland, the Banat sliced into three parts with Rudolfsgnad separated from its former cultural centers, from Temeschburg that now belonged to Romania and from Szegedin that remained with a rump of a Hungary. Both lay in foreign lands and, from the point of view of Rudolfsgnad, out of reach. There was no replacement for Temeschburg and Szegedin in the “new fatherland”, in the Kingdom of Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia, - later Yugoslavia.

The loss of the cultural centers was reflected in the course of time in the reduced number of middle school students who in the time between the two world wars came out of Rudolfsgnad, in contrast with the numerous intellectuals out of the time before 1914.

Around 1922 a tiny light became obvious when in the Serbian high school in Titel a similar or parallel class was opened with German as the language of instruction. Far more than half of the students in this class came over the bridge from Rudolfsgnad. It was to be expected that a large number of the students would later enter an institute of higher learning or teacher training school in order to become a teacher which was a traditional Rudolfsgnader profession; or to become academics.

The surge to the Titeler high school still continued in the following year, now that two year courses were being offered in the German language. Unfortunately, the pleasure was of only short duration. In the middle of the year, the Belgrade education department brought about the closure of the German classes and, as an alternative, offered entrance to the Serbian classes. This held prospects for only a limited number of students because most of the Rudolfsgnad children had been trained in the "Ovoda" and in the first two public school grades in the Hungarian language and the third and fourth grades had been taught entirely in the German language. The Serbian language had been taught only in the parallel classes in the high school as a foreign or second language.

So it came to pass that most of the German children returned to the family farm and became agriculturist.

How many buried hopes! Not only for the stricken children but also for the parents, it was a serious blow. The ownership of land was not extensive enough to make farmers of all of them; the technical professions did not provide many alternatives for them at this time, and finally there was the last resort of emigration to America, which was also closed off around 1924. There is no doubt that the closing of the German schools in 1923 along with the various other uncertainties in the new kingdom had a deteriorating effect on the people's will to live. It was another reason for the reduced incidence of births, which now became more pronounced, even in Rudolfsgnad.

What effect the possibility of attending schools of higher learning can have on a village, can be seen in the fact that between the world wars significantly fewer Rudolfsgnaders entered professions that were not of the artisan or farmer type as in the decade before the First World War. This was now to be the accepted way of life.

The colonist forefathers were farmers and artisans without exception. The latter carried on a small farming operation besides; at the very least they were wine-makers with their own vineyards.

It is therefore astounding how many of the sons of the pioneers rose in the intellectual professions, and how many grandchildren had the same success.

As the Filipowans became priests, the Rudolfsgnaders became teachers before the First World War. The generation born before 1900 produced alone 28 public school and two high school teachers, whereas, those born after 1900 produced only five public school teachers and two high school teachers by 1945.

Even more significant was the circumstances of active officers in the army; namely, a ratio of 8:0. It is interesting to note that half of them, and especially the farmers' sons, achieved high rank.

Christian Tessling died as a young lieutenant in the First World War; Michael Bleebs resigned from the army after the last war; Frigate Lieutenant Alexander Kirchner died in 1923 in Budapest as a result of a duel; Captain Josef Frisch retired early and became a ministerial official in Budapest; Lieutenant Colonel, Franz Frank, of the Budapest Military Academy was killed in the USA after the Second World War; Sergeant Lorenz Werth emigrated to Argentina; Sergeant Balthasar Kirchner went to Germany and died there; while General Heinrich Werth, who for many years before the Second World War and also in the war was Chief of the Imperial Hungarian General Staff, was after the last war dragged off to Russia where in 1950 he died in a Moscow prison.

That after 1918 not one Rudolfsgnaders son became an active officer, was not so much due to the lack of talent, but rather whether or not the Yugoslav state opened the way for them into the profession; nor that the Swabian youth felt attracted to the Balkan state and therefore did not have any special desire in that direction, to become interested in the defence of that nation. So no one became an active officer.

Of the 796 Rudolfsgnader fathers and sons who in the course of the Second World War became German soldiers, only eight attained the rank of officer. Mostly it was that they had been reserve officers in the Yugoslav army. Six men became S.S. First Lieutenants, one Wehrmacht Oberartz, and one S.S. Captain. This is quite an outstanding contrast with the First World War.

A total of 148 of 796 Rudolfsgnader German soldiers died in battle, among them First Lieutenant Johann Varga. Thirty-nine men were missing and sixteen died, mostly in prison camp.

THE LOCATION OF RUDOLFSGNAD

The geographic location of Rudolfsgnad has several features which in the course of 100 years has proven to be of positive value in relation to trade.

The village, 2.5 km long, whose streets run directly north and south and whose avenues stand at right angle to them, lies close to the dyke opposite a street which follows the course of the Theisz. It begins on the east bank of the Theisz where Titel ends on the west bank. Since 1927 a railroad and traffic bridge leads across the river.

The favourable location of Rudolfsgnad near Titel, the small, old country seat on the Batschka side, had nurtured the cultural progress of the new settlement as well as enlivened the economic life the Rudolfsgnad. The daily market in Titel was, with few interruptions throughout the decades, the closest available market for the Rudolfsgnader fruit, produce, poultry, eggs and dairy products. Throughout the year the Swabian housewife could sell her surplus and could make a small income to look after the needs of the household. Besides, the larger businesses in Titel provided her with a larger and more desirable variety of goods to choose from.

What the Titeler market supplied for economic requirements was provided by the old Hungarian high school in the realm of culture. It required only a brisk half-hour walk for the Rudolfsgnader children to reach this school. Because they could live and board at home, it was also possible for the children of the poorer families to attend school, who otherwise would not have been able to pay the boarding rates in the town's boarding houses.

Someone once said: Without the Titeler high school half of the teachers originating from Rudolfsgnad would not have become teachers.

The location of Rudolfsgnad on the large Theisz river across from Titel which since olden times was an important harbour, that is to say, a crossroads in shipping on the Theisz into the Danube, into the Bega, and on the Theisz (herself in the upstream direction to Neusatz, Betschkerek and Szegedin) resulted in a shipping station in Rudolfsgnad set up by the First Danube Shipping Company which had a main shipping station in Titel, with a large ticket agency and warehouse with second and third class waiting rooms.

The large passenger boats docked here daily for Szegedin and Neusatz; after 1918 there were also ships to Betschkerek, and to Slankamen, Semlin and Belgrade.

Beyond Neusatz and Belgrade, between the two world wars, Rudolfsgnad a connection with the Vienna Express Boat, on which one could go cheaply to Budapest and Vienna, or also on the Danube in the opposite direction to the Iron Gate, or to Giurgiu in Romania and Rustschuk in Bulgaria.

In railroad and highway traffic, Rudolfsgnad was less well provided for. The old railroad of Neusatz-Titel was extended past Rudolfsgnad and Perlesz in an easterly direction in the middle 1920's and ended at Orlovat where it joined the tracks of Pantschowa-Betschkerek.

The Rudolfsgnader railroad station was opened on November 15, 1925; the first train traveled to Betschkerek on December 23rd of the same year. The load testing of the new railroad bridge over the Theisz was undertaken on July 6, 1927 and the railroad traffic from Rudolfsgnad to Neusatz began.

The connection of Rudolfsgnad with the poorly developed highway grid in the Banat, where up to the Second World War, there was not one dust free asphalt road, was exceptionally poor. The provincial highway from Pantschowa to Betschkerek could be reached only by a detour on the federal dyke winding along the Bega river to Perlesz. The shorter and direct road to Perlesz had no paving; it was preferred to the detour when the weather was reasonably dry.

In the village itself there were two completely finished paved streets. The one, which was built in 1905, led from the shipping station past the town hall and the school to the mill on the way to Perlesz and the cemetery. The second paved street was built in the spring of 1937; it led from the Theisz Bridge in the north into Church Street and continued in the same directions through the village to the south side. On both sides of the street along the house frontages there were paved sidewalks which became narrower and poorer and disappeared completely as one came closer to the end of the village. Any stranger in the night who found himself in such a situation had to be prepared for all sorts of adventures, the least of which was a "sliding party" if it should have happened to rain. And the Rudolfsgnader loam soil required three days after a rain before its slippery surface was firm once again.

The transportation connections to Titel were in the course of 100 years not always equally good. As a matter of fact, during the Second World War, when Titel belonged to Hungary from April 1941 to October 1944, communications were completely cut off at times. Not only was the bridge lying in the water, but an even greater obstacle was the state boundary of "autonomous Banat."

In the time of the First World War there stood approximately one kilometre north of Rudolfsgnad, across from the Titel Catholic church, a pontoon bridge; for hours on end every day it would be inoperative while a portion was moved out of the middle to allow shipping to pass through.

In the middle of the First World War a wooden bridge was built on high pylons about 100 meters downstream from the pontoon bridge, which was available to traffic day and night without interruption. Also the large ships could travel underneath it even when the water was high. This imposing wooden bridge gave good service until 1927. It could only be crossed by paying a toll fee which often caused children to shed bitter tears when they could not accompany grown-ups to town because of the cost.

In the meantime, paid for out of German reparations, a modern double bridge for railroad and highway traffic was built closely to the north end of the Village of Rudolfsgnad. The bridge was opened on April 4, 1927.

This beautiful double bridge was dynamited on April 12, 1941 by the retreating Yugoslavs during the Balkan invasion by the German Wehrmacht.

In the first weeks and months of the new Hungarian occupation of the Batschka (in the spring of 1941, as the Magyars planned for the occupation of Yugoslav Banat, the Hungarian troops' goulash was being cooked), - there was a simple traffic bridge with one lane; later the Hungarians restricted this traffic rather severely. It took three years to rebuild the bridge. But hardly, when the lovely bridge was once again made useable, it was again blown up on October 13, 1944, this time by the retreating German troops.

Whoever had crossed the bridge in a westerly direction was protected from the concentration camps of the Red Army and the blood thirsty partisans.

Unfortunately, not all the Rudolfsgnaders, and only very few of the Banater Germans, used the bridge early enough to reach Western freedom.

Nobody felt guilty, nobody wished to leave home; only a few could guess, but no one believed that what later transpired in bloody horror, was possible in the 20th century.

The Middle Ages and the tortures of the Thirty Years' War were exceeded. What Stalin and Roosevelt had decided upon at Yalta, and the revenge demanded by the soviet writer, Ilya Ehrenburgin his hate literature, was now carried out by the communist soldiers on the Banat Germans.

EVACUATION AND FLIGHT

In the spring of 1941 a home guard was organized in the Banat under the auspices of the German Peoples' Organization.

The "Volunteer S.S. Division – Prince Eugen" was set up in 1942. All men of the 1892 to 1925 age groups were mustered and were required to report to their groups in April and May. There could have been about 750 to 800 men; that is, almost one-third of the population of Rudolfsgnad. In December 1942 and January 1943, the older and younger age groups were released. Our local home guard was required to guard the bridge over the Theisz from November 1943 to May 1944, a very difficult service for our people. The activities of the Partisans increased considerably in the summer of 1944. It was the duty at night to guard the fields from sabotage by fire until the harvest was brought in. During the threshing period, three men would guard the threshing machines during the night; twelve men guarded the village boundaries by night. Our Rudolfsgnaders accepted these duties without any question as to where their duty lay; each took the matter very seriously.

In the beginning of September, 1944, the first colonists from the Romanian Banat arrived, who crossed the Theisz Bridge in the direction of Hungary. In the middle of September the Hungarians closed the boundary; they did not want to allow any further crossings. During the eight day closure, the last of the fleeing people were quartered in Rudolfsgnad. The news of the closure spread like wildfire among the people of the Banat. Several people returned to their homes, whereupon many gave up the idea of flight.

Probably this was also the reason why so many Rudolfsgnaders remained at home. Until the beginning of September, the majority of the Rudolfsgnaders were inclined to flee. Extensive plans had been made; the people were listed; horses and wagons were registered. All could have escaped. Arrangements were also made for people who had no horses. A company of police was quartered at the school, and the company chief had declared himself prepared to deliver these people and their baggage to the railroad stations in Titel.

Telephone communication was interrupted on October 1, 1944. At this time the Hungarian artillery set up in Rudolfsgnad, in order that we would be protected from attack from the direction of Perlesz and Tschenta. A man with eight armed boys came from Sigmundfeld in the evening of October 2nd and informed us of the horrible deeds of the Russians and Partisans. After this report, the majority of the Rudolfsgnaders were no longer to be held. The wagon trek went into motion on October 3, 1944 at 9:00 a.m. in order to cross the Theisz Bridge and Titel to leave their homes forever. A few wagons remained a week longer in Titel; a few even returned home. At Tizakalmanfalva a two day halt was ordered so that a large number of horses could be shod. Here, too, people, wagons and horses were counted. Besides the 20 wagons that later came from Titel, there were 228 wagons with 365 horses and 943 people, who proceeded further to Neusatz-Futog-Sombor. It was the largest organized horse caravan that fled out of the

south east. In Sombor we met 60 boys of the home guard who had no prospects of getting any further. They were portioned out among the wagons of our caravan and taken along. From Sombor we proceeded through the Batschka toward Hungary to Nagybaracska; from there over the Danube to Mohacs toward Fünfkirchen. In Fünfkirchen we received two Pengö per person and were happy to have at least a little Hungarian money. The cavalcade went further, past Szigetvar – Keszthely to Ódenburg (Sopron), the last station in Hungary.

Klingenbach was the name of our first stop in Austria. Here everyone including the guards were relieved of their weapons, and happily we received care, and fodder for the horses. Tulln was the next stop. Everyone who was over 18 years of age could exchange a set amount of Dinar for Reichsmarks and receive five cigarettes. In Tulln we also met the Rudolfsgnaders who traveled from Titel by train. As was expected several people left the caravan and joined their relatives on the train. After that the way led to Hollabrunn. After a clean-up and bath at the sanitation depot, our caravan was divided into six sections which drove separately to Znaim. In a large room in Znaim everyone was well fed with very good food and wine, and the individual groups were allotted to camps. The first caravan came into camp at Jarmeritz, the second into the camp at Stannern, the third at Jamnitz, the fourth into Camp Stecken, and the fifth into Namjest on the Osel on the estate of count Heinrich of Haugwitz and the sixth on Castle Schönwald, the summer residence of the Count von Haugwitz. This allotment took place between the 4th and 6th of November, 1944. In all camps our people cooked from provisions on hand and distributed in portions. The horses received oats and hay. This camp life did not last equally long for everyone. By the end of November some people had searched for and found work with Czech farmers or on the estates. In January and February the army requisitioned all horses and those that were fit were immediately taken in. The Russians were coming closer and the second flight was only a matter of time.

Although our women and children had already suffered much on the first flight, what followed now was a horror. On February 1945 we were once again on the road facing westward. Everything was topsy turvy and our contacts were lost. In small groups and practically only at night we drove on. Attempts to drive during the day were brought to a halt by penetrating aircraft. In two instances the horses were shot by their wagons, and in others the wagons were hit and the small but vital provisions were destroyed.

Night after night we went on, through unknown territory, dark forests and unaccustomed steep mountains. On May 3, 1945 the order came not to proceed further; no caravan was allowed to proceed further. We camped in the neighbourhood of Krumau. In the local Wehrmacht camp, fodder could be obtained for the horses, and already after a short while it became clear that we Rudolfsgnaders were together in a circle of about 20 km. This territory was occupied on May 8th, the day of the capitulation, by the Americans. On May 15th we were all settled in a large meadow by Honetschlag in Marsch, and practically all the Rudolfsgnaders of the horse caravan were together again. The American commission inquired as to our intentions, which were varied. A few wanted to return home, others directly to Vienna, the majority to Upper Austria. The Americans, however, gave everyone the order to return to Belgrade through Austria and Hungary.

Few were enthusiastic about this; so that, contrary to orders, groups drove off toward individual goals. On the way one met sometimes this one and sometimes that one, and it turned out that about one-third were headed in the direction of Vienna and ended up at Haselgraben; while two-thirds wished to proceed toward the area of Wels and Schärding. In these areas there already live Rudolfsgnaders in camps, those home folk who had fled by train. They had been received at various places, even with music at the railroad stations. The largest gathering of Rudolfsgnaders grew on the large area of a military camp and in a brick factory in Andorf, Austria.

However, since the capitulation of Germany, there were no more musical instruments blown in our honour; we were no longer wanted. Food was no longer sold to us. We had to resort to scrounging if we were not to starve. Therefore we provided for ourselves by night with potatoes from the fields and the most necessary fodder for our horses.

In November, 1945 we were required – officially/voluntarily – to sell our horses. All people were brought into camps at Andorf. The circumstances were such that there was only a bare minimum of rooms to sleep, cook and live. The winter was at the door, the horses were gone, and we had no fuel for heating and cooking. What else was there to do, but with eight to ten people and a wagon to go into the forest and provide ourselves with the necessary wood? Only large trees were felled because for reasons easily understood, this had to be done quickly. In the camps the wood was cleaned up and made stove ready. This life remained unchanged until May, 1946. It was observed by the locals that we wanted to work and that we were able. Little by little our people found work with the farmers, with the brick factory, in the quarry, as builders, etc. The school age children were placed into a refugee class in the school at Andorf.

Austria was overrun with refugees and we saw no possibility to create, above all, for our children a stable new life. What then could we then do to build more securely for the future? France needed workers; therefore in 1949 Rudolfsgnaders too joined in the resettlement; however, the greater number later left France to settle in Germany. At this time some had already gone illegally to Germany where they fared rather well. It is understandable that many of the remaining Rudolfsgnaders wished to go to Germany. After 1950, especially out of our area of Schärding and, lacking other opportunities, many were caught up in the boundary camps at Balingen after having crossed the “green boundary”.

My family too, along with my in-laws, Wenzel and Maria Thurn, were received in a friendly manner in Balingen. We remained there for four months and in August, 1950 were finally quartered in Schwennigen on the Neckar. So we were one of the first Rudolfsgnader families who found a new homeland in Scwenningen. We were not the only ones. Today, there are more than one hundred families here, most of them in homes of their own.

Many who remained in Austria have settled in homes of their own between Linz and Wels.

Finally we can roughly determine where our Rudolfsgnaders live today: About 700 families in Germany, 140 families in Upper Austria, 20 families in Lower Austria, 60 families in the USA and Canada, 20 families in France, as well as some in Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and England.

Note: This chapter was prepared by our friend, Andreas Hirt in Schwenningen in April 1966. Andreas Hirt was born in Rudolfsgnad in 1897. This report was not written on the basis of a diary but on memories of experiences and happenings that he, Hirt, as leaders of the caravan experienced and gathered on the trek.

DOWNFALL

On October 13, 1944 the destruction of the Banater German community, Rudolfsgnad, began. At 6 o'clock in the morning the German troops blew up the church spire, - presumably not to leave an artillery observation post for pursuing Bolsheviks. As a result of the explosion, our priest, Father Rudolf Schummer, who happened to be on his way from the school to the parish house, was struck on the head by a stone so large that at 11 o'clock he died of his wound.

At 9 o'clock on the same day the large bridge across the Theisz was blown up; whereupon Rudolfsgnad and the whole Banat was written off as lost and left to the occupation by the Red Army; in particular, to the Serbian partisans.

During the night of October 15th to 16th twenty-five Rudolfsgnader men were taken out of their houses by the partisans and questioned in the town hall and terribly abused; and with some killed immediately. There were seven deaths this night in Rudolfsgnad; four of them were publicly hanged on trees in front of the town hall as a warning to the populace. The remaining 18 men, who according to an eye witness looked even worse than "the Saviour after being tortured", were transported to Betschkerek during the following night, where they were tortured some more, some driven to work and others shot. Only six men of this group escaped with their lives.

Three other men from Rudolfsgnad lost their lives in the neighbourhood of their home village.

On October 19th and 20th, three transports took a total of 42 men and one woman out of Rudolfsgnad to Betschkerek. Out of this group nine men lost their lives in that camp, while those survivors still able to work were dragged off to Russia.

In this way a total of 31 Rudolfsgnader men died a horrible death either during or after being tortured.

Finally on December 27, 1944, 42 young women and girls between the ages of 18 to 30 years and an additional 11 men of various ages were dragged off to Russia for forced labour. The most of these girls and women worked for five long years in the Ukraine in coal mines and track laying. All remained alive except three men died or went missing.

On January 1945 about 10 or 12 persons were taken to Betschkerek to a work camp; from this group a young boy lost his life.

About an accidental meeting with girls out of the homeland in the coal mines of the Ukraine, teacher, Franz Blee, reports as follows in a letter:

"From the Donbas Schacht Camp #20 I once went along to the town of Katik to get some glass. We two forced labourers naturally were required to ride in the back of an open LKW. We almost froze. In Katik I saw many Swabian girls working at a lumber pile. I

was able to go over to them and surprisingly, they were girls from Rudolfsgnad. I have never in my life received so many kisses in so short a time, and so many tears from so many eyes. I naturally had to cry with them. I never did see them again. There was a wailing and weeping that you can't imagine. This was the only meeting with Rudolfsgnader girls in the Soviet Union. How many were there? Who knows?

On the night of the 15th to the 16th of April 1945 the interning began; that is, the establishment of the infamous death camp at Rudolfsgnad.

During this night all the Rudolfsgnaders who had remained at home and not yet killed or dragged off, were taken out of their homes and herded into the school by the Partisans. They had to leave their houses unlocked. They could take with them from their property only what could be carried in a bundle, and even from this the best pieces were taken away, even when they were being worn. The men were separated from their wives and children and crammed into grossly overcrowded quarters. They were allowed to prepare their beds with straw. There was no bed, table, chair or bench. The straw on the bare floor was their entire accommodation.

By and by the remaining Germans from the Banater villages were brought into the concentration camps, and were quartered here in Rudolfsgnad on the straw in the houses of one village street. By October, 1945 there were approximately 24,000 persons herded together and forced into the rooms of formerly empty houses.

The very old, the sick and persons otherwise not able to work were brought to Kathreinfeld and placed in the so-called "Old Folks' Home". That was basically only a death camp, because out of 42 Rudolfsgnaders who were brought there, 20 died in a very short time. The remaining 22 eventually came back to Rudolfsgnad where 18 of them died, so that at the dissolution of the camp in March 1, 1948 only four people of this group remained alive.

About the living and dying in the Rudolfsgnad camp, the former camp inmate, Franz Schneider, reports as follows:

"Of the many Germans who were brought to Rudolfsgnad from other villages and camps, the old in particular were very weak, and also already crawling with lice. People who helped the poor and the weak, including the drivers who were required to transport the weak, also became overrun with lice"

"And no possibility to clean oneself or to wash and to change one's clothing; the possibility for a bath was not even discussed...."

"Illness took hold and then the concentration camp deaths began in Rudolfsgnad."

"There were no coffins. The dead were wrapped in blankets or rags and were covered in the cemetery, at first in single graves and shortly after in mass graves. Without priest,

without hymn, and without tolling bells. Relatives carried or pulled the dead on a litter to the cemetery.”

“When massive dying began, a grave digger platoon was organized. In the winter of 1945/46 there was a daily death rate of 80 to 90 persons. Only on one day there occurred more than 100 deaths. Early every morning wagons drove through the streets and gathered the dead. They were piled on the wagons like logs of wood.”

“To about the end of January, 1946 all the dead were buried in the village cemetery, the Rudolfsgnaders mostly in single graves beside the graves of relatives, the outsiders in the mass graves, who because of the high level of ground water were, since February, buried in a high location on the Teletschka about 2 km south of the village boundary. In the mass graves in the cemetery there are about 1,000 persons, on the Teletschka about 9,000.”

“In the three years of the existence of the camp, there died from hunger, according to the statistics of the camp management, not quite 10,000 persons. This was told to me by a woman who was involved in the dissolution of the camp as a worker.”

“It is not known if this includes those who were shot on leaving the camp or when they were brought in when they happened to run into the guards”.

“How many mothers, grandmothers and grandfathers risked their lives to secretly beg food from the neighbouring Serbian communities for their children! Many found their deaths in such attempts.”

“Just as there was insufficient nourishment for the people, there was also a lack of fuel. In places where there was not a regular guard patrol, there stood scarcely a tree in the gardens and in the streets. Fences, sheds and corn cribs were used up by the hungry and freezing camp inmates.

“Whoever was caught had to expect severe punishment. The cellar in “Franzi Lehrer’s” house was filled with prisoners most of the time. Once two men were shot when discovered in the act of felling a tree in a garden in the north-east part of the village. Women were often, for various minor reasons, struck, kicked and thrown into the cellar.”

“Some died of the abuse or suffered life-long disabilities from standing days on end in the cellar with their feet in the water.”

“For the field workers a community kitchen was set up in the church garden. In ordinary wash tubs they cooked corn meal or corn meal soup, sometimes barley, now and then some beans (only 1945), turnips, pumpkins, and always as soup, never with meat, but without any fat, and sometimes without salt.”

“There were also some priests in the camp. Two went out into the fields with the workers for a sort time. But soon they were no longer allowed to go. They were not allowed to

associate with the people. They were kept separately in a house under strict guard. Later they were reported to have been taken to Neusatz.”

“At one time Father Wendelin Gruber appeared in the camp. In secret he visited the elderly sick and comforted them. In the evenings and on Sundays he celebrated Holy Mass, naturally in secret, until one day he was taken prisoner and brought to trial. He was condemned to many years in prison.”

“Pastor Wilhelm Kundt from Pantschowa, who brought comfort to the sick among his Evangelical people from Franzfeld and Mramorak, was because of this very badly abused by the Partisans and died miserably in the camp at Rudolfsgnad. Many priests died a martyr’s death during these years.”

“But time passes. The camp inmates became fewer due to the large number of deaths; then came the new calamity and again there were fewer... whole houses succumbed to death.”

“The children were mostly with their grandparents. If these died they were put into the so-called home for children or orphanages. But even in the orphanages they died in massive numbers. These poor things were nothing but skeletons. Arms and legs as thin as a thumb, head and stomach extraordinarily large.”

“Drivers and workers came through this more easily. They always could find something that was edible. If they came to a neighbouring village they begged. Workers on loan were well taken care of and generously supplied with food. If it had not been for the good people among the Serbs, Hungarians, Slovaks and Romanians, many more would have died of starvation.”

“At the beginning of January, 1948 we heard for the first time that the internment camps were to be dissolved. Soon after a commission came to the camp with which all camp inmates were registered in family groups and questioned regarding their relatives. Those who had war prisoners working, for example, in the copper mines of Bor in East Serbia, were also sent there; others to their relatives on large farming estates in Smederovo, in the Pantschowaer flats, etc. A sort of reunion of families was thus begun.”

“Those unfit for work and the old people were put into a barracks camp at Karlsdorf, that was designated as an old folks home. Workmen were taken away from Rudolfsgnad, and from other camps workers came to Rudolfsgnad, as from the Gakowaer camp in the Batschka.”

“On March 1, 1948 we were informed that we were free. Beginning immediately we received work and ration cards and were required to look after ourselves. Various rations on the cards were available to us at very high prices. There would have been enough for our needs if supplies had been available. Meat was also in short supply. But we were happy that there was enough flour for cooking and baking, and sugar in sufficient

quantity. Wages were set. We received an advance for March. So they were really serious about our freedom! Now it was necessary to eat to regain our strength.”

“Every family received a piece of land for growing vegetables and potatoes, but there was also corn being planted in order that one could fatten a pig in the autumn and obtain some meat. What was really lacking was milk. Even though the Rudolfsnad state farm had milch cows, there was no milk to be bought here. Most people by and by supplied themselves with a goat and once more became independent, even if only at the lowest level.

“As all others who came to the mines and state farms and who had to commit themselves for three years, we in Rudolfsnad were also subject to this mandatory commitment. We could not change our place of work. It was only in this way that one received ration cards.”

“In Rudolfsnad, each family which was committed to mandatory labour was permitted to occupy a house, which each had to furnish. Everyone was happy to escape from the overcrowded facilities. There began a great clean up campaign. Holes were patched with clay, and everything thoroughly whitewashed. Bedsteads were fashioned from boards, as well as, tables and benches. Here and there, there was also an old chair to be found. But we were satisfied and not at all inclined to complain. The important thing was: that we were once again – human.”

“On Sundays we were allowed to go to church at Titel or Perlesz; our dead were again put into coffins and were buried by priest whom we were allowed to get from Titel or Perlesz.”

“In the three year existence of the camp the cemetery was seriously neglected. Therefore, we went out on Sunday afternoons with hoes, sickles and axes, rooted out all the weeds and brush, set up the fallen headstones, and since it again looked like a cemetery, we brought in one Sunday afternoon the old priest Marion from Titel, who blessed over forty single graves and the mass graves. At the first single grave we sang our dirges and at the end also at the mass graves.”

“Around the mass graves on the Teletschka we cleaned out the weeds, ploughed around each mass grave and so prepared them with wheelbarrow and shovel that a bank was built up about two meters wide, and in which a pathway of about one meter was left between graves. Relatives who know about where their dead lay erected wooded crosses at these places and decorated the graves with flowers.”

“On May 1 or 2, 1950 we had wanted the mass graves on the Teletschka ceremoniously blessed by a Catholic priest; we reported this routinely to the authorities. After all preparations had been made and Pastor Quintus from Lok was already on his way, the secret police (UDBA or OZNA) came and put a stop to our intentions. Despite this, the graves on the Teletschka were blessed in secret. When Pastor Nikolaus Thurn was here

one time on a visit, I accompanied him to the graves and he performed the blessing. The dear departed now have their rest; they rest in God.”

“In the first year of our “freedom” we went to church in Titel. In the beginning the priest read the gospel in four languages, - Latin, Hungarian, Croatian and German. Since this took too much time for the Hungarians and Croatians, they complained. But the priest protected us and on every third Sunday the sermon at high mass was delivered in the German language, and the hymns were also sung in German.”

“From the spring of 1952 Pastor Mayer from Opowa came to Rudolfsgnad on every fourth Sunday. The first time he celebrated Holy Mass was on Easter Monday, on a temporary altar set up in our yard – this after a seven year interruption. Very many people participated as well as many Evangelicals. On the next day the chief of police from Perlesz was already in my house. In the course of time I was subjected to innumerable interrogations, but we did not give in, but persisted in the demand that the performance of the simplest and barest religious exercises must be permitted for us.”

“It is not necessary to point out that under such circumstances we did not feel either free or at home. As a result, every family tried to get out of the Partisan paradise and emigrate to Germany or Austria.”

“At the beginning it went very slowly, but after 1953 most of the Rudolfsgnaders were gone. Many were helped by the teacher, Blee, by writing their petitions, filling out forms, completing applications, and advising where one should take them. Also the wife of the lawyer, Dr. Varadi, from Betschkerek, helped very much. She went from one department to another and reversed the enforced citizenship that was imposed upon us in 1948 with the advent of our forced labour service.”

This report of Cousin Franz Schneider closes in this manner, and who happily survived the difficult time of the labour camps and who now lives with his children in Schwenningen on the Neckar.

In Germany Franz Schneider dedicated his freedom to the documentation of the condition of the Rudolfsgnad people at the time of their dispersal.

In the addendum we provide the list of names arranged according to house numbers that was prepared by him. Each resident can easily be identified with the village lot plan, the house numbers and the birth date of each resident.

FROM THE SERMON OF PASTOR LÖSCHARDT

The area around Rudolfsnad was often in earlier centuries the scene of great battles and significant events. Pastor Ferdinand Löscharadt referred to them in his sermon on Easter Monday 1866 on the day of the founding ceremonies, as follows:

“... for centuries the absence of peace reigned over this land which was to become your place of residence The destructive floods which joined here in mighty streams, transformed the land into a sea, the Pannonic. The flood of human passions battled for the ownership of this area and drenched its earth with blood ...”

“In the earliest years this area was the boundary between culture and barbarism. At the beginning between the expanding Roman Empire and the hordes of the North, later between the Christian West and the pagan peoples of the East.”

“At the end of the 8th century the indefatigable Avars confronted the heroic Franks, who under their king, Pipin, forced their way to the Theisz and over there on the high land of Titel established a fortress, named Frankaville. How often were then the waters of the Theisz turned red by the unending wars between the neighbours!”

“Later the Bulgarians built their empire on the ruins of the Awarian nation. Under their king, Krumm, they conquered in the year 813 a great area of land on both banks of the Theisz. They were able to hold it for a long time. First, their lord, Zola, who had his seat in Titel, lost his land and his life, despite Bulgarian help from Mösién in 895 against Arpad, the heroic leader of the Magyars. This battle probably took place right on these fields.”

“At this time the Magyars became Christianized. For a long time peace reigned. Titel became the peaceful centre of the industrious Augustine monks. At least it can be assumed that at times they tried to put the adjoining lowlands to a useful purpose.”

“But also this time of progress passed and had to defer to the occupation of the Turks. About the end of the 15th century Turkish hordes found their way across the Theisz and advanced along the Theisz toward the centre of this land which they finally conquered and turned into a wasteland. At that time Titel was a strong fortress and was often fought over. Therefore this area was the meeting place for bloody battles between the armies of the Christians and the Turks.”

“As late as the year 1697 the Turks crossed the Theisz, stormed Titel and destroyed it with fire.”

“Prince Eugen of Savoy won back this area, as well as the whole territory, with brilliant victories. It now belonged to the Habsburgs, whose greatest concern as German emperors was, to transform the ruined and unsettled condition of the area into a place of European culture. This happened in the 18th century by way of the colonization of the south east. German farmers changed the face of the land, so that the poet could say:

“Out of the desert there grew a blossoming Eden,
Out of swamps arose a new world.”
Our world, which now has fallen back into the barbarism of the East.

IN GRATEFUL MEMORY

Two Serbian personalities from the neighbourhood have proved themselves to be particular friends of the Rudolfsgnad Germans. They should therefore receive honourable mention in a book of the homeland.

At one time the Serbian pastor from Titel, Djordje Parabucki, who in the first days of April, 1941 at the outbreak of the war between Yugoslavia and Germany, intervened and was able to get the release of six men who had been taken as prisoners to Titel. They returned unhurt to their homes.

Unfortunately, it was not possible for us Germans to save this just and honourable man from the horrible hanging to which he was subjected by the Magyars during the days of the "Neusatz blood bath."

The second friend of the Rudolfsgnaders was the Serbian pastor from Perlesz.

In January 1945 a group of Rudolfsgnader men were brought by Partisan guards to Perlesz where they had to perform a peculiar kind of work; that is, the exhumation of the bodies of six Serbians who in 1942 were hanged by the German occupation troops as communist and as a warning to others.

These victims of their convictions who had been buried in a mass grave, were now given single graves and given public recognition. At the end of this the Partisans wanted to shoot equally as many German men and bury them in the now empty grave. It is to the courageous intervention by the pastor of Perlesz that credit can be given that one horrible, repressive deed by the occupation forces was not avenged by the performance of another shameful act.

These two events show how national minded Serbian personalities felt about their German neighbours.

And yet another example: When the Hungarians occupied the Batschka in 1941, the "autonomous Banat" received about 40,000 Serbian refugees from the Batschka and for the duration of the war looked after them. This too was an outstanding gesture of humanity.

THE CHRISTCHILD PLAY
as it once was, in Rudolfsnad in the Banat.

Three “Christchildren”, St. Joseph and one Beelzebub came together each year at Advent and gathered a small acting troupe, which on Christmas Eve, the 24th of December presented the “Christchild Play” from house to house. There were always several groups and the village was divided into areas that were not rigidly defined. Normally they were the poorer village children aged 10 to 14 years, for whom the benefit from the Christchild Play was the main motivating force.

The costumes of the three Christchildren: long, white starched and ironed dresses, over which was worn choirboys gowns down to the hips (often men’s white shirts), and overall a wide ribbon the width of a hand – the first and second Christchild – red, and the third Christchild – blue – reaching from the left shoulder to the right hip and from there back to the beginning and then dropped to hang freely. For head covering they had tall, attractive cylinder hats without a brim, open at the top and sharp pointed as on a crown, decorated with moon and stars of gold and silver paper. Loose, wavy long hair reaching to the shoulders and back, and cheeks carefully rouged. The first Christchild carried a sceptre in her right hand and a little basket in the left for the receipt of gifts from each house for distribution to the children, and to receive their own presents on leaving the houses. The second Christchild carried a sword in the right hand and in the left a purse for the receipt of money gifts when leaving the houses. The third Christchild carried a small cradle in both arms in which lay a Christchild doll.

In the living room of each house a table was decorated and prepared for the Christmas tree. A chair was placed in front of it upon which the third Christchild placed the cradle.

Joseph was dressed in long white linen trousers above which was worn a long white shirt; a white fur cap decorated his head, his face covered with a white beard of hemp, in his hand he carried a cane, and a bag on his back, into which the gifts from the baskets (mostly apples and the like) could be emptied.

The Beelzebub represented the opposite of these three holy persons, and remained in the background, dressed in a ragged fur, carried a bundle of whips of which one, and more with well-known mischievous children, was left behind.

The third Christchild who distributed the presents, each time took a whip along with the gifts, punished lightly the designated “naughty children”, related to them their shortcomings and received the promises of better behaviour (Will you pray ...; will you pray!) In real serious cases the Beelzebub was called to mete out punishment, who soundly thrashed the stubborn and incorrigible boys. But in every instance the child received a gift.

In the houses where the Christmas tree was not too large, the first Christchild received the decorated Christmas tree in the hallway or in the kitchen and then carried it to the children in the living room.

Beginning at 1:00 o'clock in the afternoon the Christchildren went from house to house, rang a small bell, and called at the door of the house, "May the Christchild come in?" and only when bidden did they enter. All went together into the hallway or into the kitchen and began to sing:

"O, silent, silent midnight,
And as I watched my little sheep
And saw up there in the stable
There, sang the angels, that it echoed,
They all sang. Gloria, Gloria,
Oh, you most holy Mary."

The first Christchild steps alone into the living room and sings:

"Praised be Jesus Christ,
May God give you a lovely, good evening
I am sent as a messenger.
I am named, Archangel Gabriel.
I carry the sceptre in my hand
That the Son of God sent me
The crown I carry on my head
This has God permitted me."

Turning to the door:

"Come in, come in, dear heart.
You are allowed to enter."

The second Christchild enters the room and sings:

"Praised be Jesus Christ.
May God give you a lovely good evening.
I am sent as a messenger.
I am named, Archangel Michael.
I carry the sword in my hand
That God's son gave to me.
The crown I carry on my head.
That has God the Lord permitted me."

Both:

"God full of grace, from whom
All things come, from the dearest
Little Jesus, it will be permitted."

Together:

"Enter, enter, you saintly Christ.
The chair has been set for you."

The third Christchild enters the room and sings alone:

“Praised be Jesus Christ,
May God give you a lovely good evening
I come in quite late in the evening.”

He now sets the cradle with the Christchild on the specially placed chair and continues to sing:

“I come and have now entered,
Will see if the children pray and sing diligently
And if they pray and sing
Diligently, I will bring you
Beautiful gifts, and if you
Do not pray and sing diligently
I will bring a slender whip.
Ah, angel, any faithful servant
Tell me if the children are obedient.”

First Christchild:

“Ah, Christ, Ah Christ! If I should tell you,
The world is full of naughty children.
When they come out of school,
They stand around all the streets,
Tear pages from their books,
Throw bricks into all windows,
Such wickedness they do.”

Third Christchild:

“Ah, angel, my faithful servant,
You give me great sorrow and pain,
So I will keep my presents
And go back to heaven”

First Christchild:

“Ah, Christ, do not follow your
Rule or your mind. Come
Back and give the children what
You wish.”

Third Christchild:

“So give me my little basket,
That I can give to big and little.”

Distributes the gifts among the children, during which the First and Second Christchild sing:

“Josef, dear Josef mine,
Come in and rock the little child.”

Josef comes into the room, kneels before the chair with the cradle and recites:

“How can I rock the cradle?
Can no longer bend my old back
Hayo, pum-payo; haya-pum-payo.”

First and second Christchild:

“Joseph, dear Joseph mine.
Who will give the child a cradle?”

Joseph, in similar vein:

“The manger shall be the child’s cradle
Hayo, pum-payo, hayo, pum-payo.”

All Christchildren:

“Joseph, dearest Joseph mine
Who will give the Child two blankets?”

Joseph:

“The hay and the straw shall be the Child’s blankets
Hayo, pum-payo; Hayo, pum-payo.”

All Christchildren:

“So, so, so, says Joseph mine
The hay and the straw shall be the blankets
Joseph, dearest Joseph mine.
Who will give the child two little servants?”

Joseph:

“The ox and the donkey shall be the servants.”

All Christchildren:

“So, so, so says Joseph mine,
The ox and the donkey shall be the servants
We thank you for the gifts which we have received.
Oh, sweet little Jesus, Oh, sweet little Jesus
May you all live in peace.
In peace, in happiness, in harmony
Now we will step out the door.
All unhappiness will go out before us.
Oh, Jesus sweet, Oh, Jesus sweet.”

During the last stanza the Christchildren and Joseph leave the room, whilst Beelzebub supplies himself with a naughty boy and makes a special presentation with the whip.

Upon arrival of darkness, rarely later than eight o'clock in the evening, the Christchildren ended their presentations and went home. About eleven o'clock they gathered again and went together to church to midnight mass. There they were given places of honour at the communion rail, set their cradles with the Christchild on the altar steps and sang, while the priest, clad in ceremonial dress along with the altar boys, stepped out of the sacristy upon the signal of a bell:

“Christ is born at this time, out of the Virgin Mary
The whole world shall be happy and bless heaven
Because He has sent us the little child
Where is the child to be found in the poor shepherd’s stable?
There it lies in a manger, quite a soft shelter
By the ox and the donkey
There is nothing of gold and silver in the poor shepherd’s stable.
Hay and straw and blankets must cover the child
Where can there be greater poverty?
Where can one find the angels to serve the child?
Cherubim and Seraphim, hurry there!
Each strives to be the first.”

Whereupon the Christchildren picked up their cradles, and then only did the priest approach the altar to celebrate the midnight mass. At the end of the Mass the Christchildren appeared again and closed the midnight mass with the following song:

“Come you shepherds, oh, come quickly here you see it is,
The wonderful Child. Gloria, Gloria, oh, most holy Mary!
We now step out very quietly on a linden leaf
And bid the child a very good night.
Gloria! Gloria! Most Holy Mary!”

WHEN I WAS STILL A RATSCHERBUB

[Translator's note: A "ratscher" was a wooden noisemaker and used between Good Friday and Easter when the church bells could not be rung, to serve the function of the bells to call the people to prayer and to various church services. Boys, mostly altar boys, were sent out with the noisemakers to various parts of the village to remind them that services were about to begin or that it was time for household prayers. The noisemakers or "ratschers" were known as "ratscherbub" or ratscher boy.]

A good distance behind the small Upper Austrian village there stands a stark barracks square which could be seen from afar and which gives the impression of sombre hopelessness. Even though the road leading to it is lined with bushy pear trees, there is at this house of suffering neither tree nor bush to afford privacy or the song of birds to those who for years wandered homeless and deprived of rights on the byways of life.

From the distance the barracks appeared to press itself into the earth in order to cover its shame and nakedness. It seems as if it wanted to hide the great square of the yard from the sight of strangers because misery and poverty offer each other their hand in the most numerous of variations.

The slippery and rutted road leads up to the embankment and in an instant the beholder becomes aware that here one can see bitter poverty in all its forms.

At one wooden wall sits an old man in the warm sunshine. His hair is thin and snow white; the face of a sickly hue is turned to the sun and appeared as a thirsting person drinking in the warm sunshine. The workworn, bony hands rest on his knees, and with a rattling sound the old man's breast rises and falls. His suit is threadbare and hangs loosely on the withered form.

Four boys are coming up the embankment. On their arms they are carrying a shabby bag made of sacking in which they carry their books and note books. They are coming from school.

When they noticed the grandfather they greeted him with a simple "Grüz Gott" and as his two grandchildren approach him, the other two approach more slowly. The first two belong to his daughter and have neither father nor mother. The war gobbled up the son-in-law, while his daughter suffered a fatal accident while serving in forced labour in Russia.

The two elders had long since earned their rest and would gladly have traded their earthly life for the next. But they had to remain alive for the children. Their daily prayer had one main theme, "Lord, give us a few more years until the boys are old enough to look after themselves."

"Grandfather," said the one boy, "today was the last school day before Easter. Tomorrow is Holy Thursday and we are now free."

“Tomorrow is Holy Thursday,” repeated the old man and his eyes suddenly had a peculiar look.

“Boys, if we were still at home in Rudolfsgnad . . . , you cannot imagine what a great joy tomorrow would have brought you. You were much too small when we had to leave, in order to impress upon you all that was beautiful in our village. You have no idea how we could celebrate holidays.”

“Ha, at our place we had Easter eggs first on the morning of Easter. Have you perhaps at home received them on Holy Thursday?”

The youngster that asked the question looked amused at the old man’s two grandchildren, and then at the old man. He came from Slavonia where, as in the Banat, the same customs did not apply throughout all the villages.

“No, not that, but for each real boy of your age the time between Holy Thursday and Easter Sunday was the best time of the year.”

The two strangers stared at the face of the old man with a puzzled look. And the one grandson quickly and almost impatiently asked:

“Grandfather, tell us about it like last year,” and sat down beside him on the bench and the other boys followed his lead.

“Grandfather, tell us about it like last year.”

He begins: “For us boys, who regularly and happily served as altar boys, the pleasure of the Easter holidays began weeks earlier. Our conversation centered at that time exclusively on the honoured position of a “Ratscherboy”.

“You know, of course, that on Holy Thursday during mass, the bells fly away and return only on Holy Saturday. And that the people should know when to pray in the morning, when the masses and other services were to take place in the church; that it is noon, when to pray in the evening, the boys go out through the village with the ratschers and make known what it was that had to be done.”

“Rudolfsgnad is surrounded by water on three sides and was protected against the high waters of the Danube and the Theisz and the Bega with high dykes. At Easter time we children particularly liked to play on the dykes of Theisz that passed by the whole length of the village; because the neighbouring headland down to the bed of the stream was overgrown with willows at this time, the most beautiful pussy willows had for the most part turned a delicate light green. And that was just the right time that one could make the best whistles from the willow stems. While we were whittling and trying out various kinds of whistles, we discussed in lively fashion who would be allotted which street;

practiced our speeches, and imagined how many eggs and how much money we would earn with our “ratsching”

“On Holy Thursday in the morning the “Messner” divided the houses among us altar boys and each boy was required to strictly observe the rotation. No street and no house was to be overlooked. Among the altar boys there was a strict order of rank. The four who were always at hand and punctually carried out their duties, were the “first” altar boys and were now rewarded. They received a half main street with the houses on both sides and took on a helper.”

“On Holy Thursday during the morning services the bells flew away. According to an old belief they fly to the Pope in Rome where they spend their time in deep grief and in silence in remembrance of the suffering and death of the Saviour.”

“At twelve o’clock the ratscherboys ran from the church for the first time. In the left hand each had a stout stick with an iron point in order to protect oneself from angry dogs, and in the right hand held the “ratsch” with which each tried to make the greatest possible noise. Now they went up and down the street to each house, spun their ratsches in order to draw attention to themselves, and then delivered their prepared speech:

“Dear people, let me tell you,
The bell has rung 12 o’clock”

This was followed again with a spirited whirl of the ratsch. It was natural that the dogs grew belligerent on account of this, and each ratscherboy for weeks after Easter had stories to tell about heroic battles with the dogs.”

“In the evening at half past six each ratscherboy ran his course to the end of the village, ratsched and shouted his recitation at each house:

“Dear people, it is time for bed,
That you prepare yourself for prayer
Kneel down and pray.
The “Angel of the Lord”, - Ave Maria.”

On Good Friday we were required to get out of bed already at five o’clock in order that we would arrive on time at church, because at six o’clock it began again, ratsching and to each house the reminder:

“We ratsch, we ratsch the Angelic Greeting,
That each Catholic Christian know
That he must pray!”

On the way back we again had to go into each house and proclaim:

“At nine o’clock, services and burial.”

At noon, on the way out, the same recitation was given as on the day before; on the way back the following:

“Sermon at three o’clock, and at six o’clock burial service.

“For the stations of the cross after the three o’clock sermon the whole village gathered and it was considered a duty for everyone to pray at the grave of Christ and to kiss the five wounds.”

“At this evening we had to perform the same ratsching as on the evening of Holy Thursday and on Holy Saturday in the morning on the way out, the same as on Good Friday, but on the way back:

“At seven o’clock blessing of fire, blessing of water, at nine o’clock, the mass.”

The blessing of water was quickly over and had for us boys no particular interest. Contrary to this the blessing of fire was for us altar boys the high point of the Easter celebrations. By Jew burning and Jew chasing one could test one’s mettle, and especially by jumping the fire each could demonstrate his courage and receive recognition. Those were surely pagan rites of spring that had to do with the routing and symbolic burning of winter and thereby became mixed in with religious rites. The fire jumping was deemed to bring health and strength and the coals taken home to the houses to protect animals from all illness.”

“During the nine o’clock mass the bells came flying back from Rome and that brought the ratscher service to an end. After this mass we went to collect eggs. Each ratscherboy was now a master and got two boys of the village as helpers, who carried a large basket whose bottom was covered with straw that the eggs would not break. In his free hand each carried a stout stick to defend himself against the dogs, and some helper may have a ratsch in order to perform the final act in a spirited and festive manner. During this the following song was sung in each house:

“Dear people, we come in the Easter time,
Give us eggs, give us money,
Give us anything that you wish,
Only, no beatings, they hurt.
Eccu, eccu, russafee, tamburee,
The eggs are baked, we heard them crack.
We heard them ring, the young girl should bring them.
Good fortune for this house, misfortune out,
Bring two dozen eggs out
Or we will break a hole into this house!
A few pennies for the greedy Jew.”

“The ending required a long whirl of the ratsch. Immediately the women of the house put a few fresh raw eggs or even hard-boiled coloured eggs into the basket and some money and a piece of cake besides.”

“You can imagine that each ratscherboy received many eggs of which he was extraordinarily proud. In his family he was recognized hero of the Easter celebrations. In some years, too, was able to gather over 150 eggs. My mother sold most of them and bought for me a new suit from the proceeds which was the suit for going to church.”

“It happened occasionally that a housewife could not be at home during this part of the day, so she would deliver the ratscher fee to the home of the particular boy. Naturally there were some louts among us, that when a door was locked or if no one was at home, who damaged with their stick the freshly decorated blue painted front of the house. They seemed to literally carry out the threat, “or we will break a hole into the house.”

“As far as food was concerned the Holy Week fare was not particularly rich or enjoyable. According to an old custom one could not eat one’s fill for three days. On Holy Thursday a strict fast was already begun and no meat or bacon was eaten. At noon each household had spinach and fried eggs or egg noodles with green salad, with richer people there was fish. Good Friday was the strictest fast day of the year. In many houses on this day, nothing was cooked; in some houses only soup. Throughout one ate corn meal mush or corn cakes, but endured hunger intentionally to demonstrate one’s association with the suffering of Christ. Holy Saturday, too, was kept as a day of fasting until the evening after the resurrection procession; - when one began looking forward to the happy mood which was engendered in all churches by the universal song: “The Saviour is risen, freed from the bonds of death ...,” was called forth; then home, where the first Easter feast was placed before us.

“Easter Sunday was celebrated as the greatest Holy Day. Everywhere there prevailed pure happiness and a blessed mood lay over everything. In the church the many “Hallelujahs”, the songs of joy at the altar and in the choir, over the resurrection of Christ, the victory of life over death.

But also outside the church the depressing sorrow of Holy Week was replaced with a happy mood and a feeling of release. Most of all the greatest joy was found among the children, because Easter Sunday was the day when all children up to 14 years of age were presented with gifts by their godfather and godmother, as at Christmas. Now there were many coloured Easter eggs, also eggs of sugar and chocolate; also oranges, apples, figs, plums and some pocket money over which each child had full control. There was always a hullabaloo, a gathering in, the making of comparisons, of feasting and of waste.”

“The Easter holidays were not quite so interesting and joyful for the bigger boys and girls. They passed the time somehow and hardly knew what to do with their free time. It was not proper for them to go to the inn; so they visited each other and took walks along the banks of the Theisz, - till at last in the afternoon of Easter Monday the big event arrived for them in which they attended a free public dance at the large inn.”

“That was for them always the high point of the Easter holidays, and for all the closing out of the festivities.”

“You see, boys, so rich and so enjoyable was our life in the homeland, when I was still a ratscherboy.”

LIST OF NAMES

of the Inhabitants of Rudolfsgnad before the Expulsion

(October 1944)

I have endeavoured to publish the names of the Rudolfsgnaders who were resident there in the years shortly before the expulsion. Many landmen assisted in this process, despite that we could not avoid mistakes, especially in their years of birth and birth places.

In October 1944, the Community consisted of 3134 people, non-local service people and such not included. These are also not included in the following list.

As victims of war are listed

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Soldiers (including missing) | 226 |
| Civilians | 252 |
| Total | 478 persons |

As well, 42 women and girls as well as 11 men were carried off to Russia

Meaning of the Abbreviations

| | |
|------|--|
| + | Soldiers – who died in battle or died in prison (of war) camps; civilians who died after October 1944 as a result of war, or flight. |
| V | Missing |
| B | Brother |
| E | Parents |
| Es | Grandchildren |
| G | Wife |
| Ge | Grandparents |
| S | Son |
| Schw | In-law |
| Sm | Mother-in-law |
| Ss | Son-in-law |
| Sts | Stepson |
| Stt | Stepdaughter |
| T | daughter |
| Zs | Foster son |
| Zt | Foster daughter |

In Schwenningen, April 1966
Franz Schneider

NAME LIST
(See separate file)

EPILOGUE

In the year 1891 the village council of Rudolfsnad published a Monograph in remembrance of the 25th Anniversary of the founding of the community. It was highly acclaimed in its time.

This book, which is still in the hands of several families, contains rich research material about our home village. Because it is written in way that is difficult for today's generation to understand, a shortened and revised work has proven to be useful especially since a reprint of the old edition would have been very expensive and a new supplement would have to be written anyway.

Since the publication of the Monograph 75 years have passed, of which the last quarter century has brought great suffering and expulsion.

Through this book we wish to show our gratitude to the founders of our village, all our victims, and respectfully remember them.

We need to maintain the history of our home village for today's generation and for our descendants.

We thank all, who with their help, the publication of this Heimat book was made possible.

Special thanks is due to Messers Oberbürgermeister Gruber, Sindelfingen; der Feldmühle AG, Düsseldorf; den Efka-Werken Fritz Kiehn GmbH, Trossingen; der Martin Jauch KG, Schwenningen; der Firma Guko, Wellendingen; der Werbeagentur H. Hartmann, Reutlingen; der Firma Ensslin-Druck, Reutlingen; der Buchdruckerei R. Bardenschlager, Reutlingen.

München/Schwenningen/Trossingen, July 1966

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