

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This history of the Grisak family, stemming from the autobiography of our father, Joseph Grisak (1873-1950), son of Andrew Grisak (1850-1902), of Slovinky, County of Spiš, Czechoslovakia, has been compiled from the original manuscript our father prepared at our encouragement. Father began his writing on December 20, 1934, and the last entry was made on February 2, 1940. He passed away on March 16, 1950, at the age of 72. It is planned to have his papers (133 sheets written in green ink on both sides) bound in hard cover for future preservation.

Father was a very interesting conversationalist with an amazing memory and a great capacity for detail. He received a lot of pleasure telling about his family, life in the old country laced with humorous anecdotes, his experiences as an immigrant to America, etc. In our recognition of these personal characteristics, he was encouraged to prepare this autobiography as a legacy to his children, and to the descendants of Andrew Grisak. Its publication commemorates the 100th anniversary of father's birth.

In addition to this manuscript, we wish to acknowledge the assistance we received from our mother and her vivid recollection in clarifying names, recalling events, establishing dates, etc., that added to the value and accuracy of the manuscript. At the time of this writing, mother is in the 97th year of her birth.

We wish to acknowledge also the assistance we received from many friends and relatives to make this history more complete. Historical supplements, maps, family trees, photos, etc, related to our family have been included for clarification and a more comprehensive history.

This history is prepared in two parts. The first part covers our Grisak ancestry and dates up to the death of our grandfather in 1902.

It is concluded with brief statements summarizing the lives of all grandfather's twelve children: Mary, Joseph, Anna, Ilona, Katherine, Andrew, Julia, John, Hazel, George, Susan and Steve.

The distribution of this first part is made to the grandchildren inasmuch as it gives them a living history of their parents and grandparents. It is designed to provide these descendants with a starting point for continuing their particular branch of the Grisak family tree if they so desire. Our family name is also spelled "Gresock."

The second part of this history will be devoted primarily to father's immediate family, his marriage, early life in Pennsylvania, migration to Guernsey County Ohio in 1910 where he worked in the coal mines, etc.

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Son - Michael J. Grisak  
Merrillville, Indiana

COVER DESIGN: Special thanks go to Jack Grisak (Akron) for his creative cover design depicting the famous Spiš Castle which he visited. It is located some 14 miles north of Slovinky. The date this ancient structure was first built is unknown. It was restored in the 16th century and is presently being renovated as a major tourist attraction. Archeologists are finding many artifacts that may lead to the origins of this area.

#### FOREWORD

In the preparation of this history-autobiography, our Grisak family tree, ancestral cousins, and life of the early immigrant to America, it is well to recognize the legendary story brought to mind relating to one great monarch of the East. This, undoubtedly, highly respected individual and a man of eminent knowledge in his own right, was seeking an answer to what is "permanent" on this earth, or what is without change. That is, what can withstand the ravages of time; what can be labeled as "forever." To this query he, no doubt, gave much thought before dispatching his wise men out into the world in quest of that "permanency."

After concluding a long and diligent search, visiting heads of state in their itinerary, conversing with individuals of reputable knowledge, probing the subject with religious leaders of the time, etc., and upon their return, so the legendary narration discloses, these wise men brought back a report summarized in these few words: "And this too shall pass away."

We must be cognizant of the fact that what one reads written across these pages is prepared in the light and knowledge of people, events, conditions, and situations as they were personally known to me and existed at the time. However, this too "can pass away" with the ensuing years as changes have already taken place and continue to be inevitable since you never step into the same river twice.

What is written here obviously centers around our family and the inhabitants living in and around the village of my birth, and concentrates on establishing their ancestral roots. However, it is well to point out that in addition to the counties (stolica or zupa) on the eastern border of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire that are now incorporated within the U.S.S.R., in this general area of the Carpathian mountains, more especially in the Provinces of Galicia in southern Poland, and the three eastern counties (Šariš, Spiš, and Zemplin) in the Province of Slovakia in Czechoslovakia, there is a concentration of people whose historical heritage lies with the same ancestral cousin commonly referred to as "Russkij."

Finally, it is recognized that what is written across these pages can appear to be fictional at times, and may even provoke questions as to its authenticity. Nevertheless, its true value can be measured only by a receptive and open mind of our kinfolks who have developed a genuine and sincere interest in tracing their family roots.

#### IMMIGRANTS "WITHOUT A COUNTRY"

As the passing of time traversed into the 20th century, more especially around this particular period of time, the influx of European immigrants emigrating to America was at its peak. Their first glimpse of that outstretched arm bearing that familiar torch on the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor was a welcome sight. The term "Castle Garden" (large circular building on Manhattan Island) became a household word to the early immigrant because it was the landing place and their first shelter in their new home. It is well to recognize, however, that not all immigrants landed at the port of New York; many entered the country at ports such as Baltimore, etc.

The recording of vital statistics was most important. For a country of birth, the immigrants from central Europe, and more especially from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, were recorded as "Austria" or

"Austro-Hungary." However, it later was recognized that these immigrants were neither Austrian nor Hungarian when the question of nationality was raised. They had little or no working knowledge of the language of either Austria or Hungary. It can be said that they were innocent victims of manipulated political boundaries so common on the central European continent throughout the centuries. They were thus classified only by law.

At the time of my birth, Austro-Hungary was a vast domain comprising the greater part of Central Europe. It truly was a melting pot with a multiplicity of nationalities clustered within its far-reaching borders. This Monarchy was bordered on the east principally by the Russian Empire ruled by Czar Alexander II (1855-1881); on the west and northern direction by the German Empire where Kaiser William I (1797-1888) was the ruling sovereign; and, extended into the Balkan Peninsula. During this period of time, the ruling emperor of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was Francis Joseph I (1830-1916). He ascended the throne of this monarchy on December 2, 1848, at the early age of 18, and ruled for 68 years. During his exceptionally long reign, it is interesting to make this comparison that many of his subjects were born, lived their life span, and died knowing no other ruler. His subjects comprised a multiplicity of nationalities, thus truly a melting pot with varied ethnic roots branching out in many directions.

Relating back to the discovery of that great "Eastern Monarch" that nothing seems to be permanent on this earth, the vast and spreading Austro-Hungarian Monarchy too "passed away." And, with this passing, it can be logically rationalized that these immigrants to America up to the period of time when this monarchy was dissolved, found themselves "without a country" so to speak. I was one of these immigrants and found it at times very confusing when asked to explain "country of birth" appearing on my birth certificate as "Austria." This confusion was minimized to a degree at the end of World War I when the national identity of many ethnic groups of central Europe was restored as republics with self-government who, heretofore, were labeled as subjects of their more powerful conquerors or rulers.

Allied to Germany during World War I, at its close the 261,260 sq.m. of territory with approximately 51,350,000 inhabitants, the Austro-Hungarian empire was divided into states of Austria, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, and the remaining portions given to Romania, Poland, Yugoslavia and Italy.

#### CZECHOSLOVAKIA - PROVINCE OF SLOVAKIA

Out of the far-flung reaches of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was carved the country officially recognized as Czechoslovakia. It was established as an independent republic on October 28, 1918, at the termination of World War I. This newly established republic consisted primarily of the Provinces of Bohemia with an area of 20,102 sq.m., Moravia with an area of 8,584 sq.m., and Slovakia with an area of 18,895 sq.m.

The Province of Slovakia is located almost exactly in the center of Europe. It has no direct outlet on any of the larger bodies of water. And, it lies in the extreme southeastern part of this new republic, and south of the Carpathian Mountains located in the central part of Europe and extending in a semi-circular belt for some 800 miles. Slovakia is bordered on the east by the Soviet Union, on the south by Hungary, and on the north by Poland. To the west lies the Province of Moravia.

Also, slightly to the southwest, near the capital city of Bratislava, the Danube River provides a partial common border with Austria. At this point, the historic city of Vienna on the Danube is 63 km or some 39 miles to the west of Bratislava.

In comparison to one of our United States, Slovakia has a striking resemblance and compares very favorably to the state of West Virginia. In square miles of area, it is slightly smaller than West Virginia -- 18,895 sq.m., compared to 24,170 sq.m. But, in comparing other characteristics, they both can be described as slightly oval in shape. In topography or surface features, they both have a mountainous terrain, and they both contain large mineral deposits. West Virginia is known for its large deposits of coal, while Slovakian Ore Mountains (Slovenske Rudohori) are well-known for their large ore deposits. And, neither West Virginia nor Slovakia have a direct outlet on any of the larger bodies of water. They both are land-locked to a large degree.

Once you cross the hills and the low mountains from the west that mark the border between Moravia and Slovakia, you enter a different world -- mountains are more rugged, rivers more turbulent, and the land itself more mysterious, echoing centuries of past civilization. In fact, promotional literature encouraging tourism to Slovakia goes as far as to state that Slovakia, in a true sense, is the cradle of civilization, tracing its past to 600 B.C.

In traveling thru the Province of Slovakia, when surface features are the topic of conversation, you will hear references to the High and Low Tatras, to the East and West Beskids, etc. You will be exposed to the world famous Spas (Vary or Kupely) or health resorts. Medical opinion has it that the mineral rich waters at these spas act on the human body in a way that correct chemical imbalances. In your journey thru this small province you will have an opportunity to see castles of the Middle-Ages - some in semi-ruin and others in fair condition or being restored. To name a few attractions that can be found a short distance from our village of Slovinky are the Dobsina Ice Caves consisting of almost 200,000 cubic yards of ice, and in the town of Levoca is the Gothic Church of St. James which has one of the most splendid wooden altars to be found anywhere in Europe, the Spiš castle, etc.

This province is truly rich in natural beauty and cultural and historical relics. About 20 miles northeast of Košice is Czechoslovakia's strangest phenomenon -- the Herl'any Geyser. This geyser erupts on the average of every 30 to 40 hours. It can be said that eastern Slovakia is similar to the United States in natural wonders.

#### SLOVAKIA - SLOVINKY - RUSSIAN POPULATION

The Province of Slovakia was formerly divided into what was commonly referred to as "Stolica" or "Zupa" which is comparable to a county in the United States. These sixteen political subdivisions were as follows: Abauj, Bratislava, Gemer, Hont, Komarno, Liptov, Nitra, Novohrad, Orava, Saris, Spis, Tekov, Trencin, Turiec, Zemplin and Zvolen.

The two languages of the Czechoslovak Republic, namely Czech and Slovak, are not identical, either in their literary form or in their dialects, in the same way as are the Serb and Croatian languages. Slovak is, however, so closely allied to Czech that most scholars describe it as a dialect, although their view meets with many dissentient voices.

However, it is interesting to note that in several of the eastern counties of Slovakia, especially in Saris, Spis, and Zemplin, you will find areas and isolated rural settlements with groups of people who speak a language which is neither Czech nor Slovak. It is a dialect of the greater Russian language interlaced with many regional variations that developed over the years. The inhabitants of these many settlements are of one apparent national origin, speak their own regional dialect, attend one village church, and above all, are interrelated either thru birth, marriage or "Kumstvo" (sponsors at christening). Truly, it is a unique situation of a group of people of one national origin, either thru migration or victims of changes in political boundaries living in the sphere and under the protection of another government. The situation is comparable to our ethnic neighborhoods in our larger cities. It can be said that by law these people are classified by the country in which they reside, nevertheless they are truly Russian by ancestry.

The village of Slovinky, located in the Spiska Stolica, falls into this broad classification of people apparently of one national origin, speaking a regional Russian dialect, and living in an area outside of the bounds of their ancestral roots. Slovinky lies nestled in a huge valley extending in a general northeast direction towards the town of Krompachy. Further to the northeast and beyond Krompachy lies the city of Presov. To the southeast of Slovinky is the larger city of Kosice.

The town of Krompachy lies adjacent to the Hornad River, and is located on the main line of a railroad traveling in an east-west direction. The railroad station in Krompachy was the outlet to the outside world, so to speak, for the inhabitants of Slovinky emigrating to America. It has been related time and again that when the very early inhabitants began emigrating to America, they were escorted out of Slovinky in religious processions with church banners and tolling church bells to their local point of departure. Measured by the prevailing mode of travel at the time (foot or beast of burden), it took approximately one hour of time to make the journey down this huge valley from Slovinky to Krompachy. Exodus from Slovinky began shortly after our U.S. Civil War.

This valley is cradled on both sides by the Biela Skala ranges which is part of the rugged mountainous terrain of the general area. In these ranges are located many operating mines extracting various ores such as copper, iron, etc. It was thru the various occupations available at these mines that the local inhabitants who did not live off the land, earned their livelihood.

In an endeavor to establish the date of settlement of the village of Slovinky, local legend has it that the ore mines were in operation in this area long before the settlement of the village. It is interesting to note that when the subject of the origin of the local ore mines was alluded to by the older inhabitants in their day-to-day conversations, invariably it would center around the discovery of the inscription uncovered in the mine named "Katorena." In further questioning on this unique and interesting discovery, one would learn that the inscription was located, presumably, in an abandoned area of this mine commonly referred to as a "worked-out section" dating back some 500 years.

In recalling from memory, the names of some of the other larger mines in the area in addition to Katorena were: Doroteja, Lacimperk, Peter Shahta, Legi, Adam-Eva, Tadeja, Ilena, Svata Hana, Bogdanec, Ladislava, Trinkel, Ferdinanta, etc. Also, located in these ranges were mines whose output was on a smaller scale.

On some maps the village of Slovinky is cartographically portrayed as singular. However, it consists of two settlements -- Upper or Vishny Slovinky, and Lower or Nizny Slovinky. These two settlements are nestled in five beautiful valleys. The inhabitants have lived in this area for an untold number of years cultivating the land and working in the neighboring ore mines. Being such a unique location for a settlement, the five valleys surrounding Slovinky are worthy of mention in more detail. Two of the valleys surround the lower part of the village or Nizny Slovinky. Among the local villagers, one of these two valleys is referred to as "Porachka Dolina." The local usage of this term has reference to the general direction of this valley to the nearby village of "Porach." The other valley is referred to as "Kostelna Dolina" presumably on account of the location of the village church and school.

The remaining three valleys surrounding Slovinky are located in the upper part or Vishny Slovinky. One of the valleys is referred to as "Vishnanska Dolina" or upper valley because it projects from the upper part of the village to the far off mountain ranges. The second valley is called "Zakut" and is located in a southern direction into one edge of the village generally referred to as "Kut" or corner. The third valley is called "Furmanec" or "Furmanska Dolina." This name stems from the fact that in the very early days of the ore mine operations the drivers or teamsters (furmane) traveled this route thru this valley from the mines to the market outlets. Enhancing the beauty of these five valleys, the general area was surrounded by forests primarily of evergreen trees. It was in this valley of "Furmanec" on the outskirts of Vishny Slovinky that I was born on January 16, 1878, in the house built by my grandfather.

The question arises, why "Slovinky" was selected for the name of our village. According to the older inhabitants the inference was that the name of "Slovinky" was synonymous with the word "Slav" or "Slavjane" and was initially used to refer to that expanding settlement of Slavs that migrated into the area, logically from the east, in search of employment and to upgrade their living standards. And, with the passing of years, its usage evolved into a permanent name for the village.

Inasmuch as the term "Slav" or "Slavjan" is a general term of reference which can be applied to any one of several groups of Slavs, the question arises as to when and from where did these early settlers migrate? What was their national origin? With what linguistic group of Slavs did their roots lie? The answers to these questions are important to establish their true identity. Inasmuch as the scarcity of documented evidence reveals much to be desired in the area of their origin, some semblance of a timetable, etc., history and logic can best serve as a practical bench mark to point in the proper direction. That is, to point the way that these early Slav settlers were among an expanding population migrating geographically from the east as the discovery of ore in the west became common knowledge, and that employment opportunities presented a favorable atmosphere for migration.

However, more specific and much more convincing is the fact that with any migration or expansion of frontiers, as the case may be, it is logical that the "old" is carried over to the "new." For example, worship and religious practices, national customs and habits, language, culinary arts, etc., are attached to the emigres for an indefinite period of time. Thus, abiding to their Eastern Orthodox religion laced with its centuries old customs, teaching the Cyrillic alphabet in church affiliated schools, the language (varying in regional dialects because physical distance alone accounts for wide variations how people talk),

surnames, etc., serves as positive evidence that the historical heritage of these Slavs lies with their ancestral cousins to the east. This can be further traced to the founding of the Russian Empire in the year 865 by Prince Rurik, and followed by the acceptance of Christianity in the year 988 by Prince Vladimir who took on the Christian name of Basil, and the baptism in the River Dnieper at Kiev. Further, continuing to the year 1613 when the allied house of the Romanoffs came to power, and up to the present time to the year 1922 when the Soviet Union was formed -- the present form of government.

Surnames of immigrants is an important bench mark to a certain degree when tracing roots or national origin. As a personal example, the surname of "Grisak" refers to the word "Gnaw" in the Russian vocabulary which alludes to nibbling or chewing. It is not an uncommon name. Many families unrelated or probably very distantly related to us use the surname of "Grisak" and some spell it phonetically as "Gresock."

From my own parents I was able to piece together the information that our forebears were among the early Slav settlers of Slovinky, carpenters by trade, who initially were employed in building wooden shafts for the area mines and subsequently settled permanently in this region to earn a livelihood in mining the local ores. In attempting to establish an approximate date of their arrival, the answer from my parents was a general reference such as "it was our great-great grandparents," or a mention of our forefathers (Grisaks) coming to this region "a long, long time ago from around Kiev (ot Kiova) in Russia."

These settlements of Slavs in this general area around the Carpathian Mountains are commonly referred to as "Carpatho-Russian or "Uhorschane" (hill dwellers) -- a popular label referring to the rugged hills of the Carpathians as compared to the plains or steppes east of these mountains. It is comparable to popular labels or references such as "White Russians," "High Russians," "Low Russians," etc., as applied to their ancestral cousins concentrated within the Russian borders.

Therefore, further exploitation of common logic indicates that this segment of population referred to as Carpatho-Russian or Uhorschane, in their very early separation from their ancestral kinfolks, compares very favorably to the settlement by pioneers of our West in the early days of America. As fate would have it, they both traveled to the west, they both traveled by foot and beast of burden, and they both were in search of better opportunities in a new area. However, the Uhorschane had to cross a neighboring political boundary and go into another country, while the pioneers never left their native country and remained as Americans.

#### THE GRAF AND THE PEASANT

The feudalistic system of social polity in which lordship and vassalage were the essential features, was practiced to a modified degree in the Austro-Hungarian Empire during the lengthy reign of Francis Joseph I. Originating among the German tribes, it spread rapidly in Europe during the Middle Ages. The existing castles found in Europe to this day are remnants or traces of that outmoded form of autocracy or Despotism. At the head of this feudalistic system was the ruling monarch with his subjects bearing various titles designating degrees of nobility, social status, or rank. Under this system, in general, large land grants by the monarch went to those swearing allegiance to the sovereign.

Tenancy on these land grants, in turn, was granted by the head of the feudal estate. These grants were made on the condition of rendering military or other type of service to the feudal estate as local conditions required. In the Province of Slovakia the head of the feudal estate was referred to by the German term of "Graf." This was a title of nobility equivalent to an English Earl or French Count. The Graf exercised immense influence and brandished great power in his area of domination. One can safely say that the destiny of the peasants was influenced to a large degree by the idiosyncrasies of their sovereign.

The inhabitants of the village of Slovinky and the surrounding general area of the five valleys were referred to, according to local terminology, as "Urbane," "Sedlaci," "Havjare," and "Panscare." The origin of these terms of reference probably lies in antiquity.

The "Urbane" lived primarily in the village and, according to local standards, were considered the more affluent group of people. The "Sedlaci" comprised that group that were considered small land owners who earned their livelihood from tilling the soil. The third group, the "Havjare," lived primarily in the village, owned their own homes and the plot of land upon which the home was situated, and they earned their livelihood by working in the local ore mines.

The fourth group referred to as "Pansciare" were the people who built their own homes and cultivated gardens on land whose title rested with the Graf. They were vassals of the Graf, so to speak, paying an annual tenant's fee for the use of the land in the form of labor. Our Grisak family came under this classification. That is, we owned our own home but it was located on land that belonged to the Graf.

For the privilege of occupying land belonging to the Graf, the Panscare were obligated to render service to the feudal estate or Graf in the form of performing work as assigned -- in our case it was 36 days per year for the mere privilege of using the plot of land, and another 4 days per year for the permission of burning wood from the forests of the estate for heating and cooking purposes. The work assignment in our case consisted primarily of forest work such as planting trees, etc., and performing odd jobs in a nursery. The Panscare worked primarily in the local ore mines like the Havjare.

The Graf maintained his own security personnel called a "Hajduk." Their duty was to guard the estate against infractions. For instance, permission was granted the Panscare to gather wood for domestic purposes but it was limited strictly to dry wood only. In the event the individual was apprehended chopping live trees on the stump, his axe was seized by the hajduk and taken to the Graf's headquarters or "Majir" located in Nizny Slovinky where the Graf maintained an office with a staff to supervise various functions. In order to retrieve his axe, it was necessary for the apprehended individual to appear before the Graf in person at which time a fine was levied in commensurate to the severity of the infraction.

Another example - a stream or brook made its way from the neighboring limestone mountains down the Porachka Dolina in which the Graf kept his prized fish. This area for fishing was off-limits to all the peasants. If the hajduk apprehended anyone fishing in these waters, a severe penalty was imposed. Stories have circulated in the village that on occasion a guilty peasant would spend up to three months in jail if he was unable to satisfy the assessed monetary fine.



#### EARLY CHILDHOOD - DEATH OF MOTHER

It was in the Province of Slovakia (formerly Austro-Hungary, and now Czechoslovakia), in the County of Spis, Village of Slovinky, in the area known as Furmanec, I was born as the second child to the union of Andrew Grisak, and Katarina Mofljar. It was in the house (log cabin is more descriptive) that my grandfather built. The date of my birth is recorded as January 16, 1878. I was baptized on January 20th by the Rev. Andras Petrasovsky in the St. George's Greek Catholic Eastern Rite church in Nizny Slovinky. My godfather was John Mofljar, and my godmother was Anna Poracky.

At the time of my birth, my sister Mary was two years old, being born in the year 1876. My sister Anna followed me in birth, being born in 1880. Then following sister Anna, my mother gave birth to another sister named Ilona (Nellie) who died very shortly after birth. Following this sister, our mother gave birth to another girl who also was named Ilona or Nellie. This second Ilona was born in 1882.

At the early age of four, I well remember the sudden death of our mother. She died in June of 1882, three days following the birth of my third sister Ilona. Compounding the tragedy of mother's death, our father was in America at the time in search of employment. In the meantime, pending father's return, we were placed in the custody and care of father's sister Julia who proved to be a very strict disciplinarian.

After some nine months in America, our father returned home in October, 1882, to his four orphan children: Mary, age 6; Joseph, age 4; Anna, age 2; and Ilona, age 4 months. Shortly after father's return from America, he married a single girl by the name of Anna Djorko.

My father's second wedding ceremony is very vivid in my mind even though I was only four years old. It all centered around one incident. As was the custom at wedding ceremonies in our village, and being the only son, my stepmother the new bride, presented me with a feather to insert in my small hat. This gave me the honorable distinction of being a member of the official wedding party -- a "Druzba."

#### HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH

The historical development of the Greek Catholic Church lends itself to tracing our ancestral cousins inasmuch as it is the unbroken ancestral lineage to our historical heritage. This Christian denomination referred to as the "Uniat Church" is a very interesting and timely subject to explore across these pages inasmuch as both of my parents and I received baptism in this church.

The existence of the Greek Catholic Church of the Eastern Rite is centered primarily in the provinces of western Russia, and the general area of the Carpathian Mountains of southern Poland and eastern Czechoslovakia. At the time, both of these areas were under the Austro-Hungarian Empire, as outlined by the historical events that follow.

In the year 988 Prince Vladimir accepted Christianity from the Greek Orthodox Church, and the Russian people, as a symbol of their acceptance of the Orthodox Faith, were baptized in the waters of the river Dnieper at Kiev.

It must be emphasized that the position of the Orthodox people in the southwestern provinces thru the years, developed to be radically different from that of the Moscovian Russia. Moscow was strictly an

Orthodox Christian state. Its rulers considered themselves defenders of the Orthodox Faith. In fact, it was the normal, the accepted thing to be an Orthodox Christian, and Orthodoxy was not only a matter of personal faith and conviction but a national way of life. It encompassed all social customs, the routine of daily life, and the political philosophy of the ruling classes.

On the other hand, in southwestern Russia, and in the areas referred to as Galicia, Carpatho-Russia, etc., Orthodoxy was the religion of a minority in a Roman Catholic state. The missionary zeal of the Roman Catholic Church blended there with the proud and aggressive character of the rulers especially in Poland and Austria. Also, it should be pointed out that in the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries the idea of religious tolerance was almost unknown and bloodshed and cruel reprisals were accepted as a matter of course, and to a degree, patriotic.

The first to feel the pressures of Roman Catholic influence were the rich landowners. It was easy for the rulers of these Roman Catholic states, especially Poland and Austria, to favor those who were converted to Roman Catholicism, and to discriminate against those who remained loyal to the Orthodox Church.

The position of the clergy became more and more difficult. The appointment of bishops and of the Metropolitan of Kiev had to be approved by the Patriarch of Constantinople who was far away and who himself was under Turkish rule. This dependence upon a foreign church authority irked many of the bishops. However, the lower classes, the peasants, kept their loyalty to the Orthodox Church, but they had neither the political power nor the education to defend it.

With this background and in this peculiar setting, a historical event took place in the year 1596 -- the "Unia" (Union) of Brest-Litovsk, or the formation of the Greek Catholic Eastern Rite Church. History indicates that this move was just another attempt to impose a union of the Russian Orthodox Church with the Roman Catholic Church.

The "Unia" was supported by some of the bishops who were particularly irked by their dependence on Constantinople and who felt that allegiance to Rome would give them prestige and importance. They went to Rome, were received there by the Pope and upon their return called a Church Council in Brest-Litovsk. The Patriarchs of Constantinople and Alexandria sent their delegates to the Council also. Six of the Russian bishops who attended and some laymen joined the Patriarch's delegates and refused to take part in the "Unia," but four bishops subscribed to it.

Thus, with the support of the particular rulers involved, the "Unia" was solemnly proclaimed. In essence, it granted the Orthodox people the right to hold services in their own language rather than in Latin, and to keep certain Orthodox forms of worship. It also allowed priests to marry, but in all essential matters of doctrine and in the recognition of the Pope's authority, the "Uniat" imposed complete acceptance of the Roman Catholic principles.

Nevertheless, it is well to point out that the "Unia" lost its influence in the greater part of Southwestern Russia in the 19th century, when the Polish kingdom ceased to be an independent state. Even earlier, at the end of the 17th century, Little Russia had split away from Poland and joined Russia, thus bringing its Orthodox population under the protection of the Moscow czars.

The provinces that remained part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Galicia and Carpatho-Russia, continued to feel the many hardships of Roman Catholic pressure. The Orthodox people of Galicia and Carpatho-Russia were persecuted because they were Orthodox, and also because they were of Russian nationality living in another country. Many priests and peasants were put on trial, imprisoned, and ill-treated. In fact, there is evidence that at the beginning of World War I, as many as 30,000 Carpatho-Russians were arrested and subjected to extreme hardships in prison camps.

However, it is interesting to note, that with the passing of time, the end of the 19th century saw many of the Uniats from Galicia and Carpatho-Russia emigrate to the United States and consequently return to the fold of their Orthodox Church. One of the first Uniat parishes in America to return to Orthodoxy was the St. Mary's parish in Minneapolis, in the year 1890, with Father Alexis Toth as its pastor. It is also very interesting to note that presently the Uniat or Greek Catholics in areas under the domination of the Soviet Union apparently are not given official recognition as an on-going denomination -- that it should be either Orthodox or Roman Catholic.

It is likewise interesting to make a timely historical observation at this time for the purpose of comparing dates of major religious events thru the centuries. The Lutheran Church and the Greek Catholic Church have this in common that measured in historical concepts, they both came into existence about the same time, that is, during the later part of the 16th century. The Greek Catholic Church branched off from the Orthodox Church by forming a union with Rome in the year 1596. And, on the other hand, the Lutheran Church began establishing permanent roots in Europe also during the later part of the 16th century.

Martin Luther (1483-1546) made his historic defense before the Diet of Worms (Germany) in the year 1521. This set into motion the break from the Roman Catholic Church that finally culminated during the later part of the 16th century.

Another historical event with religious overtones that took place in the later part of the 16th century was the adoption of the Gregorian Calendar on January 7, 1584, by the Roman Catholic states of the Holy Roman Empire. Heretofore, the Julian Calendar was used exclusively.

#### EARLY SCHOOL DAYS

At the age of six it was the practice, but not a requirement, for the parent to accompany the child to school for the initial purpose of registration. There was no public school in our village as we know them in America and education was not compulsory and to a degree, discouraged. The village school was sponsored by the Church and the lay person that assisted the parish priest (kantor/reader) directed all the educational activities. When I registered for school, his name was Antal Kely. He was my instructor for two winters of schooling.

When my mother brought me to school for the first time to register, everything seemed so strange to me as if though I was entering another world. When mother and I made our appearance in the schoolroom all the children arose, as was their custom, and loudly in unison greeted us with these words: "Slava Isusu Christu" (Glory to Jesus Christ). The children were disciplined to greet an older person in this manner upon entering the schoolroom. And, upon leaving, the parting words were: "Do Laski Se Porucame" (Until we meet again...). However, if the person was of some

prominence in the village such as a government official, etc., the greeting was rendered in Hungarian; "Dičir Tešik A Jesus Kristuš " (Glory to Jesus Christ), upon entering, and "Išten Hosta Serentčešek Fetistelendek Ešpereš Urat " (God bring you good luck, Eminent Sir.....) upon leaving.

The school sessions opened and closed with a prayer. When leaving the schoolroom and passing thru the door at the end of the day, the children said loudly in unison: "Do Lasky Se Poruãame" (We commit ourselves to kindness). The children were required to leave in pairs -- a boy marched with a boy, and a girl marched with a girl. On our way to and from school, if we met an older person in the village we greeted him in Russian with: "Slava Isusu Christu." And, to a village official or a prominent person such as a "Pan" the greeting was in Hungarian.

No monetary tuition as such was required by the Church for children attending school. The school term was only during the colder months of the year when there were no outdoor chores required by the parents. To keep warm in school, a huge iron stove was located in one corner of the one-room school. And, it was a requirement for every child to bring a sizeable piece of firewood to school -- one in the morning and one in the afternoon to be used for heating purposes inasmuch as no fossil fuel such as coal was available in this area. When more convenient and able, a family of several children attending school would deliver a load of wood (two meters) at the beginning of the school year at one time which fulfilled their annual requirements.

At the beginning of my school days my mother bought me a primary book (Slabikar), a slate with lines on one side, and a slate pencil with which I made straight lines, circles, etc. This paraphernalia I carried in a home-made satchel. I was accompanied to school by my older sister Mary. The distance from our home in Furmanec to the school in Nizny Sloviryky was about one half hour walking time. When the weather was too severe, the two of us spent the night at the home of our mother's sister-in-law, Anna Evancho, in Vishny Slovinky. Our mother would back-pack our food and the required pieces of firewood for the duration.

The number of years (measured in winters) attending school was the only criterion to indicate the class you were in or your progress. One winter meant you were in the first class, two winters in attendance meant you were in the second class, etc. That is, you did not advance on merits or achievement. The curriculum consisted of instructions in both the Russian and Hungarian languages. The Russian instructions were both in the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets and were centered around church rituals and prayers. Apparently, the purpose of the Hungarian instructions were to acquaint the children with a working knowledge of the official language used in governmental proceedings in the country.

On the inside walls of the schoolroom hung large charts (3 by 4 feet) with large printed words in Russian (in both alphabets) and Hungarian. We were required to read these charts as part of our instructions. Assignments and instructions in calculations were given primarily to the older children on a limited basis. The schoolroom was a large building of masonry construction located by the St. George's Church. It was furnished with rows of long benches suitable for classroom instructions. One side of the center aisle was reserved for boys, and the other side for the girls. The capacity of each bench was designed to seat about ten children comfortably. The total school enrollment from the two villages and five valleys for one winter was approximately 400 children. In the event the provided benches were filled to capacity, the overflow of children sat on the floor around the large stove. No one was denied enrollment.

At the head of the center aisle the instructor's desk or table was located, in front of each row of benches stood a blackboard -- one in front of the boys and one in front of the girls. The younger children sat in the front row of benches, and the older ones graduated toward the rear. There were morning, and afternoon sessions with time out for lunch. Two recess periods were provided -- one in mid-morning, and one in mid-afternoon. There were no toilet buildings or facilities of any type. At recess time the boys were released first to fulfill their biological bodily functions by utilizing a garden plot which was part of the school property and situated in such a location that was adaptable for semi-privacy. After the boys returned to the schoolroom, the instructor released the girls. There were no mischievous overtones of any type or degree. The discipline was not difficult to maintain during this function inasmuch as the cold weather months apparently were a determining factor. However, playing "hooky" was quite common. The child was sent to school for instructions, but the time was conveniently diverted to skating and sled riding. I did my share of this great children's play.

Inasmuch as the school instructor assisted the parish priest in church duties, and when the occasion arose for assistance at a funeral or a religious holiday, the children were under the supervision of a student committee composed of older boys. It was their duty to compile a list of misbehaviors during the instructor's absence. Also, this committee would pass judgment on the size of firewood brought in by the children. There were two classifications of firewood -- large and small. The small pieces were placed behind the blackboard for the instructor to pass further judgment resulting in a reprimand to bring a bigger piece, or to invoke punishment on flagrant violators. However, the children who brought big pieces of firewood were complimented. In the event I was given a small piece of firewood at home, and to avoid a reprimand or possible punishment at school, the small piece would be secretly exchanged for a much larger one either from the wood shed at home or from a neighbor's wood pile on the way to school.

In regard to the misbehaviors during the instructor's absence, the committee's list of violators at times would be two to three pages in length. And, to anyone passing the schoolroom during the instructor's absence, the noise and racket inside compared favorably with a large swarm of bees seeking a place to land. Upon his return, the instructor appraised the violations for degree of severity and invoked punishment. The punishment consisted of the violator holding out his palm which received a sharp blow from the instructor's pointer or stick, two blows of the stick for more severe cases, etc., or kneeling in front of the other students. By the time all the violators were punished, occasionally it was time to dismiss classes. In the event the instructor returned rather late and no time was available for punishment, the children were dismissed with a prayer and the violators released.

Thus ended two years of instructions for me and four for my sister Mary under the supervision of Antal Kely. My memory fails me to remember whether or not the two of us made much progress scholastically during the past two winters of instructions.

In the meantime, however, there was an addition to our family. Our stepmother gave birth (1884) to her first child, a girl, which was named Katherine. This made me the proud possessor now of four sisters -- Mary, Anna, Ilona, and Katherine.

### SUMMER CHORES DURING SCHOOL VACATIONS

The duties of children during summer vacation from school were very plentiful and varied according to age. These duties were directed primarily to sustaining one's existence in preparation for the next long hard winter months. At an early age my first assignment during summer months was to tend a flock of geese which mother kept. For existence, advantage was taken of all available resources. In the case of geese, in addition to providing fare for the family table, the sale of geese down brought a good price and added to the family purse as well as the sale of geese themselves. Goose grease served as a family medication.

My duties with the flock of geese was to lead them to a pasture land in the morning and to bring them back at night. This may appear to be an easy assignment but it had its trials and tribulations. On occasion when I was out in the pasture land and my back was turned, a sly fox would attack the flock and kill one of the geese. There were times when I devoted more time to playing rather than tending my flock, and a fox would silently spring from nowhere and before I attended to the clamor, there would be several dead geese. When I returned home in the evening I was severely punished for my negligence.

As I grew older I received a so-called promotion in duties. My next assignment was to tend calves. This called for leading the calves to pasture in the morning and bringing them back in the evening. During this tour of duty, with time on my hands, I was always scheming something. For instance, I promoted the idea to teach the calves to ride me on their backs similar to horseback or pony riding. I practiced this secretly to and from the pasture lands. Also, I taught the calves how to buck, that is, to push one another around with their heads. This second idea had a tendency to backfire when the calves matured into cows; they became very unruly, hard to control, and at times would attack people.

In this sequence of promotions, my next assignment was to attend the family cow. Likewise, the cow was taken to pasture in the morning and returned home in the evening. This I did in conjunction with an older person at the outset who, for a fee, attended the neighborhood cows in the Furmanec valley. With my assistance, our family was spared the usual fee paid to cowherds.

Graduating from the so-called "Cowherd" assignment, my next duties were to go into the wooded areas to strip leaves from trees and shrubbery that were palatable as cattle fodder. This assignment consisted of stripping the leaves, placing them in bags for convenient transportation home, spreading them over the family yard to dehydrate, and storing them in the family loft. This was fed to our cattle in addition to grass which was processed into hay in the same manner as leaves. My production schedule called for one bag of leaves in the morning and one in the afternoon. With the assistance of my sisters as they became physically able, this process at times turned out to be a community project when neighboring children joined us to fulfill their requirements. Inasmuch as this process can be loosely classified as "poaching" because we were trespassing on the "off-limits" property of the Graf, at times we were pursued by the Graf's security personnel (Hajduk) and escaped with nothing to bring home.

The gathering of firewood was a continuous process with practically no seasonal limits. Inasmuch as our family was assessed four days of labor per year for the Graf, we were permitted to go into his forests and gather dry wood only. The firewood was sorted and stocked separately in our woodshed adjoining our home. The two classifications were

that of hardwood, especially oak for heating purposes, and soft wood primarily evergreen variety. Due to its qualities of producing rapid heat, soft wood was used to fire up the baking oven which was called a "Pekarnik."

The pekarnik can best be described as a homemade oven made of brick or stone, varying in size according to family needs, used for baking family staples such as bread, rolls, "Pagachy," etc. The pagachy, apparently was a regional delicacy, flat and circular in shape, with approximately a twelve inch diameter, and made primarily with a potato filling and finished off with a hot butter glaze. The pekarnik was a necessity in the home, and the specifications, if measured according to strict engineering standards can be described as crude -- but it did the job. It was generally shaped as a half sphere with a tapered narrow opening in front for easy access in firing as well as allowing for inside repair work. The inside floor was smooth. At the peak the height was about two feet. The front opening was covered with a removable metal sheet referred to as a "Brilla."

The operating procedure was to fire up the inside with the rapid burning soft wood, wait until the inside assumed the desired temperature which was indicated by a grayish color, remove the coals to one side with a wooden "Kocherha" (shaped like a garden hoe), and place the bread dough or any pastry product on the inside floor. This was done with a long-handled wooden paddle called a "Lopata." At Easter time the Easter bread ("Paska") was added to the line of products processed in the pekarnik. The kolachy, paska, and the smaller pastries were placed on suitable trays or pans before baking instead of being placed on the bare floor. The aroma generated in the home during this baking process, truthfully appraised, whetted one's appetite.

#### CONTINUATION OF SCHOOL DAYS

In my eight year I began my third year of schooling. Antal Kely, the old instructor was transferred and the new instructor assigned to our school was named Emanuel Grohl. My sister Anna became of age and started her first year of school which made three of us battling the elements for an education -- sisters Mary and Anna and myself. We no longer stayed overnight at our mother's sister-in-law, Anna Evancho, in the village when the weather was too severe but came home nightly inasmuch as our father was in America again pursuing employment. Even though we stayed home from school during severe cold or snowy days, there were times that our ears and feet were frost bitten. Mother sewed each of us a cloth satchel in which we carried our slate, primer, and a container called "Stuc" in which we put our pencils and pens.

We continued to bring to school the pieces of firewood for heating purposes and we carried our lunch. The lunch consisted of a piece of bread which received a spread of butter or lard if it was available at home. If not, the bread was toasted and sprinkled with salt or rubbed with garlic to make it more palatable. There were many occasions when lunch consisted of just a plain piece of dark bread.

It was especially in the fall months of the year that the family table had to do without many staples, meager as they were, because the cows were running dry. However, when the cows became fresh again in the spring, we were able to fare much better because all the dairy products became available again. When the hogs were butchered in the fall this relieved some of the shortage of staples for the family table. At times the only recourse was to purchase sheep or beef fat when all other domestic sources were depleted.

During my childhood days I recall many bad times and many nights when we children would go to bed on an empty stomach. I can recall instances when there was such a lack of food that mother was forced to improvise with what was available at home such as sifting cow middlings to obtain flour to make dumplings. When these dumplings were served to us children in a common pot of warm water, the dumplings would be so sparse they would seldom make contact with each other. There would be times that the three of us children (Mary, Joseph and Anna) would be crouched around the serving pot fishing for those few dumplings with our wooden spoons. On occasion, we would not chew the dumplings but swallow them whole to fake a full feeling in the stomach at bedtime.

It was our daily chore before going to school and again upon our return in the evening to tend the cows. We would feed and water them, remove the accumulated manure, and make a fresh bed for them to lay on. And, when we stayed home from school on account of severe weather, we would be kept busy helping mother weave cloth from the flax plant. This was a regular winter chore when the weaving apparatus or loom was brought into the hiza (living room) in the fall it was in operation all winter. Two kinds of cloth were made -- thin and coarse. The thin cloth was used to make home-made shirts, and the coarse cloth was made into underwear called "gachy." I well remember that finished product from the coarse cloth and the pronounced seams on my underwear that would lend themselves to developing welts on my body.

In weaving cloth from the stem fibers of the flax plant it was a most tedious undertaking requiring some twenty-three handlings or operations before a shirt was made. The loom was a hand operated contraption the principal operating parts of which were called: "Nichelnici," "Berdo," "Nabilky," "Kotulky," "Cholnok," "Smertka," "Spuljar," "Kozelec," "Cifky," and "Koleso" or wheel. The wheel was attached to the spuljar which was hand-turned to provide power to set the entire operation in motion. The sound of the operation was comparable to machinery in motion in a factory. My sisters and I assisted our mother as we were needed.

In the spring of my ninth year, when I was attending school, I fell on the ice while skating and broke my left arm above the wrist. For fear of punishment at home I kept it a secret until my mother noticed my wrist swelling. She immediately took me to Nizny Slovinky to a lady who specialized in fracture setting. Her name was Mrs. Semanka. Since the bone in my arm was already knitting, it was first necessary to break the knitted part and reset the bone. This was a very painful operation. I was held by two other women while Mrs. Semarika worked on me. After my arm was put in splints I was so exhausted I fell asleep.

Following this bone fracture, I had five welts appear on this arm which were the size of a hen's egg. When one welt would rupture, drain and heal, another welt would appear. I was exposed to many home remedies and neighborhood advice in search of a cure. Since we had no doctor in our village, home remedies were the order of the day. After we did visit a doctor, my ailment was diagnosed as a case of "Skrofula."

In affecting treatment, the doctor wanted to remove the swelling surgically but my mother refused to have this done. Finally, my arm healed after suffering with this condition for about fifteen years. However, as a result of this affliction, my arm was not a handicap to me in performing manual labor but a resulting scar constantly reminded me of my years of suffering.



### MY FIRST CONFESSION AND COMMUNION

It was an established requirement of our village Greek Catholic Church to prepare the school children for their first confession and communion at the age of nine. This was done during the great lent prior to Easter. The preparatory work was done by the school instructor. In preparing the children to fulfill the requirements of this third Sacrament of the Church (Holy Eucharist), the discipline was very strict. Before leaving home to go to confession we had to kneel by the family table to recite the confession prayers, and then ask forgiveness of our parents if we offended them in word or deed. They would answer: "If God forgives you, we also forgive you."

We would be given a piece of bread to be eaten after communion, and one hen's egg. We would assemble in the school and the instructor gave each child a confession card in exchange for the egg. On occasion, it happened that a child inadvertently crushed the egg and soiled their clothing. This required another egg. If eggs were not plentiful in the home, a small coin (Kreutzer) could be substituted. Up to the time of marriage, all young people had to render the small coin for a confession card. After marriage, this requirement was waived..

From the school building we marched to the parish house to be confessed by the priest because the church building had no heating facilities. The parish house had one room called "Kaplanka" in which the priest heard confessions. As I stood by the door of the confession room, I was overtaken by the grips of fear. This intensified as I entered the room and my eyes rested on the priest's cane (Kuljaga) along side of his chair. It was not the most pleasant feeling one would experience inasmuch as the cane was placed there not only as a symbol of punishment but was actually used as the occasion required.

Being overcome by fear, I obviously became confused in reciting the confession prayers. The priest heard my confession but I was told not to come to communion the next morning. In relating what transpired during confession, I was scolded at home and instructed that I must go to communion. The next day my mother saw to it that I prepared myself by not eating or drinking any liquids and went to church with all the other school children to receive communion and yet hoping for the best.

At first glance when the priest saw me in line he scolded me for coming that I disobeyed his instructions inasmuch as I was told not to appear for communion. Here I was caught in a cross-fire of contradictory instructions of the highest authorities of my young life -- the priest and the parent. In this tense atmosphere and in the grips of fear as to my future fate, I told the priest that my mother instructed me to come to communion today. The priest asked me if I was fully prepared to receive communion. After my affirmative answer, I was given communion along with the other children.

In regards to the strict discipline of school children mentioned above, it also extended to the manner in which the priest was addressed. For instance, the priest was referred to as "Pan Veljkomozny," and the school instructor was referred to as "Pan Professor." The discipline also encompassed an established custom to kiss the hand of the priest, and also the hand of the priest's wife. Failure to conform to this strict discipline resulted in strong verbal reprimands and, at times, physical punishment. Nevertheless, this was accepted as a way of life and it was unheard of for a child to question or challenge authorities.

### ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH IN SLOVINKY

The St. George's Greek Catholic Church of the Eastern Rite in our village of Slovinky was built by the early inhabitants in the area who were of the Lutheran denomination. The type of architectural design and construction material that went into the building indicated that it was built by people of wealth and influence and not by the common peasant. Unfortunately, we were not exposed to any of the historical background of our village church in our school inasmuch as the school itself was sponsored by the church. If you rely on speculation why the school children were not exposed to this type of instructions, one might logically conclude that it was not considered important at the time for children of school age.

However, it was from overhearing various conversations of the village elders that I was able to piece together some semblance of a historical nature to relate across these pages that alluded to the original founders of our beautiful church. It was acknowledged that the village church in Slovinky was one of two of its kind in construction and design in the Carpatho-Russian area. The congregation consisted of approximately 400 families.

In an earlier chapter when the establishment and name of the village was discussed, we pointed out that the area ore mines first began operating years ago and the village developed as the Eastern Rite Slav population increased. It is well to further point out that as the establishment of that large Lutheran Church took place, that around these larger ore mines many massive dwellings and/or castles were built which, no doubt, housed the mine owners, their top operating personnel, and owners of the area's large land holdings. The type of construction that went into these dwellings indicated the owners possessed wealth and influence. And, at the time were considered quite modern. The ore mines that operated on a smaller scale were surrounded by less impressive homes in which lived the working class who also served as security guards. They were referred to as "Hitare," and paid no rent.

From visual observation one could conclude that the area was originally inhabited by people of means and undoubtedly religious in nature to invest so heavily in the type of church they built to worship in. For instance, the Graf in our village was the owner of two flour mills -- one located in the upper part of the village, and one in the lower part which was operated by water power. In Nizny Slovinky he had a large stone building called a "Hostinec," or hotel. He operated a "Korchma," or tavern, and a "Vozaren," or livery stable for the convenience of transients.

However, as the Eastern Rite Slavs began migrating into the area in search of employment, purchasing small plots of land from the Graf to build their homes, the entire area gradually began changing. And lending itself to this changing neighborhood was the fact that the original settlers slowly began returning to their heavenly reward and their descendants gradually leaving the area to seek their fortunate elsewhere.

With this increase in population of Slavs it follows that being religious in nature, they would be in search of a house of worship. The existing and beautiful Lutheran edifice was the answer to their prayers. It is interesting to observe that the church continues to be referred to by its original Lutheran nomenclature. The church is referred to among the villagers as "Kostel" instead of "Cerkov" the Russian term. The priest is referred to as "Farar" instead of "Svaschenik."

The following sketchy bits of information, interlaced with one's imagination can provide some idea of the main structure, the parish house, and service buildings of the church complex. The church proper is a very large and beautiful edifice. Facing the south, it is constructed of stone. The walls are about six feet in thickness, and the foundation (according to the village elders) rests on solid rock. The tall belfry housed a large four-faced chime clock and three church bells. Two of the bells were referred to as the bells of St. George the church patron, and the third bell was called St. Bartholomew's bell. One set of doors served as the main entrance from the roadway. In one corner, alongside these doors was another set of doors leading to the choir loft and the belfry. Located inside of the main entrance were two statues carved out of stone, one on each side, representing Adam and Eve. A beautiful lawn surrounded the church building with an iron Crucifix erected among the pine trees at the main entrance.

The parish house also constructed of stone was located near the church on a large plot of ground surrounded by a fence on which other service buildings were located. As previously stated, the school, constructed of stone, was located nearby. The parish priest, Rev. George Zubricky, did not receive a monthly monetary stipend as such for his services, but he had at his disposal the use of adjoining farming and pasture lands with wooded areas, which were considered the finest in the area. Servants assisted with the chores connected with the parish house as well as donated services by the parishioners. This practice of remuneration apparently was followed throughout the entire area of Eastern Rite Greek Catholic Churches. The Feast Day of St. George (April 23/ May 6) the church's patron saint was considered a major holiday in our village.

#### RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL CUSTOMS IN THE VILLAGE

The religious customs observed by the villagers developed over the years, modified by regional variations, no doubt, date back to the origin of Christianity. The social customs of the village, tailored for convenience, centered to a large degree around the religious holidays and rituals such as weddings, baptisms, etc. The lenten periods and holidays prescribed by the church were observed more religiously by the older generation as well as the church attendance. However, church attendance and participation in church rituals by the young people was commendable.

Beginning in late fall when the outdoor chores were at a minimum, with time available for socializing, and immediately following the Feast of St. Michael (Nov. 8/21) marked the opening activities in the "Kudilny Hizy." This was a type of neighborhood social clubs in which the young people participated. The word "Kudil" means flax ready to be spun and a "Hiza" has reference to a room in a home. Socializing centered around these various locations throughout the village inasmuch as there was no one social center as such for the young people to utilize. According to age groups, the young people would assemble in a home of anyone who cared to be a sponsor. In practical reality, it was a type of club where the young ladies would meet during the weekday evenings to spin flax for making cloth, and the young men would eavesdrop with mischief in mind.

A secondary function of these social groups provided an excellent opportunity to exchange the latest village gossip. On Sunday afternoon and evening the young people of a particular age group would assemble in their hiza for dancing and socializing. An accordion provided the music. This type of social activity was enjoyed by the young people throughout the winter months. At times the "Shandars" (Police) would attempt to

break up this type of socializing inasmuch as it became forbidden by law. Their attempts met with little or no success since the custom was handed down for many generations and was deep-rooted in the social life of the peasant.

At Christmas time, after the Holy Supper in the homes on Christmas Eve, the young people would assemble in their "Hizy" where the custom called for the young ladies to sew large colorful feathers on the hats of their young men. These feathers were purchased from a fund the young ladies contributed. Immediately following this ritual the custom dictated that the young men were obligated to provide the young ladies enough money to purchase beverages during the Christmas season.

While this socializing was in progress among the young adults, the entire village was livened with the singing of Christmas Carols under the windows of the village homes. In addition to the village children singing carols in groups for monetary rewards, the singing of Christmas Carols was carried on to a large degree by the local gypsies (Cigane). For some unknown reason if the gypsies were offered a small coin (Kreutzer) they frowned upon this. They would rather you gave them rolls of poppy seed, fruit, or nuts. It was the custom that if you did not want to offer the carolers any remuneration for their singing, you simply knocked on the window and the signal was interpreted to travel on.

The socializing and caroling was carried on up to midnight. The thought of going to sleep was the farthest from anyone's mind. At midnight everyone went to the church service. The young men from the kudilny hizy came to church sporting the feathers in their hats. At times any derogatory appraisal of one another's feathers resulted in some sort of provocation. After the services at midnight everyone returned to their homes where sausage, smoked ribs, beverage of a special preparation (Hratja Palinka), etc., were in readiness. After a prayer was said, usually by the head of the household, everyone participated and went to bed for a few winks of sleep.

The next day it was church in the morning and the young people spent the afternoon socializing in their respective kudilny hizy. The order of the day was to visit homes to exchange the season's greetings, frequent the local korchmu or tavern, sing carols, and compare the present social activities with the ones gone by. On Christmas Day a chandelier located in the center of the church was the center of attraction and a forecast of coming events, so to speak. It was the custom for the church sexton (Cerkovnik) to light only the number of candles in the chandelier that indicated the festive weeks (Fashengy) before Easter.

On New Year's Day it was the order of the day to attend church services. The priest in his sermon would announce at this time the total number of births during the past year classified by male and female, the number of deaths, the number of marriages, etc. Socializing and visiting homes was the order of the day. The children in their rounds (including adults) of caroling and home visitations recited a special religious greeting upon entering the home -- one for Christmas, and one for New Year.

During Epiphany (January 6/19) the festival commemorating the baptism of Jesus in the river Jordan, a container was brought to church for holy water. The blessing of water took place in the frigid outdoors in a nearby brook. The church procession included the church banners carried by the young men. Two of these banners which required up to three men to carry one, were of special significance -- one was referred to as the

"Havjarska" banner, and the other as the "Sedlacka." The former had reference to that group of peasants who owned their homes and worked in the ore mines, and the latter were the peasants who owned larger plots of land from which they obtained a livelihood. The Ikons (holy images) were carried in the procession by the young ladies which required up to four people to carry one Ikon. During the ritual of blessing water the church bells rang constantly adding to the festive atmosphere of the proceedings. Following the blessing of water, each home was visited by the priest and his staff to consecrate each home.

During the Easter Lenten period (Great Lent) when church services were held on a designated Saturday morning commemorating the dead (Zadushnja Subota), it was the custom for beggars from the entire area to assemble at the church entrance. For this special service it was the custom in the home to prepare pieces of bread and bacon in memory of each deceased member (one for grandpa, one for grandma, etc.) and take to church to distribute among the beggars. The beggars, in turn, were obligated by custom to say a prayer for the respective deceased during the church services. The custom was a noble and a religious one, but at times, after the church services, the beggars assembled at the local korchina and while under the influence, began boasting who was a more qualified member of the beggar clan. The drinking was made possible inasmuch as some people gave the beggars money instead of the bread and bacon cuttings. In their boasting one would claim that his lineage began with his parents. Another would top this by claiming that his begging days can be traced to his grandparents. etc.

During the period before Easter, referred to as "Ostatnji Fashengy" was a time of elaborate celebration in the village. This was known as "Pozabuchky" (a miniture type of Mardi Gras). A young man would dress in a lady's clothes and a young lady would dress as a man. With a group they would visit the homes of members that belonged to their social circle. The group would be fortified with a jug of liquor. Early on a Monday morning as they visited each home it was the custom to donate bacon, meat, or eggs to the group. For this donation, the household members were treated to a drink from the jug of whiskey. The meat and bacon was speared on a rod and carried on the shoulder of one of the group. When all the homes were visited, the group would return to their kudjilna hiza. There the young women prepared the meat, bacon and eggs and also baked favorite pastries for the festivities. At times these festivities would stretch up to three days or as long as the food and drinks lasted. "Hratja Palinka" was the main beverage and an accordion provided the music for dancing. The older generation, during this period of "Ostatnji Fashengy," had a custom of families visiting each other's homes where turns were taken to prepare feasts.

During the Great Lent the young men and women attended classes to study the Catechism. This was done on Sundays either before or after Vesper Services. Also, it was the custom during Great Lent for the girls of the church to visit the church cemetery to sing religious songs at the foot of the Crucifix.

The custom of bringing Easter baskets for blessing at midnight services was followed very religiously. The contents of these baskets included the number one item called a "Paska." This was a beautiful piece of domestic culinary art with a cheese center arid baked in the family pekarnik we referred to in an earlier chapter. Also included were such staples as sausage (kolbasy), ham, colored Easter eggs, salt, horseradish, etc. The basket was covered with a beautifully embroidered

cloth usually depicting the Crucifixion scene. A candle was placed in the basket to be lit during the blessing ritual. During Easter holidays usually no further meals were prepared in the home. It warn the contents of the Easter basket that provided all the nourishment for the duration.

On the morning of Easter Monday, especially prior to the services, it was the custom for the young men to visit the homes of the young ladies to sprinkle water on their palms or heads saying on three applications: "Christ is Risen." The reply was: "Indeed He is Risen." This custom supposedly symbolized Christ's entry into Jerusalem. It was then repeated by the young ladies to the young men on Tuesday the next day. The custom was not confined, however, only to the young people, but it was also practiced by the children as well as the adults.

On the third day of the Easter three-day holiday the entire church congregation went to the church cemetery for a prayer service. Before Ascension Day (Forty days after Easter) it was the custom to go to a nearby field to bless the sprouting grain fields. This was referred to as "Oziminy." Then fifty days after Easter, or the Pentecost, it was the custom for the young men of the church who carried the church banners in church processions, to decorate the church with green branches and foliage. It was also customary for the young men to decorate the homes of the young ladies who carried the church Ikons in church processions. And, the peasants themselves decorated their homes with branches, etc.

In case of grave illness, the priest (accompanied by the reader) would administer the Last Rites of the church. As they approached anyone on their way, the reader sounded his "Spjizak" (bell) which he carried and people would kneel in prayer. A teamster would descend from his wagon and kneel until the priest passed by with the Eucharist.

In the event of death, the village casket maker made a casket out of spruce lumber which at times was supplied by the family. This was lined with wooden shavings and these were covered with cloth. The casket was carried on props. The body was not embalmed. Funeral services were held outdoors in front of the home. The procession to the cemetery included church banners and Crucifix. It was customary to have church bells toll. At the wake, some villagers read the Book of Psalms. The meal served after the funeral was called "Komarno." Wooden markers were used on graves.

#### FATHER RETURNS FROM AMERICA - YEAR 1888

It was in the month of March of 1888 that father returned home from America with mother's brother. As I recall the incident, being ten years of age, it was a most happy occasion for our entire family. He stepped thru the door of our home during the morning hours. Immediately, he turned his attention to me to have a look at my sore arm. He reprimanded mother for negligence in keeping watch over me, and presented me with a pen and pencil -- what a proud possession, and all the way from America.

Being the only boy in the family at the time, father expressed a desire that I learn to read and write inasmuch as neither he nor mother could read or write. In a humorous vein, he expressed himself that he wanted me to become a priest. The extent of my parents' writing ability centered around making chalk marks on boards in the form of circles, crosses, and short vertical strokes. A crude record of births in the family was maintained on rafters in the home. None of father's brothers or sisters were able to read or write. However, this was not unusual inasmuch as approximately half of the village population could neither read nor write with the schooling being what it was in our village. But, they possessed strong reasoning powers and applied sensible judgment in their daily living.

With the approach of summer of this year (referred to as triple eights) and as I would accompany father to the pasture land with our cow, he would encourage me with words to the effect that I provide enough firewood for mother's purpose in preparing meals. With this encouragement, I proceeded to accomplish this assignment by placing a hatchet and a rope over my shoulder and off to the nearby woods in back of our garden plot. Having located a desirable sapling along the pathway, placing my rope around the trunk, I proceeded to chop away with the echoing sounds of my strokes vibrating throughout the forest.

As I continued chopping, I felt a tug on my arm from the rear. Lo, and behold -- it is the hajduk whose duty was to maintain security over the Graf's forests and see to it that only dry wood was taken. "Please, uncle," I pleaded, "Let me go." As he loosened his grip on my arm, I tumbled about fifteen feet over a rocky area holding on to my hatchet. The rope, however, was left at the chopping scene. As I came running home with hat in one hand and the hatchet in the other, I was asked what happened. "The hajduk caught me," I replied. Upon father's instructions to hide, I climbed the ladder to the attic and began to listen inasmuch as the hajduk followed me home. The hajduk told father to instruct me not to chop raw saplings especially along the pathway. This dampened my youthful enthusiasm for the moment even to reclaim my rope thinking the hajduk was still in the area. Nevertheless, my future ventures in chopping wood directed me to go deeper into the forest.

This same year, father being proficient in carpentry, was contemplating on building a new home inasmuch as the present one in which we were living was deteriorating. As he began assembling the necessary tools for construction, mother came down with pneumonia that fall. When mother recovered from her illness, I came down with typhoid fever. Having received the last rites of the church, the priest said that my recovery was very doubtful.

But, as I recovered, all my sisters began coming down with the fever. As one would recover, another would be laid up. This continued all winter. We had no doctor. The cattle had to be tended to. As one member of the family became physically able, they attended to the others. After we all recovered from the fever, we all lost the hair on our heads. It was a very sad situation in our home. However, upon recovery we all acquired a tremendous appetite which we satisfied to a great extent by eating potatoes boiled with their skins. They were easy to prepare.

That particular winter (1888-89), in addition to our illness, we were snow-bound. We had very few visitors on account of the big snow. The snow and sickness made it impossible for us to attend school but I was considered to be in the fifth class inasmuch as the only time I saw the schoolroom was when I went to confession and communion that spring.

Also, that same winter tragedy befell our emperor Francis Joseph. His only son, Archduke Rudolph, crown prince of Austria, died a very mysterious death (January 30, 1889) with his mistress Baroness Marie Vetsera in Rudolph's hunting lodge in the Vienna Woods near Mayerling.

I recall one severe winter we removed snow from our roof with hoes and rakes to prevent collapsing -- it was up to our window sills. To attend Christmas church services, neighbors of Furmanec cleared a tunnel-like path. And, when a crust of ice covered the snow and with moderating temperatures, people would perish as they fell into the snow. Our village was located in about the 49th latitude which is comparable to Lethbridge in Canada. Usually snow covered the ground all winter.

### FATHER CONSTRUCTS OUR NEW HOME

With the approach of spring in 1889, father began preparing to build our new home. Arrangements were made with the Graf for the purchase of suitable trees to be cut in his forest. It was about March 15th that father hired one man to help out, and I was supposed to be the other hand in this big construction project even though I was only eleven years old. In overhearing conversations I learned that the most desirable time to fall trees for construction was the month of March. The prevailing theory among the peasants was that the timbers would last longer. When a certain tree was selected as suitable timber, it was struck three times with the axe handle. The acceptable theory for this gesture was to ward off destruction by insects.

As a tree was felled the branches were trimmed, and I was assigned to remove the bark. Father presented me with a small hatchet to be used in all my assignments. This gave me a great deal of pride and satisfaction to be working as one of the crew. For the next step father hired a teamster to haul the logs to our building site. Then the logs were squared for a tight fit while they were still unseasoned in preparation for the end joints. I made use of my time by assisting father with the measurements by holding one end of the measuring line. There were no blueprints or sketches to follow -- and, as the Russians would say, it was all "by the eye" (ot oka).

As father was busy preparing to build our new home, our mother gave birth to a son which was named Andrew at Holy Baptism. He was born on the 28th of March, 1889. This was a proud moment in my life inasmuch as I could boast of having a brother.

At the time father began constructing a new home, our neighbor, George Blasko, started work on his new home also. This made it very convenient for both father and his neighbor. With the help of the additional man, father and neighbor Blasko worked on both houses jointly.

Only pine trees (jedly) were used in our area for construction of houses, barns, and various service buildings. Father, being an expert especially in joinery, was the so-called "brains" in the construction of both houses. He made all the decisions and directed the workmen, etc. The neighbor and the hired man gave only assistance as the job required.

For the next step in construction, father hired another man who was an expert in making shingles inasmuch as the roof needed repairs also. Father could do this type of work but time would not permit. And, by having the shingles made on the site it was much cheaper than purchasing them ready made.

On occasion, it was necessary to appropriate timbers from the woods in addition to that which was agreed to with the Graf. The timing of our building was most appropriate inasmuch as an extensive lumbering operation was in progress in the area. Desirable lumber was strewn over the entire area. Of course, if apprehended by the hajduk the recourse was to invite him to the home for liquid refreshments which father did as the occasion arose. The contingent of hajduks relished this friendly gesture because it satisfied their ever-demanding thirst for free drinks. Whiskey was the preferred beverage for entertaining among the peasants in these situations as well as at weddings, christenings, funerals, or community projects where neighbors assisted one another. The elite of the village usually entertained among themselves with vintage wines, beer, and other choice beverages.



During the building project I recall that father ran short of lumber to make shingles. It was decided to go into the wooded area back of our garden where a suitable dry and relatively straight tree was located on a knoll. The time selected was after hours so that they would not be apprehended by a hajduk. After a few drinks to insure some degree of bravery, with the proper instruments shouldered, the trek was made to the site, the timber was felled, and the bark removed. As father and his helpers began to position the log for easy sliding down the incline, I was on hand with my prop or stake to offer assistance. As I positioned myself at the lower end and placed my prop under the log, it moved unexpectedly and twisted the prop out of my hands which in turn struck both of my bare feet as the log kept sliding to level ground. The result was not a disaster, but it was necessary to back-pack me home as both of my feet began swelling from the bruises.

To assist us in transporting some of the lumber from the forest to the building site, we had a two-wheel cart with a long handle. One end of the log was placed on this cart and the other end traveled on crude wooden rollers. We all pulled and pushed, the whole family -- mother, my able sisters, and I.

By the end of summer that same year our building project was finished -- a new home, barn, and a "komora" or storage area, including several service buildings. The home was finished with a wooden floor, plastered inside walls, and the outside crevices or cracks stuffed with moss to make it weather-tight. The dimensions of our home, that is the "hiza" proper, was 18 feet long by 15 feet wide, and 7 feet high. The walls being constructed of pine logs, this was considered a large room among the peasants in the area.

The type of construction that grandfather used in building the old family homestead which allowed father to merely replace the walls, was unique and the only one of its kind in the area. Apparently, grandfather was a builder with vision as well as a master craftsman. The construction was such that the unique framework supporting the roof was assessed to endure three replacements. As father removed the four walls the roof was supported by large pillars made of spruce (smerek) timbers. After replacing the walls, father repaired the roof as required, and the outside construction was completed. In replacing the walls they were attached to the roofing timbers in an ingenious manner to make the entire structure weatherproof and safe.

Grandfather, in addition to being a master craftsman as evidenced by re-construction of the old family homestead (referred to as a "Sramok" building), he was an interesting individual. During his military service in the Austrian army, he performed a heroic deed in rescuing the country's flag. The honor bestowed upon him for this act could be interpreted as the Congressional Medal of Honor in America. He was granted a military pension and special privileges such as permission to keep a gun at home, and was allowed to hunt. Also, he was not required to pay the usual tenant's fee to the Graf's estate for the use of land on which he built his unique home in which I was born.

It could be rationalized that being granted these special privileges from the government for his military bravery, influenced him to select the site in Furmanec to build which was on the outskirts of the village of Slovinky. However, after grandfather's death, these special privileges did not pass on to any other member of his family.

Due to unavailable documented evidence substantiating grandfather's military career, it can be logically rationalized, based on dates of birth, information handed down thru family circles, and discussions of village elders of grandfather's generation who served in this conflict, that grandfather distinguished himself for bravery during the so-called "Kossuth War" (1848-49). The Hapsburg dynasty of Austria was threatened by revolution led by Hungarian patriot, Louis Kossuth, during which the Emperor Ferdinand abdicated to his youthful nephew, Francis Joseph I. The Czar of Russia, Nicholas I, placed 150,000 of his soldiers at the disposal of Francis Joseph. The revolt surrendered in August of 1849.

Grandfather's death was caused by a back injury in the ore mines. He was hospitalized in Spisske-Podhradie but never recovered. Since the bodies were not embalmed in those days and the corpse was not transported to other areas for burial, he was buried in Spisske-Podhradie.

As a point of general family interest, the family homestead ("Sramok" or cut-out style) from which father removed the walls allowing the framework supporting the roof to remain intact, which was originally constructed by grandfather upon his return from military service, father came into possession of it by mutual agreement with his three brothers (George, John, and Mike), and his two sisters (Anna and Julia).

Father and his brother John lived together with their families in this homestead where uncle John's daughter Mary (Mrs. Tushim) and son Mike were born. This was a common arrangement. When uncle John's family left for America, father remained in the home. Prior to grandfather's fatal injury, it was his life's ambition to build this type of home for each of his four sons. The oldest son, George, and daughter Julia never came to America.

#### MY FIRST CALLING AS GODFATHER

There was no denying that the common peasant living in the Austro-Hungarian Empire during my youth merely existed from day to day. But, when it came to spiritual wealth, they were among the richest. Peasants had great respect for one another and valued each other's friendship. This was evident in the area of "Hmoterstvo" or "Kumstvo" (godparents).

It is interesting to mention that the Grisak and Visocky families in Slovinky, traditionally, maintained an unbroken lineage of being sponsors at baptism dating back to great-grandparents. This was something they cherished and were very proud of. Then the occasion arose that in order to continue this tradition into the fourth generation, it was my turn to arise to the cause as the only male available. I was six years old.

Inasmuch as one should have an understanding of the godfather's duties at the ritual of baptism, when the time came for the christening, my father stood in for me. However, my name was recorded in St. George's church records as the official godfather which preserved the tradition into the fourth generation thus spanning some one hundred years.

The actual christening in church was traditionally followed with a feast where friends and relatives were invited into the home of the young child's parents. When the hour for the feast approached, my mother led me by the hand and instructing me on the way how to conduct myself as the official godfather. It was the local custom when the newly baptized infant was brought from church the godfather would ask upon entrance into the home: "Is this the home from where we took a child?" The parents would reply: "This is the right home." Then the godmother would say as she handed the infant over to its mother: "We took from you" home today

a heathen (pagan) and brought back a Christian." Also, it was a custom among some peasants to put the newly baptized infant under the table and the father would pick it up.

It was the custom for the godfather and godmother to distribute candy or coins (kreutzer) to the children of the household (brothers and sisters) and admonish them to play and rock the baby in its cradle. In following this tradition, my mother supplied me with coins which I distributed to the children as previously instructed, and told them not to renege on their duties of playing and rocking the baby's cradle. In order to appreciate the humor generated by my instructions, it is well to mention that the children I was giving 'fatherly' advice to were much older and bigger than me.

During the festivities, I was seated at one corner of the table as the honored guest. Inasmuch as this christening took place during the lenten season before Easter, no meats were served only eggs and various pastries such as "kolachy," etc. The traditional beverage for these occasions was served -- "Hratja Palinka." I was constantly being offered eggs to eat and was at a loss how to politely refuse. As the festivities were in progress, my eyes were constantly focused on my playmates enjoying themselves out in the yard. After I succumbed to temptation, I asked to go out the impression being that I wanted to answer a call of nature.

After an extended period of time, my absence was questioned, and there I was spotted -- the honored guest -- playing with my buddies out in the yard. So, back again to the table and more eggs until my trouser belt was showing signs of strain. Then came the time to depart for home. Mother tried to carry me back-pack inasmuch as the over-indulgence of eggs began to take effect. A six-year old boy not being the easiest to carry, mother got as far as her sister's home which was in the area and there I spent the night. The next morning my aunt's older son carried me home as a final gesture of this trying episode as godfather.

The parents of the newly baptized infant were Peter Visocky and his wife Mary whose maiden name was Rebar. Peter Visocky became afflicted with some type of ailment which made him delirious at times. He would act like a child during these seizures and wander thru the hills and valleys cleaning out springs, etc. However, he had a great liking for me as his godfather and at times would approach me to play with him. He would pick raspberries or strawberries and bring them to me. If my sisters asked for any, he would refuse and say that girls have big mouths that they should pick their own berries. Peter was harmless and terribly afraid of his mother. When he recovered from this affliction he went to America. I understand that in America he had no more seizures but lived a very normal life.

#### FATHER IS LAID UP WITH PNEUMONIA

The outside construction work of building our new home in the summer of 1889 came to a successful conclusion. With the approach of cold weather father began finishing the inside, making cabinets, benches, window frames, doors, tables, and whatever was required for the home.

This marked my sixth year in attending school which automatically put me in the sixth class. Together with my two sisters, Mary and Anna, more pieces of firewood were required to take to school. It was much safer now for the three of us to travel the distance from our home in Furmanec to school which was located in Nizny Slovinky. We no longer

were forced to stay overnight in the village when the weather became too severe to come home.

However, school work was not too much to my liking. When the instructor asked for volunteers for assistance with his personal domestic chores, I usually was the first to offer my services. Having impressed the instructor with my experience in tending cattle, cutting straw, etc., I usually was selected for the assignment. Inasmuch as the country of Austro-Hungary had no compulsory educational program, and apparently cared less to have the native peasants both Russian and Slovak advance culturally, the children were not pressured along educational pursuits. The instructor usually devoted more of his time in following the progress of children of the more influential families of the village rather than the children of the common peasants.

Both my father and mother were very desirous that we children get an education inasmuch as father could neither read nor write. Mother, however, could barely read her prayer book which was printed in the Latin alphabet. Incidentally, neither father nor mother used Orthodox prayers in their devotions in the home and we children began using Orthodox prayers only after attending the school sponsored by the church. Father would repeatedly admonish me to get an education for which I developed a liking only after I grew older and realized that father was telling the truth. Father would say that one thing which made an impression on his mind, during his two trips to America, was his handicap of not being able to read and write. Both of my parents were impressed when I was able to read to them from my school book. And, when I began writing, crude as it was, they were highly pleased. There were no happier parents than father and mother when I was delegated to write for them my first letter to America. After wading thru the contents of this first letter, the recipient in America, no doubt, appraised it with mixed emotions.

During the process of putting the final finishing touches to our new home, father came down with pneumonia. As was the custom among the poor peasants who could not afford professional medical help, various home remedies were initially employed. For the type of sickness that father developed the usual home remedy was to apply leaches to the left side to draw out the so-called "bad" blood. Mother applied this remedy by placing leaches to father's body -- thirteen in all -- but there was no apparent improvement.

Following this home remedy, mother arranged for transportation to take father to a doctor located in the town of Vlachy which was a 2-1/2 hour ride from our home. The weather was very severe. To make father comfortable for the trip, mother placed a feather bed (perina) in the wagon for him to lay on. Mother and I sat beside him during the trip.

Upon examining father, Dr. Lehnicky determined that he could not follow the accepted procedure of severing a person's vein on the left forearm to draw out the "bad" blood. The application of the leaches put father in a weakened condition. The doctor gave us medicine to administer to father and sent us back home. Upon returning home, his condition was getting worse. As he laid in bed in his weakened condition, mother and we children began crying. The priest was summoned to administer the last rites of the church. Mother and I kept placing our hands on father's chest to feel the strength of his pulse. As the beats showed signs of improvement, we encouraged each other that he will not die. However, as the beats became weaker, we all began crying.

When I began to realize what was happening to father, the sad thought entered my mind that I already lost my mother, and now if I lose my father with us children so young and me with my sore arm, what would happen to us. I was so grief stricken that I couldn't forget or remember any other such grief in my entire lifetime. At every turn I would pray for father's recovery. As if though a miracle took place in our home, the Good Lord answered my sincere prayers inasmuch as father gradually began showing signs of improvement. He finally recovered from his sickness and began finishing our home. When I witnessed father's recovery from the weakened condition I saw him as he laid on his bed, I began to realize the power of prayer and have religiously prayed all my life. I, likewise, have encouraged all my children to never forsake the habit of reciting their prayers.

#### MY FIRST DUTIES AS "PASTIR" (COWHERD)

With the approach of spring in the year following the building of our new home, father was preparing to nominate me to serve as the neighborhood "Pastir" (cowherd). I was twelve years old. In his preparation father made me a leather satchel such as was worn by the cowherds on the side of their body. He fancifully decorated it with shiny ornaments. The cowherd carried his food and his whistle in this satchel, and it also served as a quasi-official badge of office in the neighborhood.

The custom of electing an official cowherd for the neighborhood cows followed an established pattern or procedure. The time and place of meeting for the purpose of selecting an individual for this office for the new season was publicized by word of mouth. The customary day was a Sunday afternoon. If the weather was agreeable the meeting was held outdoors preferably in the woods where a fire was built and bacon was roasted, etc. If the weather proved to be disagreeable, the meeting was held in a neighborhood home. Names of qualified individuals willing to serve were submitted and the first order of business was to select the cowherd for the coming pasturing season. After the individual was selected, contributions were made for liquid refreshments and bargaining for his compensation took place.

The first year I was nominated, two cowherds were selected for our neighborhood of Furmanec. This included a neighborhood buddy of mine, John Uhrin, and myself. My buddy was younger than me and inasmuch as his father was dead, it was agreed to have him serve with me. The compensation agreed upon was 40 kreutzers per month per cow, and 20 kreutzers per month per heifer. In addition to this monetary compensation, it was the established custom for each housewife to bake a "Kuhlen" for Pentecost for her cowherd. The "Kuhlen" was a type of kolach or pastry baked on a circular tray, about two inches thick and about 18 inches in diameter.

Having selected the cowherd and the compensation agreed upon, the next order of business was to select a date for the "Vihun." The "Vihun" was the first day the cowherd takes his charge to pasture. When the selected day arrives, each housewife leads her cow or heifer to a central location. At this time the housewife gives the cowherd his "Priuchno." This was sort of a "tip" for the cowherd inasmuch as the cows when released from being penned up all winter in their stalls were very frolicsome. It is the duty of the cowherd to regiment the herd and prevent them from piercing each other with their horns. The entire staging area where the cattle first congregate takes on the atmosphere of a circus -- the mooing of the cows, the tinkling of their bells inasmuch as each cow had a bell fastened around her neck, the barking of the

neighborhood dogs, the cackling of the chickens, the general confusion created by the operation, etc. The "Priuchno" usually was not less than 4 kreutzers, and some of the housewives even gave bread, bacon, and on occasion, liquid refreshments. It was interesting to observe that once the cowherd manages to get his cows under control in the spring, they have an instinctive tendency to stick together during the entire season.

The bell fastened around the neck of the cow served a dual purpose. If the cow strays away from the herd she is readily located by the sound of her bell. And, the various sounds of all the bells in the herd on the open meadows gives pleasure to the cowherd as he would stand among his charge fingering tunes on his whistle. However, all was not pleasure at times when a storm would approach with no shelter for protection from the beating rains, lightning, and occasional hale storms.

The entire herd from our neighborhood of Furmanec consisted of 14 heads of cattle -- my buddy and I each were assigned 7 heads. We each served our own housewives and received our compensation from them. Our tour of duty was to take our cows to the Graf's meadows at 4 o'clock in morning, bring them home for milking at 11 o'clock, return to the pastures at 2 o'clock, and again return home at dusk. This time schedule was in effect from early spring to the month of August. It so happened that about the month of August the cows did not require milking at midday so we carried our lunch with us and returned the cows home only in the evening. Our tour of duty ended with the first snow fall.

In order to utilize the Graf's meadows to pasture the herd, each family paid 3 zlaty per year for pasturing a cow, 2 zlaty for a heifer, and there was no assessment levied for calves. On occasion, my buddy and I had our youthful misunderstandings. This resulted in each of us steering his herd away from the other. But, we discovered this was not too easy to accomplish inasmuch as the cows were trained to graze in a group and trying to separate them did not work out to our liking. Nevertheless, when one of us had difficulty in locating a stray, we would seek each other's help and forget our petty quarrels.

In order to maintain our time schedule of bringing the cows home for the midday milking, we timed ourselves by the sun. That is, when the sun was overhead and we could step over our shadow, we knew it was time to bring the cows home. However, on a cloudy day with no sun to create the shadow to step over, we observed the actions of the cows. As the midday approached, the cows would instinctively start their grazing in a homeward direction which was our cue that we should leave.

#### MY FIRST ASSIGNMENT AS STUDENT INSTRUCTOR

After the first snow fall covered the ground and my duties as the neighborhood cowherd was no longer required, it was school time again. This was my seventh winter in pursuit of an education which automatically put me in the seventh class. At the beginning of this school year, there were now four of us children attending school from our family. The new pupil was our sister Ilona (Nellie). Thus, it was Mary, Anna, Ilona and myself. The drain on the family woodpile increased to four pieces of firewood per day instead of three. That is, four large pieces inasmuch as we carried our lunch and stayed all day. The standing requirement of firewood was one piece in the morning and one in the afternoon, or one large piece in the morning for children who stayed all day especially those living in the five outlying valleys who were unable to go home for lunch on account of the distance.

This being my seventh year in school, I was promoted, so to speak, to sit in the classroom benches rather than on the floor around the huge iron stove as in my previous years. This promotion was made possible due to the fact that the older pupils gradually left school to go to work or begin serving as apprentices in various trades such as shoe repair, miller, etc.

This school year brought us a new instructor -- the third since I started school. As I got better acquainted with him, I found out that he was not the disciplinarian that the two previous instructors were. I would receive assignments to teach the other students when his services were required for church duties such as funerals or holidays during the week. During his absence each of us older students would be assigned to tutor students in one bench as they read out of their books. I was very lenient with my assignees inasmuch as I myself would rather do chores than devote my time to books. However, if stricter measures were required, I would admonish the guilty pupil that he will be reported to the instructor upon his return. The reaction would have a soothing effect on both of us inasmuch as I would be bribed, so to speak, with a lead or slate pencil and the charge would be dismissed.

At times I was assigned to be custodian of the wood pile that accumulated by the blackboards and pass judgment on the size of the pieces of wood as they were brought in. Also, during the instructor's absence I was given the unpleasant duty of tabulating the unruly and noisy children and submitting the names to the instructor upon his return. Another assignment we older students received was to ring the church bells as the occasion required such as funerals or holidays. This assignment required a degree of manual effort and dexterity especially to ring the large bell in the church belfry. Three youngsters were required to ring this large bell -- two to rock the bell to gain the necessary momentum, and the third youngster to hold the pendulum until the proper time for release.

On occasion we older students were assigned to another pleasant task that released us from the monotony of the classroom. That is, to wind the clock in the church tower. This was a large clock with four faces that were visible for a great distance. In order to wind it, it was necessary to operate a pulley-type of apparatus to raise the weights that activated the clock mechanism. Some of these weights probably would tip the scale in excess of 100 pounds. This also required manual labor and dexterity which was to my liking and which I enjoyed.

It was the custom in the village to ring the church bells whenever a severe storm was approaching that could ruin the crops. It was traditionally accepted that the ringing of the church bells would alter the course of the storm and save the crops from destruction. Even though at times the storms ruined the crops and the peasants lamented which to some was the only means of a livelihood, it was generally agreed that the bells should be rung. In the event of a fire in the area, the church bells were rung to alert everyone. The bells served as a fire alarm by allowing the pendulum to strike only one side of the bell.

The school term ended after the children were prepared for confession and communion which was an annual requirement of the school children during the Great Lent prior to Easter. And, according to the calendar, about this time it was spring and the Graf began his spring planting of trees. This was the time of the year the peasants (panscare) fulfilled their annual obligation to the Graf's estate with work assignments. The duty levied by the Graf for our family was 36 days of labor

for the use of the land on which our home was built, and 4 days for the use of firewood for heating and cooking purposes. The work assignments were under the supervision of the Graf's hajduk. This was a type of nursery work to maintain continuous growth of the Graf's forests. The youngsters would dig the holes with a special tool (motika) comparable to planting potatoes, and deep enough to cover the roots of the seedlings which generally were six to eight inches in height. The actual placing of the seedlings into the ground which required a degree of judgment was assigned to the older workers.

The planting was all done systemically in rows spaced to provide for future growth. At times it was necessary to replant new seedlings if the previous planting failed to take root. This could be repeated for three to four years. We planted only the more valuable species such as fir (sosna), cedar (fihta), and spruce (smerek). The pine (jedlja) seedlings were not planted inasmuch as they grew by themselves and were plentiful in the area.

Assisting in fulfilling the obligation of our family to the estate of the Graf for the annual tenant's fee was my assignment from the time school closed in the spring until the growth of grass in the meadows was tall enough for pasturing and for me to assume my duties as the neighborhood cowherd.

#### MY SECOND SEASON AS NEIGHBORHOOD COWHERD

As the time approached in the spring and the entire countryside began to show signs of life, the conversation in the neighborhood of Furmanec centered around pasturing and selection of a cowherd for the coming season. The usual procedure of selecting a cowherd got under way. The representatives of the various households who had cattle to pasture assembled at a designated place and the order of business followed the usual pattern.

"Why not retain Andrew Grisak's son Joseph? He did us a good job last year," was asked. My pasturing buddy of last year, John Uhrin, was not available inasmuch as he was now working. And, with father's consent, it was agreed to retain my services for the coming season. They sent for me to make my appearance before the assembly of neighbors. At the outset, I tried to appear as not too anxious to take on the job but at the same time I was happy to be chosen. In fact, it was an honor to both me and my father.

As I made my appearance thru the door the "Odomas" was already in progress. That is, the customary liquid refreshments were being served to commemorate agreement in the selection of a new cowherd. It was also agreed, so I was told, that the remuneration for my services would remain the same as last year -- 40 kreutzers per cow per month, and 20 kreutzers per heifer per month. In addition, I was to receive a "Kuhen" from each housewife on Pentecost, and the "Priuchno" at the time of the "Vihun" or first day of pasturing.

In preparation for the assignment, I prepared my satchel by polishing the ornaments that father decorated it with until they glistened, got my whip (bitch), staff, and whistle ready. During the preparation process I also prepared our own cows by fastening bells to their necks.

It was a traditional custom in the village never to have the "Vihun" or first day of pasturing before the holiday of St. George. And, it was also a superstitious practice among some of the peasants who were



afflicted with witchcraft tendencies to place a chain with a lock attached under the doorsill of the barn door for the cow to step over on the first day she is released from her barn stall. Supposedly, this superstitious practice stems from the very early days when there were wolves roaming the area and would attack the herds and tear the animals into shreds. The belief among those who practiced it was that as the cow stepped over the doorsill, the strength of the wolf was captured by the chain, and the lock that was fastened to the chain sealed the jaws of the wolf to render him powerless.

When "Vihun Day" arrived, I was on hand to receive my "Priuchno" from each housewife as she brought her cow to me. It was the usual confusion for about two to three days. The housewives would render their assistance in the roundup in trying to prevent the larger cows from charging the smaller ones. On occasion, they would actually roll over the smaller cows. Among the confusion you could hear the crackling of my whip and the shouting of my voice as I tried to establish order.

Somehow or other word got around, and about a week later I began to receive heifers for pasturing from beyond our immediate neighborhood. To my surprise, some of the newcomers were from the employees of the Graf's estate, and others were from that group of village peasants commonly referred to as "Sedlacks." The sedlacks were villagers who earned their livelihood from their own plots of land. Due to distance involved in traveling to Furmanec, some of these heifers were housed for the evenings in our neighborhood where space was available in local barns. Our family also housed some of these heifers in our own barn. The logical reason for wanting to have these heifers graze with our herd was the availability of better pasture lands in the vicinity of Furmanec. And, to a degree, word got around, apparently, of my professionalism in handling a herd. In addition, and as a further inducement, the Graf's personnel increased the pasturing limits since their heifers were also among my herd.

With the addition of these extra heifers, my herd was increased to 21 heads as compared to the 7 of the previous year. Even the figure of the 21 heads was a conservative estimate at times. This large herd kept me on the go all the time. However, my sister Mary and sister Anna gave me a helping hand early in the spring when order was more difficult to maintain. On Sundays my sisters would visit me to keep me company and occasionally father would drop around inasmuch as he liked to be outdoors in the open spaces. Once in a while father would take charge of the herd to permit me to go to church on Sundays. But, under father's command the herd would not respond as they would when I was in charge. Apparently, the cattle knew their regular boss and my technique was to call each cow or heifer by their names. We had names such as: Kontesa, Kesha, Ruzana, Boca, Sejka, Strakulja, Hovana, Tirolja, Mazulja, Roza, etc. These names were given to them when they were young calves. The selection of these names at times indicated or referred to markings on their bodies, or other characteristics and behavior.

When the housewives would go into the rolling hills and meadows to assist in making hay for the winter feeding, I would volunteer to milk their cows at midday. It also made my duties more pleasant when there were men from the village in the area mowing grass with their straight-handle scythes keeping an even tempo in their strokes. The sounds of their honing stones in putting sharp edges on their scythe blades added music which seemed to dispel the monotony.

When the time came for me to stay all day in the pasture lands with my herd on account of no milking was required at midday, I would stock my satchel with bread, potatoes for baking in hot coals, bacon for sizzling over an open fire and capturing the drippings on my bread. And, if available, mother would tuck into my satchel some butter which was considered a delicacy in the household of any peasant.

Collecting pay for my services was always a happy event. This took place usually on Sunday at noon or evening. Mother supplied me with a small appropriate pouch and I made my rounds visiting each housewife in my area. Those housewives living some distance would bring my pay to me as they brought salt to feed to their heifers. My settlement with the Graf's personnel whose heifers I pastured followed a different course. They would deduct what was due me from our tenant's fee for which our family was obligated to for use of the land on which our home was located. And, after the first snow fell and enough wood was chopped and stocked for the winter months, it was back to school.

#### MY FIRST EXPERIENCE AT "HACHAKY" (DEER HUNT)

Deer hunts in our area were referred to as "Hachaky." It was a popular sport of the times. The wealthy and men of influence participated which included the Grafs and Panove (land owners, etc.) It was engaged in primarily in the fall of the year when foliage was at a minimum. Hachaky was a major event in which the villagers who cared to take part were hired to assist in routing the deer.

The announcement of the day of the hunt was made in the village in the usual manner as all other events or happenings of importance were made. That is, it was an established custom in the village to elect a man called a drummer. He was provided with a drum which he sounded at various spots in the village. The villagers assembled when he appeared and listened to his announcement which went something like this: "It is announced to one and all that the Grafs and Panove will come to our village for hachaky. Those who care to participate will be paid. They must register at the Graf's headquarters." The village drummer was paid 20 kreutzers for each announcement or job. He was called a "Bubnjar."

When the designated day for the hunt arrived, all the villagers who registered to take part assembled in the village and traveled down the Vishnanska Dolina into the distant woods to a hunting lodge referred to as "Smerek." Our father took me and my two sisters, Mary and Anna. We joined the other villagers on the way. The entire scene could be likened to a traveling army. The guests of honor, so to speak, the Grafs and Panove were in the procession also but they traveled in their fancy coaches with their manservants, cooks, etc. The procession included wagons loaded down with barrels of whiskey which the guests of honor provided inasmuch as everyone who took part was treated.

The local hajduks made all arrangements in the woods where the hunt was to take place. The job was no small task. This required clearing off areas about 20 steps wide into which the running deer had to expose themselves. At times it was necessary to remove large trees and dense foliage to provide clear areas. These clearances were spaced about 300 steps apart. The villagers were positioned about 4 to 5 steps from each other to form a line. This regimentation was done under the supervision of the hajduks. The Grafs and Panove positioned themselves at the border line of these clearings. Each Graf carried a cane which gave him support in climbing hills. When he reached a clearing he unfolded his cane into a seat on which he sat, holding his gun, as he viewed the

area for an approaching deer. The Panove also stationed themselves at these clearings. When everything was ready for the villagers to begin their advance towards the clearings, a signal was given and a trumpet was sounded. At this point, at the command of the hajduks, the villagers began to advance thru the woods rapping on trees with their large sticks as they passed. The noise and disturbance that was generated by the advance gave the deer no choice but to take to their heels. The sticks were also used to direct the deer forward if they tried to backtrack. The discipline was very strict. There was no loud talking, only whispers were allowed. The villagers were strictly forbidden to enter a clearing where shooting could take place.

As one section was covered, the Grafts and Panove advanced to the next clearing and positioned themselves. Then again the trumpet was sounded on a given signal and the villagers advanced towards the next clearing. This process was repeated many times.

Then the welcoming orders came to take a break for lunch. The villagers carried their own food with them in their side satchels (tanjistry). It was back to the initial starting point where the coaches and wagons were stationed. Everyone was treated to a round of whiskey which was portioned out by the hajduks from the barrels on the wagons. The grown-ups received a larger portion than the younger generation. Those who did not drink gave their share to others. We children gave our portion to our father. The cooks and manservants who accompanied the honored guests, the hunters, prepared lunch for their masters on spits.

After lunch was over, it was back to the woods to the spot where we left off. In due time during the hunt, as we traveled a certain section the son of one of the Grafts felled a deer with his gun as the deer entered a clearing. His manservant immediately lanced the deer's throat, took a green leaf from nearby foliage, dipped it into the pool of blood, and placed the leaf in the son's cap inasmuch as he was dressed in a military uniform which appeared to be that of an officer.

Immediately after the deer was killed, the information was dispatched as to who was credited with the kill. Then the orders came that the hachaky were over and for everyone to go to the village tavern for a round of whiskey in commemoration of a successful hunt. The whiskey barrels on the wagons at the hunting lodge were empty so the final treat would take place at the tavern. We took a flask for our share of the treat and brought the whiskey home to our father.

The villagers who participated in the hunt and were tenants on the estates (panshare) had their pay credited to their tenant's fee, and all the others who participated received one Korun for adults and half a Korun for children. The Korun was a monetary denomination.

In addition to the elaborate hunts held for deer, there also were hachaky for hunting rabbits. These hunts were on a much smaller scale in which only the school-age children of parents who paid tenant's fees participated. The hunts were confined to meadows of estates surrounding the village. The procedure was basically the same only we children did not rap on trees with sticks. In fact, we did not carry sticks at all. Our assignment was to howl like dogs in order to rout the rabbits as we traveled a section. Needless to say, by the time the hunt was over, laryngitis was the order of the evening. Nevertheless, it was something we enjoyed and looked forward to.

### MY LAST SCHOOL YEAR

In the year of 1891, we had another addition to our family. On April 29th a baby sister was born which received the name of Julia at Holy Baptism. Now I had five sisters and one brother -- Mary, Anna, Ilona, Andrew, Katherine and Julia.

After my duties as the neighborhood cowherd came to an end in the fall, I began my 8th and last year of schooling. No other higher education was available in our village. Most of my school buddies already finished their eight classes, were engaged in some type of employment, or were helping out with domestic chores for their parents. As we began the new school year, we also were greeted with a new instructor named "Andras Sakmary." He was a personable and an older gentleman with a beard which gave him a grandfatherly appearance. He and his wife were both natives of our village of Slovinky but for many years he taught school in other villages at Carpatho-Russian Greek Catholic parishes and now he was transferred to our school. He was a family man whose sons were pursuing higher education.

As I began this 8th winter of instructions with my three sisters (Mary, Anna, and Ilona), the procedure of bringing firewood to school remained the same. This being my final year, the new instructor, who was a fine gentleman and an excellent teacher, approached me to give him assistance in teaching. His first approach was to question me as to what year I was attending. After I told him this was my 8th year, he began questioning me on my achievement on this level. At this point I was apprehensive inasmuch as I knew I was not as far advanced as I should have been after attending school for seven winters. As I began stuttering and forgetting, he just looked at me as he vigorously stroked his beard. Then he questioned me as to where I was attending school in the past. I replied that it was this school in Slovinky that I attended during the past seven winters. He told me that for the time I attended school, I knew very little and he wanted to know why I wasn't more advanced. Being in an apprehensive mood during the entire interrogation, I broke out into tears.

Having suspected that something was amiss as he was impressed with my sincerity, from this time on our new instructor, thru his kindness, gave me special tutoring in the more important subjects. It was quite difficult at the outset but I began taking more interest in learning and it was much easier to grasp things with my change in attitude toward my studies which came about primarily by the friendly method of instructions of the new instructor.

In fact, at home my parents were encouraged that I would amount to something after all. My father would tease me that he will send me to Gribova to study for the priesthood. Gribova was a town in Galicia where villagers from Slovinky would go to market (Jurmark) to buy and sell cattle, horses, etc. Resulting from this teasing, my school buddies bestowed upon me the title or "Farar (Priest) from Gribova."

During the feast day of Epiphany as the priest, accompanied by our school instructor, visited our family to bless our home with holy water as was the traditional custom, the instructor questioned my mother as to how I was behaving at home. She replied that my behavior was very good, and she asked the instructor how her son was coming along at school. During their conversation I was very attentive and hoping for his good appraisal in the presence of my mother. To my disappointment, the instructor told her I knew very little. Inasmuch as we lived in an

atmosphere where compliments were few and far between so as not to spoil a child, mother did not take this too seriously. She was more interested in my growing up and going to work to supplement the family purse. It was quite noticeable that the instructor did not question my mother about my sisters inasmuch as sisters Mary, Anna and Ilona also attended school under his tutorship. Apparently, he was more interested in seeing me advance because he knew the value of an education when one faces the problems of the outside world. The instructor kept following my progress continuously and my advancement under his personal tutorship was remarkable -- may his soul rest in peace.

During the winter evenings as we came home from school it was the usual routine chores or helping with the cattle and giving mother a hand at the loom in making cloth while my sisters spun the flax. About March 15th to April 1st, as the sedlacks began their spring plowing, the children began dropping out of school gradually to help with domestic chores while others continued until warm weather set in and the school was closed. As the Graf began planting seedlings about the 15th of April, we worked on these assignments to satisfy our annual tenant's fee.

Following the job of planting for the Graf, I began preparing again to take on the duties of neighborhood cowherd. My parents didn't want me to work in the local ore mines but wanted me to take up the trade of "Kuchnir," inasmuch as they were concerned about my laming arm and a trade would not be as strenuous as manual labor in the mines. A "Kuchnir" was a person who follows the trade of making sheepskin coats (Kozuhy) which was quite popular in our cold climate. This trade did not appeal to me inasmuch as a kuchnir was required to process his own sheep skins. During the winter months the processing of skins required scrubbing the skins outdoors in running brooks. Consequently, my summer was taken up again pasturing the neighborhood herd.

#### FROM PASTURING TO GRINDING GRAIN

As the spring of 1892 approached, my only recourse to occupy my time for the coming summer at something profitable was to continue pasturing the neighborhood herd. Being fourteen years old, I was considered by local standards an adult. I was as proficient in handling cattle as any adult. When it became known in the village that I was again elected cowherd, my clientele took on new dimensions. Among my herd were heifers belonging to the Graf's aids from Nizny Slovinky, which due to the distance, were quartered at our home for the entire summer. From Vishny Slovinky one of my customers was Matthew Nemchik who was a hajduk in the Graf's service. Another customer was Abraham Klein, a Jew who owned the tavern in center of the village.

This summer my duties as cowherd were laced with new experiences and new ventures. In Vishny Slovinky the Graf owned a mill to grind grain. The Graf rented the mill to an elder villager by the name of Michael Supina. Supina's cows were in my herd also. My total compliment of cattle in the herd now were in excess of 30 heads. Inasmuch as I had to bring the herd into the village for milking, the evening trip made it necessary for me, due to distance, to find sleeping quarters nearby so that at daybreak I could return the herd to the Furmanec pasturing meadows. The mill provided me with a logical place to spend the night. This arrangement lasted all summer. On occasion, my father and and sisters would spend a Sunday with me in the meadows to break the monotony.

While at the mill, I got acquainted with the miller and would follow him around in his duties observing the operation as the large wheels would revolve. The mill was propelled by water power. The miller would

gladly take time out to explain the process of grinding. As time went on, he asked me to assist him especially when it was necessary to dress the grinding stone. He showed me how to grind wheat into flour, and acquainted me with various duties of his trade. He was called a "Mlinjar."

When my parents learned of my close association with the miller, my father told me that if I refused to take up the trade of kuchnir, now I have the opportunity to become a miller. Milling was a trade in itself. The miller had no children to follow in his footsteps. Being fascinated by the entire operation, I agreed to father's suggestion.

Resulting from father's conversation with the miller, he told father that after the pasturing season was over, I should begin my apprenticeship with him. In the meantime the miller continued to tutor me as time would permit for the balance of the summer. When I had available time during the long summer days in the meadows, I would make whisk brooms from birch twigs for the miller. These were used in the milling operation to remove flour. Father was encouraged inasmuch as he already was in possession of a suitable workbench and various tools that would lend themselves to my future trade as a miller.

It might be of general interest to point out that in addition to the two trades (kuchnir and miller) which we discussed, some of the other popular trades available to young aspirants were that of: Shoemaker (shuster) who made and repaired shoes for young and old; potter (harenchar) who made a variety of pots, pans, plates, etc., from clay; cabinetmaker (stoljar) who made chests, tables, chairs and even caskets when required; carpenter (cimerman) who built homes, barns and various buildings out of wood; brick or stonemason (murar) who erected homes, chimneys, cellars, etc., from brick or stone; chimney sweep (kominar) who swept out soot from chimneys to restore a draft; kovach (blacksmith) who made hatchets, rakes, knives and various gardening implements, etc.

An apprenticeship usually began in very early youth. The apprentice was referred to as "Uchen" and after he served his apprenticeship and received his diploma or certificate, he was called a "Tovarish." The instructor or master was referred to as "Pan Majster."

As fall approached my knowledge of the milling operation advanced to the point that I was able to grind wheat, which mother purchased, into flour for her. Usually I did this at night so as not to disrupt the daily routine of the miller. When the miller would see me grinding at night, he would insist that I get some sleep inasmuch as I had to rise very early in the morning, and he was kind enough to finish my job. He was a very accommodating person. In fact, he would allow the sedlacks grind their own grain in his mill thus making it less expensive. He merely stood by to observe that everything was functioning properly.

When the time came for me to begin my apprenticeship, it was necessary for father and the miller to draw up a contract or written agreement. The miller being well along in years, father wanted the contract to contain a clause that in the event the miller was unable to fulfill his obligation, that another "Majster" would finish the apprenticeship and issue the diploma. Due to the circumstances, it was logical for father to make this request inasmuch as it took four years to complete this apprenticeship, and a miller was required to make and repair practically all his machinery and apparatus which was primarily wooden and water powered. However, he would not agree to father's proposal and the negotiations were terminated.

After the arrangement for my apprenticeship to become a miller did not materialize, father persuaded me to remain home for the winter and help out with the domestic chores. While my sisters attended the village school during the winter months, my time was occupied primarily tending our cattle, chopping firewood for mother, helping her make cloth, and repairing the loom when required. On father's workbench I made rakes and various wooden implements that were required in the home.

When word got around that I was available, the Graf's hajduk would come to our home to have me chop firewood for the Graf's aids. I was well known to these people inasmuch as I pastured their heifers and they were pleased with my work. There were three of these aids to the Graf for whom the panschare cut firewood. There was no compensation for this work only credit was given towards the annual tenant's fee.

We did not cut firewood every day and rotated among the three aide as required. Usually we worked as a group of three at a time but not less than two inasmuch as two were required to use the large handsaw. At times when the weather was severe we would come home with ears, toes or fingers frostbitten. We were not permitted to come into their homes to warm up. Nearby was a tavern and we would go there at noon to warm up. However, occasionally we were treated at some homes to a drink of liquor, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. On rare occasions we would receive a drink of milk or a piece of bread which supplemented our own lunch.

In the meantime father was making arrangements for me to work with him at the ore mines. The time was approaching when father needed help with the family finances since there were nine mouths to feed now -- father, mother, Mary, Joseph, Anna, Ilona, Andrew, Katherine and Julia.

#### MY FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH TOBACCO

It was during my first summer as the neighborhood cowherd that I experienced my first encounter with tobacco. During that first summer when two of us were elected from our neighborhood to tend the herd -- John Uhrin who was my neighbor and buddy, and myself. I was twelve years old at the time and my buddy was a bit younger.

About mid-summer the two of us took our assigned cattle (seven apiece) a little further toward the mountains. Here we noticed a group of lumberjacks falling trees and processing them into planks. It was a commercial practice to make arrangements with the Graf to purchase timber in his forest for further processing on the scene and shipping the product out of the area to markets. As these men noticed that we were nearby with our herd, they asked us if we would bring them some tobacco tomorrow from the village that they are running out. This was agreeable with us and we told them that we would be happy to if they gave us the money for the purchase and also some of the tobacco when we brought it.

It was a practice for these lumberjacks to live in the forest by their work area during the week and only come into the village on week-ends for provisions and relaxation. Since my buddy lived a little closer to the village than me, he volunteered to make the purchase that evening. Also, at the same time, he searched their home and located a small tobacco pipe that his deceased father smoked. My father did not smoke so there was no pipe in our home. This agreement with the lumberjacks made us very happy that we will get some of their tobacco, and to be able to indulge in that manly pastime of adults. The next day we drove our herd into the far hills where the lumbering operation was in

progress and handed over the tobacco to the lumberjacks. They kept their promise as agreed the day before and my buddy and I each received a small portion of the tobacco. To put our experiment into operation, we selected a spot some distance away from the lumbering operation, set a fire, and packed the pipe with tobacco. Being the older of the two, it was agreed I would light up and start puffing first just like the big men. Thinking this to be something pleasant and enjoyable, I kept puffing at a rapid pace for several minutes while my buddy was 'champing at the bit' awaiting his turn. As I handed the pipe over to him, I began developing a strange feeling over my entire body. It seemed as if the entire countryside was revolving with me in the center.

I tried to get up but was unable to stand on my feet. As I glanced at my buddy, who had made enough puffs for an affect, he was engaged in a different type of behavior -- he was rolling over the ground as our pipe lay near the fire awaiting more action. Our herd was in a state of disarray roaming the countryside. We both lost all track of time. The position of the sun indicated that it was time to drive the herd home and we were still in a state of confusion.

Finally, as we began feeling better, we rounded up the herd for the trip home. We promised ourselves to smoke only a little at a time in the future. This we did until all our tobacco was finished. I did not smoke anymore after this episode until I began working in the ore mines many years later. My buddy also refrained from smoking temporarily but in later years he became a very heavy smoker while I remained a more moderate user of tobacco.

#### MY FIRST JOB AT THE ORE MINES

Following father's conversation with the boss at the ore mine that he worked in, negotiating a job for me, the boss told father he would give me a job but that he would like to see me first. Early one Sunday morning, about the middle of May (1893), father and I set out for the town of Krompachy where the boss lived. It was a trip of about one and one-half hour by foot. When the boss saw me, he turned to father and said that I was strong enough to work. This made me very happy that I got the job. Father sent out for drinks to commemorate the successful conclusion of our trip in which I was permitted to participate in the toasting. The boss told me to come tomorrow to "Kliperk" with my provisions to be ready to start work. "Kliperk" was a term used to describe a mountainous section in our area which was spotted with mines where ore was mined. It was about an hour distance by foot from the village with a continuous uphill climb.

At that time there were four ore mines on Kliperk, namely: Lizabeta, Shvedljarka, Strednja (center) Petra, and Spudnja (lower) Petra. The workmen from the village would spend an entire week at their work area and back-pack their provisions. At the mines the men lived in barrack-like buildings called "Kram." They cooked their own meals. Their work shift started at 12 noon on Monday to 6:00 P.M. Then from 6:00 P.M. to about 11:00 P.M. they would catch a wink of sleep. Starting again at midnight, they would work until 6:00 A.M. the next morning. This schedule of a six-hour work-shift and six hours of rest continued until 6:00 A.M. Friday morning. The balance of the week the men would spend at home. The Kliperk area of four mines employed about 200 workmen and six youngsters like myself.

The mine was referred to as a "Banja." The supervision, according to rank, was called "Hutman," "Pan Stajger," and "Pan Shif Majster."



The oldest member of our group of six youngsters was referred to as "Kirfirer." He was sort of a group leader. The company that operated the mines was named "Shargo Tarijan." Generally, the company was referred to as "Gverstvo." Inasmuch as the ore mines belonged to German or Austrian interests, the terminology used for names, titles, etc., was primarily of Teutonic origin. Working under German supervision our vocabulary naturally became laced with many German words, expressions, etc., in our daily conversation.

Our daily tour of duty was to do clean-up work in the mine that was required by the workmen. We worked shifts opposite the men so as not to interfere with each other. That is, we worked from 6:00 P.M. to midnight, and from 6:00 A.M. to noon.

On my very first shift that Monday morning when I reported for work we stored our provisions in the "Kram" and received a special assignment to pick "Barvinok" in the nearby woods. "Barvinok" is a broad-leaf green plant used by peasants for medicinal purposes. Sometimes it is referred to as part of the Periwinkle family. As we came into the wooded area, the group turned their attention to me -- the new recruit. Knowing that I was a former cowherd, and as the saying goes that 'boys will be boys' the group wanted to test my strength in wrestling. Much to their surprise, I was able to pin down all those who were my size, but not the larger boys.

After we filled our satchels (tanistry) with barvinok, we took it to the "Pan Shif Majster's" wife in Krompachy. This was a distance of about one hour by foot. His wife wanted to plant the green barvinok in her garden since it was time for spring planting. This completed my first assignment, and we each were credited with a six-hour shift. I was quartered in the Kram at the mine named "Lizabeta," with the other boys. My father, however, was quartered at the "Strednja Petra" Kram.

On the 6:00 P.M. shift that first day, as I entered the mine with my buddies to do clean-up work, the inside surroundings seemed very strange since I was never inside a mine before. We all were equipped with a light or lamp called "Kahan." This lamp contained a small compartment which held about a quarter-pint of oil and a cotton wick which projected from a narrow spout. The cotton wick, when saturated in oil, provided the necessary illumination when lit. One filling of oil in the lamp provided sufficient light for one shift. The company provided the cotton wicks and the oil, but the lamp was our own property.

Our working tools were a metal implement shaped like a hoe (graca) with a short wooden handle, and a basket-like container the size of a large pan. This container was woven from oak twigs with an ear-shaped handle on each side for carrying purposes. It was called a "Feljfas." Our job was to scrape the debris with the hoe into the feljfas and carry it to a designated area. The debris consisted of items such as pieces of ore and slate.

The iron ore was referred to as "Shpot" and slate was either called "Pjargy" or "Tabovito." When the time came to begin a shift and receive assignments, this was referred to as "Faraty." The stajger would line up our crews and give us our assignment. We did not work as one large group but as several crews with one older member directing a new or inexperienced recruit like myself. It was a must that we did as we were told by our group leader. As time and duties would permit, we would leave the inside of the mine for the outdoors, sneak a few winks of sleep, a bite of bread, and report back to our work area.

#### FIRST ATTEMPT AT MAKING HALUSKY

When we finished our shift at noon, it became a custom for our noon meal to prepare "Halusky." This was a type of dumpling which was a staple among the peasants. The principle ingredients, with variations to satisfy individual tastes, were kneaded dough and grated potatoes. Each of us had our own cooking utensils which consisted of a steel pot for boiling water, a dish-like pan made of pottery from which we ate, one large iron spoon made by the village kovach (blacksmith), a wooden vessel for kneading dough, and a potato grater.

Each workman or miner (generally referred to as "Havjar") brought his own weekly supply of provisions. This usually consisted of a large loaf of bread, small sack of flour, some potatoes in a sack, slab of bacon, butter, sheep's cheese (brinza), cottage cheese, and a wooden container of salt. However, during my first week it was necessary for me to borrow some utensils to make halusky since I was unable to bring everything on my first trip.

With enough borrowed utensils, cooperation being the order of the day, I made my first attempt at making halusky. My buddies coached me along in this venture. But, it was not much of a mystery for me inasmuch as mother made them at home and she showed me how to boil halusky so as not to get sick on uncooked ones. Having prepared my halusky, and as I was ready to boil them in the metal pot, my buddies cautioned me that I must determine what haluska cooks first. Not suspecting any mischief at the outset, I tried to convince them that it was impossible to determine what one cooks first. They told me that the one I place last in the pot cooks first, and the first one placed in the pot, cooks last. This apparently was a standing joke to which all new cooks were exposed.

On my first trip to Kliperk mother packed my tanistru with so much of the necessary staples that I was barely able to carry it. In addition to the basic provisions of bread, bacon, etc., she also gave me a "Rompel" of butter which by volume was a little more than a half pint. With this delicacy I was very conservative and later boasted to mother how good I was at conserving. This taught me a lesson. The next time mother reduced my portions until I told her that I was running out.

As we youngsters prepared our meals, we had much freedom in the Kram. The workmen were on their shift in the mine and we had all the facilities to ourselves. After we ate our noon meal we went to sleep until our evening shift. We all slept on "Pogrety" which was a bunk-type bed built along one wall. We each had our own mattress stuffed with either straw or dry corn husks. These mattresses were not moved unless one got torn and had to be replaced. Everyone slept in his clothes. All that was removed, in addition to the hat and coat, was the vest (lajblik) and boots (bochkory). The Kram was furnished with a large stove made of brick with a heavy metal sheet on top. It was used both for cooking and heating the Kram. Everyone had to share in bringing in firewood.

Each workman had a "Shtok" or a foot-locker in which provisions were kept under lock and key. This shtok also substituted for a chair to sit on since no one had a chair or table. The shtoks were lined up along the opposite wall from the bunks. About six feet above the shtoks were shelves for storing our cooking utensils. Under the shelves were nails to hang one's coat (hunja), vest, hat, and tanjistra. Everything was engineered for maximum utilization of space and efficiency. Each Kram was equipped with four "Kopy" or large wooden buckets for water. Each bucket had a handle-like arrangement on one side to be used for carrying purposes.

It was a traditional custom among the workmen for each to have in his possession a walking-stick (kulachka). This was stored back of the shtok when not in use while walking or hiking. Also, it was part of one's standard belongings to have on his person a pocketknife (nozik). This knife was attached to a strip of leather for safety and was carried in the vestpocket at all times when not in use.

#### OPERATING PRACTICES AT THE MINES

The workmen (havjare) worked in assigned crews. A crew was referred to as a "Kira." Each crew was under the direction of the oldest havjar or the most capable one. He was called a "Kirfirer." He would be the first to enter a work area, was responsible for his crew's safety, and would inspect every phase of their work. The kirfirer's name was used to identify the crew and their production. Each crew was composed of at least two workmen. The size depended upon the work area to which they were assigned. The work area was called a "Stros." It was comparable to a room in a bituminous coal mine. A "Feldort" was comparable to an entry in a bituminous coal mine.

It is well to mention that some crews, being more religious and more mindful of the dangers associated with their work, would pause when they entered their work area, sit for a moment as each member silently said a prayer to himself, then they would begin their work. The work consisted of building, drilling into solid rock, transporting ore to the outside, etc. Transporting the ore was usually done by the younger men of the crew and were called "Huntstisare." The operation was called "Bjihaty" and the vehicle used for transporting the ore was referred to as a "Hunta" or a "Vagon." On level ground usually one huntstisar could manage but where an incline was involved, it took one to pull and the other to push the vagon.

As the ore was removed out of the mine, each crew dumped their production in a certain location called a "Rampa." As the workmen finished their shift, the hutman was on hand to evaluate the output. Each crew had two wooden measuring boxes called "Pury" with which the workmen measured the ore. The hutman tallied the output which was identified by the name of the kirfirer. The pay was calculated according to the pury.

After the measuring operation was completed, the pury were emptied onto an incline which allowed the ore to slide and accumulate in one general location. After the workmen were finished measuring their output they went to their Kram where they usually prepared their one favorite meal of halusky. Its popularity among the workmen was due, no doubt, to its simplicity and ease in preparing between six-hour shifts.

The ore was transported from the mines down the mountain side by an inclined track on which two cars, fastened to a steel cable, traveled -- one up and the other traveled down to level ground. The movement of the cars down the mountainside was done by gravity -- the loaded car traveling down would automatically pull the empty car up. At the top of the incline was a building which housed the mechanical equipment which consisted of large wheels, etc. One man was stationed in this building to control the speed by applying brakes. A crew of eight women loaded these cars. They worked 12-hour shifts, were paid 40 kreutzers for each car loaded. They could load up to 60 cars on a 12-hour shift. When snow became a problem in the winter time, it was our assignment to assist the women in cleaning the snow with shovels from the tracks. It was not unusual for us to have our fingers, toes or ears frostbitten when shoveling snow. From that point transportation was done by "Furmane" (teamsters) to a factory by Krompachy called a "Masha."

The ore deposits were found in the ground in drifts called "Stolny." These drifts were not concentrated in one spot but in various locations. The ore deposits were in vertical rather than horizontal veins in which coal is mined. To remove the ore from this vertical position required various techniques and methods of extraction. Blasting was done by dynamite. There was no electrical or steam power -- manpower was king.

What applied to removing ore out of one drift, did not necessarily work in another area. The various methods consisted primarily of erecting scaffolds, providing air passages inasmuch as there were no mechanical means of ventilation, building shafts and chutes to transfer the ore from a higher to a lower level, etc. It might be well to say that the various methods used were ingenuous and probably were considered the most modern for the times and the technology available. The deeper the ore deposits penetrated the earth, the higher the quality of the ore.

Wages were established according to the area from which the ore was extracted. Each stros carried a different rate. The hutman or the ober hutman would inspect the work area of a crew every two weeks, or towards the end of the month, to establish a rate of pay. This monthly assessment was called a "Ding," and the two-week assessment was referred to as a "Half Ding." The payday was always on a Saturday and was disbursed once a month. It was called a "Ljun." The ljun for eight months of the year was based on four weeks of production, and for four months it was based on five weeks of production. Inasmuch as each stros was assessed a different wage rate, the final calculation of pay included an adjustment to equalize the earnings of each workman in order that no one was penalized when required to work under unfavorable conditions.

In the event that we had company officials, or other dignitaries came into the mine on business with the workmen, cordial greetings were always exchanged. When the visitors came into the stros by the workmen, they would say (as near as I could make out) "Gligov." The workmen would stop their work and reply "Gligov," before any conversation began. Upon departure, the same greeting was exchanged between them.

#### DISCIPLINE IN THE KRAM

The discipline among the workmen living in the close quarters of the Kram was very strict. The younger members respected the knowledge and wisdom of the older workmen. Obedience was a household word that meant just that. Thievery was unheard of among the workers. In fact, in our Kram we had a "Rihtar" or "Elder" who saw to it that order was maintained. His name was Michael Mnich who became my father-in-law after I came to America and married his daughter Mary.

The four wooden vessels (kopy) we had in our Kram for water were filled each evening by two different workmen (we all took turns) so that water was available for the midnight shift. In cooking meals each workman furnished his own water but sharing of water for convenience was a common practice.

For drinking purposes we had two pottery cups (Rajhenicky) in our Kram. In the event one accidentally was broken, the guilty party had to buy a new one at his own expense. Cleanliness was the order of the day. The Kram was swept every day at which we all took turns. The presence of fleas was a menace. To combat the situation, especially on week-ends, containers were filled with water when we left and the first arrival the following week doused the floor with the water to get rid of the fleas. With constant use of the Kram during the week, fleas presented no uncontrollable problem.

In the evenings, storytelling was the most popular pastime. A captive listening audience was always available. Necessary chores were carried out very quietly when the workmen retired so as not to create a disturbance. In the event some crew had good production the previous week, they would report for work on Monday noon as required, but would immediately dispatch a huntstisar to the village tavern for liquor. The huntstisar, with a tanistra full of empty bottles on his back, would sneak thru the woods so as not to be noticed by supervision. At times this could drag from Monday evening into Wednesday. This practice was not too common among the workmen and only a selected few participated.

The stajger would pay us a visit to our work area every shift as he made his rounds. It could have been for safety inspections, but occasionally it was interpreted to be a mission of surveillance especially to apprehend us youngsters at loafing on the job. It was our assignment to carry pjargy (slate, earth, etc.) to elevate the footings of the workmen so that they could reach the roof to drill necessary holes for blasting as they mined the ore upwards.

In the event we were apprehended doing something mischievous or not proper, the stajgar would not credit us with a shift or we had to do one shirt twice. This was considered very unfair and probably stemmed from the fact that we were Russian and the stajger and mine interests were dominated by Germans. There was no appeal. Animosity between the two nationalities was not too pronounced but did exist to a degree and surfaced only in a subtle and insidious way.

Many nationalities were represented among the workmen at the mines on Kliperk -- Russian, Slovak, German, etc. Some would travel great distances to work. And, after a weekend at home, each workman came to work relating news of events, experiences, etc. Since no newspapers were available, this was one avenue of communication. Inasmuch as storytelling was the most common pastime in the evenings, each nationality contributed to the variety of humor that was exchanged. Since conversation was on a low level and very informal, the language barrier was not a big problem. Interchange of colloquial expressions was very common.

It was this multiplicity of nationalities living and working so closely together that it was practically impossible to maintain an indigenous language. Our conversations were always interlaced with words other than our native Russian, primarily Slovak and German or Hungarian.

#### PAYDAY AT THE ORE MINES

My first pay for working at the ore mine on Kliperk amounted to 3.96 Zlaty in Austrian money. This was for 18 6-hour shifts at 22 kreutzers per shift inasmuch as I started about the middle of the month and did not have a full month's pay like the other workmen. The older and more experienced youngsters received 24 kreutzers per shift compared to my starting rate of 22 kreutzers. As I remember, mother gave me an allowance of 21 kreutzers from this first pay. In fact, I did not spend this entire allowance inasmuch as I made a loan to mother which she never paid back.

This same summer of 1893 that I began to work at Kliperk, our mother gave birth to a son -- my second brother. At Holy Baptism he was named John. This increased our family to ten members.

In order to collect our pay, it was necessary to travel to the town of Krompachy to await our kirfirer. This was a monthly trip and always on a Saturday morning. The pay for the entire crew was given to

the crew kirfirer in large denominations. He received the money at the factory called "Masha." This was about a half-hour walk from the town of Krompachy. To give the money to the crew kirferer was the paying procedure for all mine crews. That is, the kirferer received the pay in large denominations for the entire crew. He brought the money to Krompachy where his crew was awaiting in their selected taverns. The proprietors of the town's taverns (korchma) were Jewish. Being prepared for an influx of business, they were prepared to have on hand enough money in small denominations for the occasion. The crew members divided the money, each receiving his due amount, as they ordered drinks. The Jewish proprietors just smiled, gently stroking their beards, as they attended to the influx of business.

We youngsters who drank very little or no liquor, had no one particular tavern to meet in. It was necessary for us to shop around to find a proprietor to make us change. We received many refusals. The youngster who had no father to accompany him, came with his mother to collect his "Ljun" or pay.

When it was payday, a market was held in Krompachy at which the workmen could purchase all their personal needs. The supplies for the mine, referred to as "Unkosty," such as dynamite for blasting, fuses, caps, oil, cotton for wicks, etc., were stocked at the Masha factory and were picked up every two weeks on a Saturday morning. One or two members of each crew would be assigned for this duty where the stajger made the disbursements. The articles that were not furnished by the company, a payroll deduction was made.

The crew of youngsters followed this same procedure in securing the unkosty for their needs. These mine supplies were stored in a separate brick building at the factory. It was about a 10-minute walk from the factory near the Hornad River. For security purposes, the building referred to as the "Prahuvnja" (powder house) was equipped with bars on windows, reinforced door, etc. The crew members carried everything to the mine site by tanjistra. The dynamite came in packages weighing about six pounds each. The Hornad River was the source of water supply for the factory Masha.

The following summer (1894) the company began a project of cleaning, repairing, etc., the canal that brought water from the river to the factory. This major project required all workmen, youngsters, and women from all the mines, to participate. We worked every day except Sunday, from 4:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. for about three months. The rate of pay was the same as we received at the mines. The workmen who lived close to the project would go home in the evenings. Father and I were unable to do this on account of the distance -- we remained at the work site. Our quarters were the available barns in and around Krompachy. During the day we splashed around in water and slept in our wet clothes at night.

Twice a week mother brought us prepared meals. The other meals consisted of bread, bacon, butter, brinza, etc. Father was assigned to do carpenter work on the project inasmuch as he was proficient at the trade, and I with the other youngsters shoveled mud out of the canal. Each was assigned work that he was capable of doing. At the site where the canal joined the river, the flow of water was controlled by gates.

As we speak of meals, our daily fare did not include any corn products inasmuch as corn was not raised in our village at that time. However, corn was already being cultivated in surrounding areas.

#### SOCIAL TITLES - THE VILLAGE - THE PEASANT

In the Austro-Hungarian Empire where feudalism was practiced to a modified degree, the wealthy, the land owners, and the ruling class lived an abundant life as compared to the peasant. The general classification of "Panove" was used in reference to these people who possessed wealth and influence. In addressing these people, a multiplicity of titles was used as the individual, situation, or condition required. The various titles attached to their social status were required by wealth, education, inheritance, etc.

For instance, a common peasant in addressing these individuals was required to use phrases like "Veljko Mozny" (Your High Esteem), "Jih Milosty" (Your Mercy), etc. A tradesman who had an apprentice under his tutorship was referred to as "Pan Majster" and a woman was "Pany Majstrova." A Jew in the village was always referred to as "Mlady Pan" even if he was 100 years old. An unmarried woman of a high social standing was a "Fraulein," and one of a lower social position was a "Kizasonka." An unmarried young man of a mediocre level was a "Mlady Pan," and one of a higher social status was "Pan Urocheny." These are a few selected examples of titles that prevailed.

If a peasant went to the "Kansalarija" (office) seeking employment, he first was required to remove his hat and determine what title he should address the person to whom he spoke. Then the peasant would plead his case something like this: "Pitam ponizenu lasku, jak pana Ober Hutmana, kebi mi recili dati robotu" (I humbly appeal to your generosity, Pan Ober Hutman, to favor me with a job). In the event this line of social graces was not followed, the peasant was reprimanded and reminded of his lower social status with derogatory reference to his Russian ancestry before being dismissed.

Each village had a "Rihtar" (Mayor or Burgomaster). The governing body of a village was called a "Synod" which was comparable to a city council. Inasmuch as Slovinky was actually two villages (Vishny and Nizny) each had their own rihtar and synod but they followed one uniform system of governing. However, the St. George's Greek Catholic Church and school serviced both villages and the five adjoining valleys.

The peasants or the poorer class of people varied as to earthly possessions, occupations, trades, etc. The "Sedlaks" (sometimes referred to as "Gazdove"), to which we made a brief reference earlier, belonged to this poorer class. They were the peasants who owned their own homes, land, barns, cattle, horses, sheep, pigs, chickens, geese, etc. They earned their livelihood by tilling the soil. However, being self-employed, so to speak, this type of life had its trials and tribulations. The land for cultivating and raising crops in our area of the country was not too fertile inasmuch as it was mountainous and did not lend itself to good farming.

In the event a crop failure was encountered, there was much to be desired in the way of food for the table and fodder for the cattle. A typical example of a sedlak's woes were situations in which he would purchase a barrel of whiskey from the Jewish tavern (korchma) owner. Liquor was of prime importance to treat volunteer help during harvesting, hay season, etc. When a crop failure was encountered or destroyed by a storm and the sedlak was unable to pay for his purchase, the tavern owner would confiscate an "Osminu" of land (about 3 acres) before the sedlak could purchase more liquor in anticipation of a future harvest. Obviously, it was a vicious circle and actually happened.

The "Havjar" was another group of poor peasants which we mentioned previously. He was the individual who worked in the ore mines (banja) for his livelihood. To a degree, he lived a more secure life than the sedlak since he had a regular income in the form of wages he earned at the mines. Nevertheless, this was a "hand to mouth" type of existence and saving for a rainy day was very limited. And, there was no security in the event of sickness or disability.

The peasants referred to earlier as "Panscare" lived on the land of the Graf and were obligated to satisfy his annual tenant's fee in the form of labor. For a livelihood, they were dependent primarily on the ore mines. This provided them with a more secure life than that of the sedlaks since they did not depend solely on the elements. As was mentioned previously, our Grisak family homestead was located on the land of the Graf. We paid an annual tenant's fee by doing assigned work for the Graf's estate, and father and I worked in the ore mines. It is well to mention that even though our family lived in the Furmanec Valley, other members of the Grisak clan, which was sizeable in Slovinky, was concentrated primarily in the Zakut Valley.

In the village there were several service type occupations in which the entire community participated and benefited on a regular basis. One of these occupations was the village "Pastir" (cowherd), and the other was the "Bacha" or village shepherd. We, of course, in our valley of Furmanec engaged our own local cowherd and were not dependent upon the village in this respect.

The duties of the village cowherd were to drive the cattle at daybreak to the neighboring pasture lands and bring them home in the evening. He was paid by each individual family that required his services. This pay was in the form of grain, bread, money, etc. His lodging, however, was furnished by the village. At daybreak he would sound his horn and each housewife brought her cow to the center of the village. The bull that serviced the herd was community (Gmina) property. The cowherd also served as the village "Vahtara" (Fire Marshal). In the fall when the harvest was stored in the barns, the cowherd was assisted by three to four assistants. These assistants were the villagers themselves who took turns at fire-watch all winter. They would blow their whistle at every corner as they made their rounds thru the village which indicated that they were on duty and all was well.

The villagers who kept sheep were serviced by an individual called a "Bacha." The bacha usually had three assistants called "Juhasy," and one youngster called "Bojtar." Their duties were to drive the sheep into the hills in the spring where the bacha and his staff took charge of the flock. In the evenings the entire flock was kept in a movable enclosure called a "Koshar." In this koshar the lambs, rams, and the milking sheep were kept separate. The koshar was positioned in a different spot or location each day so the sheep could fertilize the entire area rather than one spot.

One juhas tended the lambs, one tended the rams, and the third who tended the milking sheep was assisted by the youngster called bojtar. The flock remained in the pasture land all summer. The sheep were milked three times daily. The bacha processed the milk in his hut in large kettles into cheese from which the villagers made a delicacy called "Brinza." The remaining liquid from the cheese-making process was called "Zentica" which was part of the diet of the bacha and his assistants. The bacha portioned the cheese to the villagers strictly



according to the quantity of milk each sheep produced which was determined at the beginning of the season. The shearing of the sheep was another duty of the bacha and his assistants. The wool was processed into "Postaf" or fabric from which a "Hunja" (coat) or "Holoshnji" (trousers) were made.

In addition to the two more popular occupations of cowherd and sheep herder, there were other service occupations maintained on a community basis. The heifers owned by the villagers were in charge of an individual called a "Gulash." He was engaged to take the herd of heifers into the hills for pasturing where he remained all summer. The pigs of the village were in charge of still another individual called a "Kondash." He would take the pigs to pasture in the morning and return with them in the evening. The geese of a household were usually tended to by one's own children whose ages were around 8 and 9. The pasturing of geese was confined to local areas primarily around the home and nearby streams.

The beggars and cripples found in the village were primarily transients. In the event a beggar came to a home for a handout, it was the custom that he would first say a prayer at the doorstep (the more pious knelt) before he made his plea. The beggar would put everything that was given him in his tanjistra -- bread, a few potatoes, some flour, etc. If the inhabitants of a household were unable to share anything with the beggar, they merely told him that the Good Lord will provide for him, and the beggar would leave.

It can be concluded that the type of existence that prevailed among the peasants in the villages and throughout the entire area, with its feudal system of dominance by the "haves" over the "have-nots," and with no possibility of upgrading their living standards, gave cause for the migration of the masses to America to seek a better life.

#### JEWISH MERCHANTS IN SLOVINKY

Accounts of significant events, not considered worthy of recording at the time, usually perpetuated from one generation to another by word of mouth. So it was with the arrival of the first Jewish merchant in Slovinky. In relating the incident, the older village peasants recall one Abraham Klein making his arrival very shabbily dressed, carrying a small chest attached to a stick, positioned over his shoulder. The chest was packed with small trinkets such as needles, thread, shoe strings, buttons, pen knives, etc. With this stock of merchandise, so the story reveals, he set himself up in business in a rented "Hiza."

As the venture became profitable, he expanded the business into a korchma (tavern) and began selling tobacco, candy, intoxicating beverages, etc., thus capitalizing on that one weakness of the peasant -- drinking to excess. Traditionally, whiskey was a must among the peasants at all festive affairs such as christenings, weddings, funerals, celebrations, etc. Following this successful venture, it became common knowledge that Abraham Klein purchased several large brick buildings in the center of the village. As time went on, he kept adding land and other buildings to his holdings. Finally, he became the richest man in the village. His presence in the area attracted his friends and relatives who also set themselves up in business and prospered at the expense of the struggling peasant.

This success story even though it was legal, morally left much to be desired. It made it possible for the Jew to educate his children and hire the peasant to do his domestic chores, etc. The young peasant

girls who worked as domestics in Jewish homes were not permitted to eat at the same table with the Jewish family. In fact, the food the domestics or hired hands ate, was of a different and at times of an inferior quality.

The Grafts and Ministers in the country owned the distilleries and the breweries. They sold their product to the Jewish tavern owners who, in turn, capitalized on the plight and weakness of the peasant -- the rich became richer and the poor became poorer. The Jewish tavern owner would take anything in trade for his whiskey -- bread, grain, flour, eggs, butter, lard, bacon, firewood, etc. As was related in the episode about the plight and struggles of the sedlaks, the Jew sold him whiskey, and for his default to pay during a crop failure, the sedlak's land was confiscated for payment. Anytime parcels of land became for sale such as when a peasant went to America, the Jew was there to make the purchase. The Jews were able to educate their children who became lawyers and judges. In the event a peasant was involved in litigation with a Jew as defendant over land, etc., the deck was obviously stacked against him in court.

A certain popular anecdote among the peasants illustrating Jewish shrewdness in business dealings, went something like this: A Jew was on his way to market but had nothing to sell. He decided to fill his sack with dirt from the roadway, and kept on traveling to market. Along came a carriage (coach) carrying an important aide from the estate of the Graf. As the carriage overtook the Jew, the aide asks the coachman to halt the horses so they could talk to the Jew.

"Where are you going, my little Jew?" "To market," he replied. "What are you selling, and what do you have in your sack?" he was asked. "I am selling flea powder," he answered. At this point the aid turns to his coachman and says, "It would be well to buy his flea powder since we are troubled with fleas at our estate."

After the purchase was made, and the carriage continued on its way, the coachman turns to his master - "We forgot to ask the Jew how to apply the powder." After the Jew was located, he was asked how the powder was to be applied to be most effective. The Jew replied: "First you catch the flea, than sprinkle some of the powder into his mouth, and you will be rid of the pests."

It is well to point out that the Russian population in Austro-Hungary lived under a three-fold design of subtle oppression. First, they were of a foreign nationality in a country' governed by Hungarian laws; second, the Russian peasant was of the Orthodox Faith in a predominant Roman Catholic country when religious tolerance was not practiced; and, third, the peasant was at the mercy of the wealthy and shrewd Jewish merchants.

#### GYPSY INHABITANTS IN THE SLOVINKY AREA

During one's life time, sooner or later, a person comes in contact with that ethnic group of people known as "Gypsies." Supposedly, they are a race of wandering tribes scattered all over the civilized countries of the world and especially in Europe. The English name "Gypsy" stems from the word "Egyptian" because formerly they were thought to come from Egypt the title by which they were known in the English states. However, they are also believed to be the remnant of some obscure tribe of India, their Romany language being derived from the Sanskrit, although many other Oriental and European terms and inflections

have been incorporated. They are members of the Caucasian race with dark skins and black hair. The occupations of the men, especially in our regions, were principally horse-dealing, work in metals such as blacksmithing, playing string instruments primarily the violin, and occasionally thieving; that of the women, fortune-telling.

In our village of Slovinky, we had families of gypsies. However, they never would live among the villagers but always preferred to live on the outskirts. One legend has it that the trait of living on the outskirts of villages stems from the Biblical account of Moses leading the Israelites to the Promised Land. When Moses separated the waters of the Red Sea and the Israelites were safely across, he commanded the waters to return. In their pursuit, Pharaoh's army supposedly perished except those on the edges or outskirts. Thus, stems the tradition of gypsies always living on the outskirts in commemoration of these few survivors.

In all Slav speaking countries the gypsies are known by one general term of "Cigane." This name is a colloquial expression with overtones of "falsehood" or "deceit." It could be said that what is true of the cigane in our village parallels experiences in other areas as well. Some of the more common habits and idiosyncrasies of these people were: They would adopt the religion of the people where they lived; violin music was their second nature and a tune once whistled to them, they could play it without notes; among themselves they spoke their own gypsy language but quickly learned the language of the country; for sponsors at baptism (Kumstvo or Hmoterstvo) of their children they would always select prominent people in the village, and kumstvo to them was a high honor and they would treat their "Kum" or "Kuma" with great respect; their speech was sort of a regional dialect delivered in a soothing and friendly manner in peculiar muffled tones; they used much profanity; dressed differently; were not ashamed to beg even the well-to-do; they would go caroling at Christmas time but for some unknown reason frowned upon receiving money; and, they resented their nickname of "More."

Inasmuch as metal working or primarily blacksmithing was one of their occupations to earn a livelihood, cigane were not permitted to stand by their anvils but only worked in a sitting position. This was a restriction imposed upon them by the blacksmith tradesmen since the cigane never went thru the apprenticeship program for the trade, and had no diploma to certify their skill. To them blacksmithing was handed down from father to son. The tradesmen apparently endeavored to maintain blacksmithing on a professional basis thru apprenticeship programs.

Providing music at popular social functions was another means of earning a livelihood as well as their women doing fortune telling. Not all cigane lived from hand to mouth. Many cigans were well-to-do and followed a high standard of living.

Among the peasants, cigan stories always found their way into daily conversation. When confronted with a situation and to prove his innocence, a cigan in defiance always came up with a humorous or grotesque answer. A popular story relates an incident in a Russian neighboring village of "Helcmanufci." On the outskirts of this village lived a settlement of about one hundred homes of cigans. They had no name for their settlement but they had their own rihtar (mayor) and synod (town council). The story goes that in Helcmanufci a cat bit a villager and later the person died. It was ruled that the cat was to be killed and taken to another town called "Gelnica" to determine the cause of death. After the cat was killed, the question arose who would take the cat to

Gelnica. The synod of Helcmanufci resolved that we have cigans - have them take the dead cat. When the rihtar of the cigan settlement was told of their assignment, he reported that their synod decided it was below their dignity to fulfill this request inasmuch as their young musicians played for influential people, and they would be publicly jeered with cat "Meows." But, since it was ruled that it was their assignment, their synod arranged to hire a willing peasant who did the job for five Zlaty.

Another humorous story centers around the incident in this same village of Helcmanufci where the peasants were troubled with gopher-like rodents called "durliky." The village synod decided to pay five kreutzers for every dead durlik, and for evidence, to bring back the tail of the durlik. The adjoining cigan settlement volunteered to take on the assignment and proceeded with the job. As time went on, tails were being brought in and paid for but the durliks were just as plentiful as before but had no tails.

An investigation revealed the fact that the cigane released the durliks after clipping off their tails. When the cigans were brought to task, in their defense, they pleaded that they followed the instructions given to them of just bringing in the rodent's tail and not the corpse. The case was dismissed and ruled in favor of the cigans.

An incident occurred in another village where the rihtar complained that his governmental superior refused to listen to his problems. The cigan told the rihtar that he not only would have the official listen to him, but he would eat at his table. A wager was agreed upon. The cigan timed his visit to make his call exactly at dinner time. He makes his appearance at the home of the official and tells the maid that he wants to see the Pan. She told him the Pan is eating now, but she would relay the message. The cigan tells her that no one should be in on this secret only the Pan himself.

The maid having relayed the message to the Pan, he comes to the door and asks the cigan the purpose of his visit. The cigan follows the customary social graces and addresses him as "Pan Velkomozny" and asks the official what a chunk of gold would cost the size of his head. The Pan thinking to himself that maybe the cigan found something of value, invites him in and wines and dines his guest. After the meal was over, the Pan asks the cigan in an inquisitive manner, what he found. The cigan replies that he did not find anything now, but just in case he did in the future, he would like to know its value. Obviously, the cigan won the bet from the rihtar.

Another cigan story -- a cigan went to confession to a Catholic priest. After hearing his sins, the priest gave the cigan a penance not to eat meat, not to drink liquor, and not to socialize with girls, for a certain period of time. At his next confession the priest asks the cigan if he fulfilled his penance. After an affirmative answer, the priest asks if he ate meat. The cigan replies that he did not, that he only ate foul. Then he asks if the cigan drank liquor. he replied that he did not, that he only drank rum. Finally, the priest asks the cigan if he socialized with girls. He replied that he did not, that he only socialized with nuns.

In disgust, the priest whips the cigan with his "korbach" until it falls apart. In his dash for home, the cigan meets a cigan friend and asks him where he was going. The friend tells him that he was going to the priest for confession. The cigan tells his friend that there was no use in his going to confession because there was no penance left, that it fell apart on him. A korbach was leather strips attached to a handle.

Some of the cigan stories were very subtle and a knowledge of the situation was required to enjoy the underlying humor. An incident took place when the peasants were working the fields during the hot summer months. In passing by, a ciganka meets the Graf's wife -- a lady of culture and refinement. Out of courtesy, the Graf's wife asks: "Ciganko, is it hot enough for you?" The ciganka replies: "Nam Pany Veljkomozna jak nam, ale znam ze tuj sprostachiny horuco cho robja tam na pol'u." (To folks like us, your highness, so be it, but I know that it must be hot to those poor commoners who must work the fields in this hot sun.)

Finally, a cigan was caught stealing a slab of bacon from a sedlak. The sedlak asks: "Cigan, what are you doing here?" He answers: "I have a slab of bacon, will you cure it for me in your smokehouse?" The sedlak orders the cigan: "Get out of here with your bacon." As the cigan was leaving, the sedlak suspected thievery and accused the cigan of stealing. The cigan, in defense, replies: "You told me to get out of here with my bacon."

#### A VILLAGE WEDDING

A wedding ceremony was a major social event in our village. In the pages that follow, an attempt will be made to outline in some detail highlights of the procedure that was followed in our village as I remember when I participated. The details of this procedure, handed down from generation to generation, may vary in minor social aspects from village to village but certain religious and civil requirements were basic.

At the age of 21 a young man was required to register for military service in the Austrian army. Annual registration was done around the 6th of October. If the youth was accepted, he served two to three years then came home and got married. If the military found reason not to accept him, the young man came home and married inasmuch as the civil and religious authorities were in agreement to allow marriage at the age of 21. The customary age for girls to get married was 18. However, after a girl was past her 23rd to 24th birthday, she was considered the equivalent of being an old maid. For a man, the age of 25 to 26 was considered old for marriage.

It was the law of the country that the oldest or only son could be released from the obligation of military service if the family so petitioned. However, before a young man was released, he was required to serve two months of basic training. All the other sons in a family were required to serve their full term if accepted. The theory of releasing the oldest son from military service was to provide assistance at home.

Marriage ceremonies were held primarily in the fall since military discharges were made effective in the fall. However, some marriages were held during Fashengy prior to Easter lent, and others were held immediately after Easter. Courtship was very brief since the young people knew each other especially thru socializing from their school days and in the neighborhood kudjilny hizy.

When two young people decided to get married, it was the custom for the parents of the prospective groom to visit the parents of the prospective bride to ask her hand in marriage to their son and become their daughter-in-law. After she consented, toasts were exchanged and a date was set for the young people and their parents to make arrangements for the wedding. In the event the young man had no parents, an older member of the family substituted, usually it was left to the women. The young people chose their own marriage partners and not the parents as is the

custom among some ethnic groups. The second meeting of the parents and the young people to make wedding plans was held on a Sunday afternoon and was timed to be two weeks before the wedding. It was referred to as "Sprosinny" - some villagers called it by the more popular name of "Vjincy." On the Saturday before vjincy the young people registered and took an oath before the civil authorities at which time they were granted permission to marry. That same day the couple went to the parish priest for Catechism. They were asked to recite the Ten Commandments, the Seven Sacraments, etc. They were required to say certain prayers.

In the event the priest found certain deficiencies, they were reprimanded for not being better prepared and were reminded as to how they expect to teach their children when they themselves don't know the prayers, etc. After being lectured, the couple's names were entered into the church records. Following the church registration, the young people returned to either the home of the bride or the groom where a feast was prepared with near relatives participating.

The following day which was a Sunday, the couple went to church. The groom wore a feather in his hat which was attached by his lady, and the bride wore on her head the traditional "Partu." The parta was an ornate piece trimmed with pearls and ribbons worn by young girls and single women. The priest read the first church announcement of their wedding. After the noon meal on Sunday, certain invited guests went to the home of the bride to prepare the vjincy. This is something decorated like a Christmas tree with ribbons and various ornaments which the bride presents to the groom. Feasting continues during the decorating.

After the vjincy are prepared, the "Starosta" (Elder) takes them to the home of the groom, accompanied in procession by all the invited guests, where more feasting takes place. At this time the "Starsa Druzka" (maid of honor) outfits two "Druzby" (Ushers) - a senior and a junior, by attaching feathers and ribbons to their hats and placing red and white towels over their shoulders. According to local custom, they are now officially ready to go out and invite families and guests to the wedding.

The invitation consists of a personal visit by the senior and junior ushers to each home. This visit is done in a very formal manner. They remove their hats as they enter a home and the senior member is the official spokesman. His opening words are: "Pohvaleny Jesus Christus" (Praised be Jesus Christ). The family replies: "Na veki amin. Vitajte u nas." (Forever, Amen. Welcome to our home).

At this time the senior usher recites a letter perfect, lengthy and formal invitation, in which he traces the Biblical story of Adam in Paradise and his quest for a partner; how the Lord out of Adam's rib created the first woman Eve to share life's responsibilities as his wife; the names of the marrying couple are mentioned and a parallel is portrayed to this first union; and, the inviting families are mentioned that they request the presence of this family to the wedding which will be held two weeks hence. The entire composition of this invitation is a beautiful piece of literature, and very well worded.

It was a traditional custom, handed down thru the ages from generation to generation, that when anyone entered a home, he was given a loaf of bread to cut. This was a gesture of sharing and a symbol of respect as one human being to another. Thus it was when the two druzby entered a home to invite the family to a wedding. However, on this occasion the bread cutting gesture also took on an additional meaning. The two

druzby took bits of this bread with them as they made their rounds. In the event any young girls from the village met the druzby, they would ask for this bread. It was to bring luck to the girls, supposedly, in seeking a husband. When all the inviting was completed, the two druzby returned to the home of the bride where the maid of honor removed the feathers, ribbons and towels, and they were officially released of the invitational assignment.

Sometimes prior to going to church for the wedding vows, the bride and groom, at the home of the bride, go thru the beautiful custom of "Otpitnja I Blahoslovinja" (Forgiveness and Blessing). The bride and groom kneel before the parents to receive forgiveness and the parents' blessing to start their new life together. This is informal.

In two weeks after the personal invitations have been extended by the two druzby to families and friends, the wedding takes place. In fact, it actually starts on a Saturday evening which is for the young people only. Musicians are hired to provide dance music. This revelry continues until about midnight and resumes again Sunday afternoon until about 10 o'clock in the evening.

The next day, Monday, the young couple, the starosta (elder), the svashka (matron), and starshy druzba who escort the bride, go to church for the wedding ceremony. The mlady druzba accompanies the procession leading the musicians. However, early Monday morning before the wedding ceremony takes place in church, the mlady druzba revisits the homes of families that were invited two weeks ago to remind them that today is the wedding. Then he and the musicians go to the korchma where a celebration is taking place as they wait for the bridal party to come from church. The young invited guests are in the korchma feasting and dancing. After the church ceremony, the bridal party go to the korchma where feasting and toasting takes place. It is the custom that everyone who is toasted furnishes a liter of wine with which the starosta treats everyone present.

Following this brief ritual, the entire group accompanied by the musicians, go to the home where the elaborate wedding takes place. As a matter of custom, if an older person stops this procession and asks formal questions, it is up to the starosta to furnish the proper answers before they can proceed. For example, when my brother John got married, the wedding was held in my home in Ohio. When the wedding party reached my gate, I posed this question: "Skade hamy koleso?" The starosta, George Magdos (Mizikar), was unable to answer and my brother-in-law, George Rebar, came to his rescue and replied: "Zdoly." Then I permitted the wedding party to proceed.

At the doorstep of the home where the celebration takes place, the starsy druzba releases the bride to the starosta who leads her into the home and ties the married couple together with a towel. A "Verchenik" is placed on each of their heads as the starosta leads the couple three times around the family table as appropriate songs are sung. A "Verchenik" is sort of a round bread made for the purpose. Then the festivities begin with a meal. This is all in charge of the starosta who is the master of ceremonies. After the meal is over, each guest is given a piece of the verchenik and also a small individual loaf of bread called a "Bohnik" which is baked especially for the occasion. The bohnik is taken home by the guests.

When the wedding is about to end, the women gather in a separate room or where it is convenient, and the starsy druzba removes the partu

from the bride's head and gives it to the starsa druska. At this point the women sing various songs but one of the most popular is:

"Parta, moja parta, zlata, perlova. Rada ja ju nosim.  
Vchera bula moja, dneska druzbova. Kebi ti tu partu rada nosila,  
Druzbu, moj druzbu, daj mi moju partu Nebula bi ti je zhlavly zrutila."

Then the starsy druzba (with towel over right shoulder, around the body, and fastened on his left side) dances the "Hajduk" (like the Kozak) around the bride after which they drink wine. Now a "Chepec" (bonnet worn by married women) is placed on the bride's head. In our area they put up the bride's hair or comb it into a roll to show she becomes a married woman. Then comes the bridal dance when money is given to her.

Following the bridal dance, gifts are exchanged, the druzby give their towels to the bride, and she thanks them for their service. A bit of subtle humor comes into play at this point. The druzby present the bride with a rope and hatchet to go into the woods for firewood. And, the druzky prepare beforehand a crib complete with a cloth infant. They give it to the starosta who presents it to the bride with choice words that this will take up her time until she has one of her own.

The next day the bridal party visits homes of invited guests with a jug of whiskey at which time people give them various foodstuff to begin housekeeping. In return, they are treated to a drink. For this occasion a few members of the party dress in comical clothes for amusement. In some instances foodstuff is donated beforehand to the young couple. This visit of collecting for the household (or money) is called "Za Kudjilom."

These customs may vary from village to village, and even in our own village of Slovinky the more prosperous peasants extend the wedding celebration into two days while the less fortunate celebrate only one day. The first day is the usual church ceremony followed by a feast. In some villages where a three-day celebration is held, the second day is set aside to "cure" hangovers (popravky) and headaches, and at the same time the men supposedly repair the women's shoes resulting from dancing. The third day they assemble for further "cures" and at the same time the women shave the men who, supposedly, were not in condition to shave themselves during the duration. This is all done for a fee which is given to the young couple.

When neighboring villagers attended a common wedding, an exchange of local humor usually prevailed -- Slovincane kidded the Helcmanuvjane, etc. One such story centers around a lad at confession. Being asked his sins and assured of secrecy, the lad tells the priest about a bird's nest in the willows by Furinaky's with live birds. When the priest reprimanded the parents in church, the youngster yelled out: "You said you wouldn't tell." Another confession story -- a youngster tells the priest that he threw a coat (kozuh) on the ground. Being assured by the priest that this was no sin, the youngster confesses that his mother was wearing the coat at the time.

Out of the village of "Jakubjany" comes the story that they can determine the financial status of a deceased by the tolling church bells. In the event the deceased is a poor peasant, the bells have a brassy tinge to accompany these words: "Hev rentar, tam rentar" (here renter, there renter)! However, when a large land owner is called to his eternal rest, the bells take on a deep resonant sound echoing throughout the village: "Hory, Roly, Dom - Bim, Bom" (High Hills, Meadows, Home - Bim, Bom)!



### YOUTHFUL TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS

In the year 1895 our family increased to eleven as sister Hazel was born. I now had two brothers -- Andrew and John; and, six sisters -- Mary, Anna, Ilona, Katherine, Julia and Hazel.

About this time, when I was about 16 or 17 years old, father bought me an accordion for some three Zlaty. Since I was maturing into manhood, he wanted me to learn to play since his musical talents were limited to fingering a whistle (Pischalka). I was not going to the kudjilny hizy at this age but I had a friend who lived in the Vishnanska Dolina with whom I worked at the ore mine. We would visit each other's home on a Sunday afternoon to spend our leisure time. My friend was more knowledgeable than me in worldly affairs. He was the youngest child of an elderly couple with older brothers and sisters from whom he gained worldly knowledge. He was able to dance and I was just learning.

Inasmuch as it was customary to celebrate on "Ostatny Fashengy," we were exploring what we could do to mark this festive occasion. His father suggested that we buy ourselves a liter of whiskey and spice it with about two kreutzers worth of hot red pepper. So, off to the village korchma we go to make our purchase. We each put in 21 kreutzers. The whiskey was 40 kreutzers and the red pepper was 2 kreutzers.

To add an atmosphere of manliness to our celebration, we bought ourselves two cigars apiece. We smoked as we drank. I did no smoking at the time and it only took us a few drinks to put us to bed. Needless to say, the consequences were such after we regained our senses, I could not look at whiskey for a long, long time. My friend's father did not do this as a joke but to teach us a valuable lesson which was customary for parents to do as children started to flap their wings.

Unfortunately, my friend, Steve Kostelnik, passed away about the age of 18. The circumstances leading up to his death were a valuable lesson to me personally. Steve was a young man who liked to display his masculine endurance prematurely, and did not take good care of his health. In the most severe winter weather he would only dress in a vest while other people wore heavy coats. The result was that he came down with a severe cold which resulted in a severe lung and respiratory condition. He was laid up for a long time in bed being treated by home remedies as was the custom among the peasants.

Finally, the family was recommended a certain bacha (shepherd) in the Krompachy area. In the month of May this bacha took Steve to the mountains to his koshar. He gave Steve steam baths with zentica and he was recovering to the point that he was able to help the bacha in his daily chores.

In the meantime a sister-in-law was getting married and the family received permission from the bacha to have Steve attend. The bacha cautioned the family not to give Steve alcoholic drinks. And, as an old saying goes among the peasants 'women have long hair but short brains' the women at the wedding kept coaxing Steve to have a little beer that it won't hurt him. Following his protests and much coaxing, Steve did drink a little beer. When he returned to the koshar, Steve admitted to the bacha what he did. The bacha said nothing to him. However, his condition began to deteriorate and after the family took him home, he died in two weeks -- May he have Memory Eternal! The lesson I learned from this incident in my youthful days, that people in all sincerity mean well but do not use good judgement.

### OUR LIVING QUARTERS

The homes of the peasants in our village were built primarily of pine logs. There were homes built of brick and stone but this was very rare. After the logs were felled in the forests, they were squared and placed on one another with openings for doors and windows. The roof was covered with wooden shingles but in earlier years straw was used to cover roofs. The straw was tied in bundles which were placed side by side and laced into one solid piece. This type of thatch roof was referred to as "Kichky."

The building was partitioned into three sections -- hiza, priklet, and komora. The hiza was placed in front or next to the roadway. The priklet was in the center, and the komora was in the back portion of the building. Cooking of meals was done in the priklet on a raised arrangement made out of stone comparable to a bar or counter. This was connected to the pekarnik where baking was done. The cooking arrangement was called the "Pahrutka."

In the hiza was a masonry stove for heating purposes. In one end of this stove was a compartment which held about five or more gallons of water. The water was kept warm by the stove and was used for general household purposes. The smoke from the fire in the pahrutok escaped thru a hole in the roof. There was no chimney. The priklet also had a ladder for entry thru doors into the attic spaces over the hiza and also the komora where leaves or hay was stored for feeding cattle. A section was set aside in the priklet for chickens to roost. Over the priklet, meat and bacon was cured with smoke from the fire. Also, in the priklet were pits lined with boards where potatoes were stored.

The komora was a large area used for general storage purposes. It contained painted chests for storing Sunday finery, etc., with lids for security. In the komora was a "Pajstruna." This was a long chest with compartments for storing foodstuff such as flour, milk, bread, butter, etc. The pajstruna had a lid or cover so it could be closed.

The windows on the hiza were equipped with shutters that were closed during severe weather. These shutters were called "Okenicy." Inside the hiza were small troughs under the windows to retain condensation during the heating season. A table was placed in the front corner of the hiza with Ikons on the walls over the table. For seating purposes, back of the table were benches some equipped with and some without arm rests. For benches some of the peasants merely used a pine log split in half, trimmed, with pegs made from the trimmed branches used as legs. Around the heating stove in the hiza were small stools. Some of the peasants merely used suitable pieces of tree trunks. Small pieces of tree trunks were also used for footstools.

Along the walls in the hiza were large bunk type beds about three feet high. Under these bunks were smaller removable bunks for children. These would be removed at night from under the large bunks onto the floor for children to sleep on. Under these small bunks, tubs were stored. These tubs were used to steam leaves and straw for feeding cattle in the winter, and various household purposes.

Straw was placed on the bottom of the bunks which was covered with a cloth sheet and a wool blanket called a "Plat." A perina (feather bed) and pillows were placed on top of this. When the occasion arose, a newborn calf, colt, or lamb was kept in the hiza in winter until the animal gained enough strength to be placed in the outside barn. Sitting

hens and geese were kept on nests under the bunks. Also, laying hens would lay eggs in the straw in one corner of the bunk bed.

Some of the homes were covered on the outside with clay and some with moss. The hiza inside was plastered and then whitewashed with lime. Some of the peasants were fortunate to have a stove in the hiza on which they prepared meals instead of the pahrutok in the priklet. The larger building such as for business purposes were more modern and were built with chimneys. The barns and other service buildings were set apart from the living quarters. Some of the yards were fenced in with high boards primarily to keep out wild animals. There were no curtains inasmuch as the windows were placed high enough to warrant privacy.

For lighting purposes in the evenings, kerosine lamps were used by some peasants, some used tallow candles, and others had containers which were filled with tallow or lard into which a wick was placed and lit. Some of the less fortunate peasants did chores by moonlight, or the flame in the pahrutok. The peasants were very conservative when it came to providing illumination.

#### NEW COMPANY TAKES OVER KLIPERK

After working on Kliperk for over two years the Shargo Tarijan Company (Gverstvo) was bought by the "Rima Murany" interests. This change in ownership took place around the year 1896.

While working for the old company a lesson that I learned was that obedience gave me much recognition with my superiors. After working about a year or so at menial jobs, the stajger gave me more important assignments. At the two tracks by the hoist I was given the assignment to grease the cable rollers. In the event we had company officials come to Kliperk during the summer months, our company liked to relax for an outdoor meal in the nearby woods where there was a camping area with tables, benches, etc. I was released from my regular duties at the mine to build a fire and roast meat on a spit.

On occasion, the stajger would send for me into the mine to come out because company came and they have a taste for halusky (dumplings). I was assigned to do the honors of preparing my brand of this popular and choice staple among the peasants. At times the officials would bring their wives and children for a visit to Kliperk. They would bring wine, whiskey, etc., and I would be invited to join them. In the event we had mining engineers come to our mine to do surveying, the stajger assigned me to duties such as carrying their instruments, etc. All these assignments appealed to me and made my job more interesting and I was able to meet other people. This was all due to obedience which was drilled into our daily lives at home.

Immediately after the new owner of Kliperk came into possession of the ore mines where we worked, changes came from every angle. Many of these changes which involved working conditions of the miners, were very strongly resisted. Inasmuch as there was no labor organization to represent the workers, they were ignored. The one big change was the working hours for the miners. Heretofore, they worked 6-hour shifts and the new system called for 12-hour shifts. The workweek began on Monday at 8:00 A.M. and ended Saturday at 4:00 P.M. Every morning and evening at a designated time every worker was required to report at the office where his name was recorded to determine the number of shifts he worked. This new procedure was called "Cahovaty" and in German it was called "Felezovaty."

The monthly (or bi-weekly) assessment to establish a rate of pay called a "Ding" remained the same as under the former owner. The wages were equalized as under the old system so that no worker was penalized for being assigned to unfavorable working conditions. Payday remained once a month but the day of disbursement was changed from Saturday morning to Sunday morning. To this change in payday the workers and the villagers strongly protested. This Sunday morning schedule did not allow enough time for the workers living some distance for traveling inasmuch as the location was also changed from the factory by Krompachy to a small settlement some ten minutes walk from Slovinky. At this settlement (Kolonija) there was a korchma and a company store called "Provizerat" where food and drinks were sold.

A strong protest came from the village inasmuch as the workers did not go to church on payday Sunday. After receiving their pay, it was customary to treat themselves and their buddies to a few drinks. And, on their way home they had to walk past the St. George's Church. Loud talk, arguments, and at times fights would result as church services were taking place. Finally, the protests resulted in a change from Sunday morning to a Saturday afternoon, and later to a Saturday morning as under the old system. The end of the work-week was changed accordingly to accommodate the workers.

When the new company took over, it began expanding and modernizing. It opened up new ore mines, bought land from the sedlacks to establish settlements for the workers, constructed ovens to process the ore near Slovinky, abandoned the old method of transporting ore to the ovens down the mountains from Kliperk and installed a much more modern system to travel from another direction, and new roadways were constructed among the hills. The old factory by Krompachy was replaced with a bigger and more modern unit where the ore from the area was processed. It was rumored that this new factory was patterned after the Andrew Carnegie factory in America at Homestead, Pa., and that Andrew Carnegie had interests in it. In fact, to substantiate the rumor, the Carnegie name did appear in places.

The new ovens to initially process the ore were located below Slovinky. The processed ore was transported from these ovens to the factory by Krompachy by overhead cable cars called "Drocaj Ban," that traveled over the hills and wooded areas. The old method of removing ore from the mines was modernized. Motors were introduced to transport the ore from the mine to the outside whereby it was done by manpower before. Motors were also used to take the ore from the mines to the new arrangement down the mountainside and to the new ovens.

This same company operated mines near the neighboring village of "Helcmanufce." This area which was comparable to Kliperk, was known as "Mataska." The ore from the Mataska area was transported by cable cars to the new ovens near Slovinky. It was in this village of Helcmanufce that the story originated about a "Red Rooster" (peasants' local expression for a fire) was seen on a roof and the village burned to the ground. The people wailed over their loss that now they are all on a common level with an equal amount of ashes.

In the meantime, while all this modernization was taking place at the ore mines, which extended over a period of time, another blessed event took place in our home. On May 28, 1898, another son was born. He was named George at Holy Baptism I now had three brothers and six sisters, increasing our family to twelve members.

### MY ASSIGNMENT AS KIRFIRER

When the new company, Rima Murany, took control of the mines at Kliperk they began modernizing methods of production, expanding operations, and hiring more workers. But, I was still assigned to work with the youngsters. All my buddies were promoted to better paying jobs. Some became hunstisars, that is, transporting ore, and others were taken in by their fathers to work in the stros. When I approached my father to have me work with him, his reply was for me to be patient that I have plenty of time to be doing a man's job.

However, I received a promotion in the meantime. The company gave me the assignment of Kirfirer over all the youngsters since I was the oldest. With the expanded operations, there now were about 20 youngsters involved as compared to some 6 or so formerly. The younger members of this crew were paid 50 kreutzers for a 12-hour shift, the older ones were paid 55 kreutzers, and as Kirfirer, I received 60 kreutzers. But this was not to my liking. I was 18 years old and still working with the youngsters. I felt I was capable to do a man's job as well as my buddies who were earning more money. Also, I already was a member of the kudjilna hiza gang but still doing a boy's work. In the neighborhood club I was the target of their humor and gang pressures. My appeals to father always precipitated the same answer that I have plenty of time to work and that I should still rest and take it easy.

Then the occasion arose thru father's buddy who told me he would intercede for me with the boss to permit me to work in their crew. When the opportune time came, we went to the office to see the boss. I told him that I wanted to work with my father. Father's co-worker also told the boss that their crew would welcome me to work with them. Incidentally, father was the Kirfirer in their crew. The boss agreed and I was assigned to a man's job which made me very happy and regain social status in the club. My replacement as Kirfirer supervising the youngsters was an elderly man.

The system of pay for a beginner like myself doing a man's job, who was 16 to 18 years of age, was on a graduated percentage scale based upon experience. After the age of 21, pay was equal to the other men. A Kirfirer like my father, he received the highest percentage. As a safety requirement, a beginner under the age of 21 was not permitted to handle or even touch dynamite. The new company paid each worker individually as compared to the old system of paying each crew. A day before payday each worker received a statement of his earnings. The pay was calculated on the number of shifts each man worked.

My first assignment was to transport ore to the outside. One man would pull the vagon by a rope and one would push from the rear. We would take these vagon to a siding (parting) to allow one group to bypass each other going in the opposite direction or out of the mine. Then I learned how to drill holes for blasting. Following this, I learned to build and construct scaffolding, etc., that was required. As time went on, the company brought in machinery to drill holes and I learned to operate this equipment. Finally, I was able to perform any assignment and to work with any individual or group.

On one occasion the workers became dissatisfied with their rates of pay which resulted in a strike for about two weeks. The older workers were doing the negotiating for higher wages, and we younger men made the rounds of taverns during the daytime. If anyone wanted to have straw cut for feeding (sichka) cattle, we accommodated them for a few drinks.

In the evenings we spent our time loafing in the kudjilny hizy. During this strike a contingent of "Shandars" (police) came to our village to see if there was any trouble since the men were out on strike. The shandars in making their rounds found us in our kudjilna hiza about 10 o'clock in the evening. For some unprovoked reason they began attacking us -- a beating I well remember to this day. As they were whipping us and releasing one by one thru the door, they kept yelling "strikers, strikers." We lost our hats during the escape. It was never determined why this visit by the shandars whether it was due to a complaint or for the purpose of punishing us for striking.

The workers had no contract or agreement with the company as to rates of pay. The company alone set the wage scale. There never was a slow-down or curtailment of operations due to lack of orders. The mines operated day and night. If there was a recession or lack of orders, the ore was stockpiled for future shipment. The machinery introduced by the new company was operated by electricity. Heretofore, the mining operations were done by manpower. In the main entries where hard rock was encountered, steam was used to operate the equipment on three shifts.

#### CIVIL WAR BREAKS OUT IN SLOVINKY

The peaceful village of Slovinky, to everyone's surprise, broke out in what could be termed a "civil war." Local scrimmages between individuals or small groups was not uncommon especially around the taverns in Nizny Slovinky. But, what took place on that Sunday afternoon during one summer was beyond all previous proportions. It all started from a provocation between two individuals in Nizny Slovinky by the hostinets near the korchma. One young man was from Nizny and the other was from Vishny Slovinky. As the struggle went on, more young men joined to defend the honor, supposedly, of their section of the village. As the Nizny were getting the upper hand over the Vishny, they began chasing the Vishny to their part of the village.

However, when the Vishny reached the line of demarcation between the two villages, they took a stand where shots from revolvers were directed at the Nizny. Fortunately, no one was hit. But, these shots triggered the fracas which took on the atmosphere of a civil war. People began mobilizing from both Vishny and Nizny Slovinky and joined the fight. The weapons were primarily fists, stones, sticks and penknives. The young women and girl friends were supplying ammunition by bringing in stones in their Sunday aprons for their menfolks to throw at the declared enemy. Bloodshed began to appear from the knife slashes, and bruises from the sticks and stones.

The casualties were two people dead. Both were from Nizny Slovinky. One was a young man about 21 years of age who received knife head wounds and did not seek medical attention but kept on working. In about two weeks he died from an infection. The other casualty was an older man who joined the fight to protect his son. Armed with a stick (kija) in hand, he jumped into the bunch to punish the youngsters. But, to his surprise, he miscalculated his chances. When he was spotted coming into the fight, he was confronted by three men. One of the men knocked him to the ground, another struck him on the neck with a stick, and the third attacker hit his head with a stone. The victim was carried to his home and never regained consciousness. He died the third day.

The next day the shandars arrived and began an extensive investigation. They rounded up all of us from Vishny Slovinky who participated in the fight and took us to the rihtar's office for questioning. The

same was done for the participants from Nizny Slovinky -- they were taken to their rihtar for interrogation to determine the cause, etc. Immediately after the older villager died, the three attackers were taken to jail in Levoca where the judiciary for our Spiska Stolica was located. At the time, names of the other participants were recorded.

Two of the three attackers, which resulted in the death of the older victim, were brothers -- the one who knocked him to the ground and the one who hit him with a stick on the neck. Later, we all who participated were taken to Levoca for a hearing. In the meantime many of the participants left the country to go to America. In about eight months the trial was held in Levoca. There were about thirty of us participants present at the trial. One of the three attackers became sick while in jail and died before the trial took place. He was the one who struck the victim on the head with a stone.

The final verdict resulted in the two young men who originally started the fight receiving eight days in jail. Those of us who threw stones were sentenced five days in jail. The brother who knocked the victim to the ground was freed of charges because no one testified that they saw the act. And, the attacker who hit the victim with a stick on the neck received one year and eight months in jail. However, he retained a lawyer who immediately appealed the case and we were all released until a hearing on the appeal.

The period of time from the original trial to the appeal extended to about two years. In the meantime more of the young men left for America and there were only five of us left at the time of the appeal. We had to serve our original sentence of five days in jail. When we showed up to serve our sentence we were searched, our pockets emptied, and we were weighed and measured. Inside the jail were other inmates. The cell was constructed of stone. The windows were high, you could not see outside. We were assigned our own individual cots to sleep on. However, we were strictly forbidden to lay on our cots during the daytime. We were served only two meals a day with no supper and no tobacco. In the morning and evening we were taken outdoors for exercise which consisted of marching like horses for about an hour. Conversing with one another during the exercising period was not possible since we were under guard.

After the exercise, we were marched into the cell where we saw no more sun for the balance of the day. Inside the cell we had one water bucket for drinking purposes. The water was changed twice daily. The cell was furnished with one "Budak" (toilet) which we had to take out daily to be cleaned.

It was an obsession with the peasants in our village and probably in other areas, that the least provocation resulted in a scrimmage. It could be over such personal things as a girl friend. After a few drinks it could be over the display of muscle and manliness. Or, it could be over a childish thing like stealing of a "Kozak" (rooster feather) worn by the young men in their hats. Nevertheless, we served our five days in jail in the city of Levoca, and I vowed at the time that I would never spend another day in jail during my lifetime.

In the event a serious crime was committed, or to avoid conscription, it was not unusual to. escape out of the country especially to go to America. An "underground" route (via swamps, woods, hide-outs, etc.) across the border into Germany was operated for 10 Zlaty by a local character who the villagers referred to as "Mishkar."

#### DRUZBA AT SISTER MARY'S WEDDING

It was during a period of Fashengy in the later part of January in the year 1898, that my oldest sister Mary got married. This, of course, was the first wedding in our family. The wedding was held in our hiza in Furmanec. Sister Mary was married to a young man from the Vishnanska Dolina by the name of George Malinak. Young George was the only child in the family, and his father was already dead at the time of the wedding.

Sister Mary married young George after he came from Madjary (Hungary). He was in the Hungarian area working in the coal mines with his father. When his father passed away, he came back with his mother to live in their native Slovinky. Young George was educated in the Hungarian schools and spoke the language fluently. Upon his return to Slovinky, his wearing of pants (Nohavicy) and being addressed as "Vy" was a contemporary subject of conversation. The standard wearing apparel in Slovinky among the young men was holoshny. However, after the marriage and to conform to local standards, he also wore holoshny and was addressed as plain "Djura."

Inasmuch as it was a traditional custom to pick brothers and sisters or close relatives for the wedding party, and since sister Mary's fiancée had no brothers, I was selected to be the starsy druzba. For the mlacy druzba, George Rebar was selected since there were some family ties. It was also the custom in financing the wedding for the groom's family to pay half, and the bride's family to pay the other half of the cost.

Sister Mary's wedding was an elaborate affair since the Grisaks were a very large family in Slovinky. As to how elaborate a wedding should be depended upon the family size and the means at their disposal. Some families even incurred a sizeable debt to put on a wedding. Weddings varied according to the fancy of the individuals, but the ceremonial customs were traditional and followed a somewhat uniform pattern.

After the wedding, sister Mary went to live with her mother-in-law. It was not necessary to furnish a home for the couple since her mother-in-law had everything that was required for housekeeping. Usually when a house was built it was completely furnished with sleeping accommodations, stoves for cooking and heating, benches, stools, cooking vessels and various utensils. These did not go out of style but were handed down from generation to generation. Sister Mary and her husband had to furnish personal odds and ends only.

From this first participation in a wedding party, I took a liking to being a druzba. I always tried to perform the part with dignity when asked to serve. In fact, it was my good fortune to serve as druzba on eight occasions. One of these occasions was to go to our neighboring village of Helcmanufce as druzba to my first cousin Mary, daughter of father's oldest brother George. She married Mike Lajtman (nicknamed "Selan"). They called their village "Selo" and we referred to our village as "Valal." Wedding customs varied from village to village. In Slovinky the druzby invited guests two weeks in advance on a Sunday afternoon, and the wedding was held on a Monday. In Helcmanufce the druzby invited the guests on the day of the wedding which started on a Saturday evening.

In listening to conversations among our elders, it can be said with certainty that these ceremonial customs at weddings have been handed down for generations. On one occasion I overheard a humorous incident that had a setting at a wedding celebration. The story goes that in the early days of mining, some miners lived rent-free in company housings for convenience (they were referred to as "Hitare") that were isolated in the



woods near the mines. Their contact with people, and more especially with other children, was very infrequent. The story relates that on this particular occasion a family was invited to a wedding in the village. The father brought along his son named "Jano" who was about 12 or 13 years of age. At the wedding celebration young Jano witnessed things for the very first time in his young life. It was the usual--he heard violins being played by the gypsy musicians as was the custom, guests engaged in lively dances, and drinking with singing added to the jubilation.

After the family came home, they asked young Jano what he saw at the wedding. He said that he saw a lot of people. And, referring to the musicians, Jano said some people held little rams in their hands and they kept twisting the rams' ears, and the rams kept squealing. They had one big ram (bass violin) and when they twisted his ears, he just grunted, Jano related. And, he said, the people just kept jumping (dancing) up and down trying to see. But, I was able to see the best because I stood on a bench by the stove.

Another humorous story, as related by the village seniors, that comes out of the past, had a setting when there were very few schools and education was at a premium. People did their calculations by making strokes, crosses, and notches in wood. This practice was referred to as "Rovash." On this occasion a group of workmen came out of the mine at lunchtime, made a fire to roast bacon, etc. In the meantime a light rain began falling. As the men sat around the fire, they spotted a very strange creature crawling about which was as big as a snail. Their conversation centered around determining what the bug was called. One of the men spoke up that his son is now going to school, that he will know the name of the creature. Since going to school was a status symbol for this father even though his son, Vojtek, actually was in his first year of school, they sent for little Vojtek. Finally, when young Vojtek arrived on the scene, he was asked to give the men the name of the bug. Vojtek answered: "Skadesy je, i deska ide" (He came, and he goes somewhere). The father proudly turns to the group and says, "See, I told you my son would know." The creature was what was commonly referred to as a Slipy Jaschur" (blind lizard).

#### MILITARY DRAFT - "ASENTIRKA"

It was the law of the Austro-Hungarian Empire that when a young man reached the age of 21 he was required to register for military service. This requirement was referred to as "Asentirka." I reached my 21st birthday on January 16, 1899, and was called up for registration around the middle of March. Among the peasants it was considered, in all sincerity, as an ironic paradox when it came time to register for military service inasmuch as no one questioned as to how a parent sacrificed in raising their sons. But, when the time came for conscription the youth was obligated to go.

The procedure for the registration from our entire area was to go to the town of Gelnica for our physical. The town was officially known as "Gelnic Bana" and had a population of about 900 house numbers. The distance from Slovinky was about two hours by foot over the area hills. During registration each village was assigned a certain day. This day was announced by the village drummer (bubnjar). The young men referred to as "Regruty" would all report to the village rihtar and he personally would accompany his constituents to Gelnica. The government provided each rihtar with an allowance to furnish drinks and cigars for his men. On the designated day they were off over the hills and valleys, singing and frolicking all the way to Gelnica.

In Gelnica we reported at a large building called "Mesticky Dom" (City Hall). On the first floor was a large hostinec and korchma. The second floor was taken over by the military for the physicals. As we came into Gelnica I got the feeling that it was an "open town" where everything goes. There were rihtars with their recruits everywhere you looked. The recruits singing, drinking, smoking, performing acts of hooliganism which kept the shandars busy trying to separate scrimmages.

The recruits were called by each village in a group when their time came for examination. Inside the military headquarters one soon acquired the feeling of solemnity as his eyes focused on the doctors with their examining stethoscopes, and the army officers in their military uniforms. Our first instructions were to disrobe down to our underwear, then we were directed into a waiting room prior to the entry into the examining room. A recruit was usually accompanied by a parent or anyone available and they stood guard over your clothes as you were being processed. As your name was called, surname first than your given Christian name, you entered the examining room in your birthday suit.

Once inside the examining room, first you were measured, then weighed, and finally you were led to a large table where the top brass did the examining. Inside the examining room the army officers were in command, and outside the door the shandars were in charge. If you passed the physical and was accepted for military service, you were tapped on the chest and the word "Tauglich" (suitable) echoed in your ears. Immediately you were placed under the watchful eye of a shandar to put on your clothing and back into the barbering area of the examining room where your haircut became military style. All those accepted for service sat in a group with their rihtar. After the final recruit was examined and accepted, they were given an oath in a group. As they were released after the oath, a white card was placed in their hats. You were now government property.

In the event a recruit was rejected, the examining doctor tapped you on the back instead of the chest and bellowed "Schwach" (weak). The recruit was released and free until his next call. There were three classifications of recruits. Class one was composed of young men 21 years of age and accepted on their first call. Class two was made up of men who were rejected the first time but must be re-examined at the age of 22. Class three was that group rejected the first two times but were required to be re-examined at the age of 23. If the recruit was rejected from class three, he was permanently released from military service and free to get married.

In the event a recruit had a visual impairment (one eye missing, etc.) or was a cripple, he was given a red card and was not required to report any more. Since I had a lame arm, I was put in class two on my first examination. I knew I would not be accepted but it was required that I report for examination. It can be said that the military, especially during peace time, were operating under high physical standards, only one of my buddies or circle of friends was accepted at this first asentirka. Since I was not accepted for the military on my first examination, it worked out to father's advantage since he needed my help at home especially in the summer time cutting grass for hay to feed cattle.

Cutting grass for hay was a very necessary chore and the peasants had an ingenious way in making it a social event also. The annual timing for the hay season was around the holiday of St. John (June 24/ July 7) when the peasants began cutting grass in their neighboring

meadows. Then around the holiday of Saints Peter and Paul (June 29/ July 12) the men would select an evening to go up into the hills with their straight-handle scythes (in America scythes have a bent handle), prepare a fire and spend the night. Early at daybreak the next morning they would begin swinging their scythes to a rhythmic beat. If a peasant had a large area to be cut, he would hire help which was referred to as "Kushcove." Grass that was reasonably damp from the early morning dew lent itself to the best cutting. A second cutting was called "Otava."

About 8 o'clock in the morning the women would bring provisions for the day on their backs. This consisted primarily of pirohy, kulashu, halusky, bread, bacon and, of course, whiskey. Immediately, the women, girl friends, youngsters, they would begin raking the grass, turning it over periodically for drying. This was all done to the accompaniment of lively folk songs which echoed into the distant hills. It truly was a social but a very necessary and productive event and one that made you happy when you had an opportunity to participate.

The women returned home in the evenings regardless of the distance they had to travel up into the hills. The men kept swinging the scythes until dark. When the hay season was over, efforts were directed to processing grain in the same social atmosphere. When all the grain was harvested, the next chore, and social event, was digging up the potato crop. I personally took a liking to swinging a scythe during the hay harvest season. One could not complain of a lack of appetite when he swung a scythe all day up in the fresh mountain air.

#### TAX ASSESSMENTS AND PAYMENTS

Taxes assessed and paid to the government on property was referred to as "Porcija." Stories out of the past as related by the senior folks regarding taxes were very interesting and worthy of relating across these pages. In the very early days, even beyond my recollection, the method of notifying all the villagers when and where the porcija was to be paid was a unique one.

In the office of the village rihtar was an iron rod about a foot in length. Then on the tapered end was a crossbar. On each end of the crossbar a metal ring was attached. The rings were about three inches in diameter. On the heavier end of the bar was another metal ring attached for the purpose of hanging on a nail attached to a wall. This iron rod was called a "Kljuka." If there was any significance to the unique design of the kljuka, it probably was lost in antiquity.

The story goes, that when the rihtar received word from his superiors that there would be a porcija, the time and place, the rihtar would take the kljuka to his nearest neighbor and related the message. This neighbor, in turn, passed the kljuka to his nearest neighbor, and so on until all the house numbers under the rihtar's jurisdiction were notified. Then the last peasant returned the kljuka to the rihtar. This was all done very religiously by the peasants.

However, in later years, this crude method of notification was replaced by that of the village drummer. In theorizing, it could be assumed that with the expansion of the village the old kljuka method was too time consuming. Usually the location for paying the porcijy was in the village school. A representative from the government would come to the village to make the collection. He was called a "Natarijush." In the event a peasant failed to pay his assessment after allowing sufficient time, a delegation would visit the home. This delegation was made up of the village rihtar, shandars, a government official called a

"Ekzekutor," accompanied by a female. If the peasant still refused to pay his porciju when the visit was made to his home, they would take possession of feathers from his bed, or pillows. And, if the assessment was sizeable, they would take a perina. The reason for taking feathers, they were considered the most valuable since there was no furniture or anything else that was worth taking. These feathers were taken by the lady in the delegation to the office of the rihtar. If you wanted to redeem your feathers, you had to pay the porciju.

The peasants that lived on the land of an estate, the panschare, paid a porciju to the government for their house and various service buildings. Also, they paid a tenant's fee to the Graf for the use of his land which was called "Panschina." The tenant's fee was paid in the form of assigned days of labor for the estate. A complete accounting of each panschar was made every two years. A meeting was called by the Graf's aides to which all the panschars were summoned. If you lacked sufficient days of labor, you paid up or remained delinquent until the next accounting period. If you had more days worked than you were assessed, you were credited until a future accounting was made. A day's work was assessed to be worth about 30 kreutzers.

The overseer of the Graf's holdings in the Slovinky area was a Slovak by the name of Josef Heiser. He supervised all the various activities in connection with the operation of the estate. The Graf, himself, had a permanent home somewhere in the vicinity of the city of Presov.

Regardless of the poverty level of existence of the common peasant, humorous stories making the rounds always provided good entertainment. And, it can be said that the peasants were able to laugh at themselves and at each other. One of these peasant stories centers around a village whose inhabitants were educated but were unable to govern themselves. They decided that their problem was lack of "wisdom." In the meantime a Jewish merchant in making his rounds happened to be present when the discussion was taking place. Inasmuch as the merchant dealt in odds and ends, he told the villagers that he was able to sell them "wisdom." An agreement was made to buy his "wisdom" for 100 Zlaty. Payment was made from the village treasury by the synod and the Jew handed them a box containing "wisdom" and then he departed.

The villagers now were faced with the decision as to who will get the box of "wisdom." It was finally agreed that the box should remain with the rihtar. Their village was situated on an area of level ground. A short distance from the village was a hill. As the rihtar opened the box, out flew a bird called "Misy Kralik" (kingbird). In circulating around, the bird finally landed on this hill chirping to himself. The villagers in pursuit, tried to catch the bird but it disappeared among the foliage on the hill.

What is to be done now? They decided to pull the hill into the village, and they all would share in the "wisdom." The menfolks rounded up enough rope to circle the hill. A group was assigned to pull on the rope while another group was to direct the operation. The group that was assigned to pull, began yelling that the hill is starting to move. The group directing yelled back that it is not so. Both groups argued their position. Actually, the rope was only stretching. So the story goes -- it was the merchant who sold (taught) the villagers a lesson in wisdom though subtle it may have been.

## SECOND CALL FOR ASENTIRKU

At the turn of the century, in the year 1900, we had another addition to our family. Mother gave birth to a baby girl who was given the Christian name of "Susan" at baptism. I now was blessed with three brothers and seven sisters. We now had thirteen members in our family.

In this same year of 1900, I was required to report for the military. I was deferred the previous year and placed in class two on account of my lame arm. When I was examined this year, the doctor put me in class three on account of my arm which was a routine procedure. I was now required to report the following year as a member of class three.

After the asentirka in March, the recruits that passed their physicals were required to report for service the following October 6th. Those young men who were accepted considered it an honor at the time to become soldiers. It was a sort of a status symbol among the young men in the village. There were many branches of service that were available and the recruits were placed in various parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Each branch of service, of course, had its own uniform. Going into the military service was a happy event at the outset for each recruit but it was just a matter of time that letters began coming home asking the parents to initiate a release. And, some of the young men who were unable to adjust themselves from a carefree village life to the strict military discipline even committed suicide.

Some of the more popular branches of service that the young men were assigned to were: Husars (Calvary); Infanterija (Infantry); Honveds (National Guard); Jagrum (Communications); Kanonjir (Field Artillery); Mariner (Engineers or Bridge Builders); and, Sanitirs (Grave Diggers). These branches of service were located in various parts of the country such as the infantry was based at Presov, the Husars were based around Kosice Some branches used German and some used Hungarian commands; Some of the military personnel were required to wear mustaches.

Since I was again deferred from the military service, by this time most of my buddies had gone to America. This was the popular thing to do among the young men. Their letters to me indicated that conditions in America were very good, and that you could eat all the meat you wanted. Meat was something that we did not have too much of on our table at home. There was plenty of work at the ore mines, but the spirit of adventure kept working on my mind. Grass on the other side looked greener to me also, and I wanted to go to America to join my buddies.

The young men that were deferred from military service for a year or two and wanted to go to America did so illegally by escaping across the border and out of the country. Many of them were apprehended and returned. It was not unusual to have someone returned several times but illegal means for escape were available for a price. If you were caught your money was confiscated and you were sent back home. Later, your money was returned to you by mail.

In order to leave the country to go to America legally, you had to obtain a "General Pass" from the Natarijush. You presented this pass to shandars at the border and you were permitted to leave the country, but you kept the pass in your possession.

When all my friends in my age group left for America, I had to make new friends with men younger or older than myself. I had one particular friend who was my first cousin by the name of Matthew Ivancho. Our

mothers were sisters. Matthew had his left arm severed below the elbow thru a freak and careless accident. During a wedding ceremony, when he was nineteen years of age, as a wedding party was leaving the church, Matthew had some dynamite to set off to commemorate the occasion, as was the custom. This was a popular and traditional custom, and since no one was permitted to have a gun or revolver in his possession, dynamite was used since it was available at the mines. He had two half sticks of dynamite, one in each hand. Apparently the fuses to set off the dynamite were too short. As he lit the fuses he threw the explosive from his right hand but the one in his left hand exploded and severed his hand at the wrist. Later, in the hospital the doctors amputated the stub below the elbow.

My friend did not go to America but got married and worked at the ore mines doing jobs that he was capable of doing. Anyone that was physically impaired in any way was not permitted to leave the country. Matthew had the bad habit of getting intoxicated and was the precipitator of scimmages. Later, he became the cowherd for the village and custodian of the village bulls. On one occasion when he went to feed the bulls while intoxicated, the bull apparently smelled the liquor and became vicious. Matthew was gored by the bull's horns, pinned against a wall, and was killed.

It is interesting to note that there was not much incentive to inculcate culture into the daily lives of the peasants. Each family lived their own crude style of existence. National or patriotic songs did not receive much attention and were not popular. This could have been due to the fact that by law we were citizens of one country, but at heart and ancestry, we belonged elsewhere. It can be said that this same condition prevailed in America especially among the early immigrants. They lived in America but had a yearning for their roots. It seemed that each person had his own pet song that suited his fancy which he sang when the atmosphere was conducive to exercising the vocal cords. My pet song was this:

A ponize tenesvaru stoji korchma  
Murovana zvonka, zdnuka vakovana,  
Zdobrim pjiskom visipana.

A ftej korchmy okruhly stol  
Za njim sidy Andras Sabol.  
Andras Sabol za njim sidy.  
Halva vina pri njim stojy.

Halva vina cherveneho  
Prishla pon'ho zena jeho.  
Andras Sabol pot' do domu,  
Druhy lude oru, seju.  
Nasy plusky v blatji hniju.

Dos se na mnja malo znala  
I tos na mnja vivolala.  
A ja na tebe vece znal,  
A ja natja ne vivolal.

A koshilku ne menujem  
Bo fnuj nigda ne nocujem.  
Piposarik kalinovy,  
A pipochka zmorskej peny.

A opasok bul zchereshny  
A bise mu fshy ne rozishly.

And, another of my favorites, alluding to courtship with romantic overtones, went something like this:

Eši lem pres prab kračal  
Uš my ručku davala.  
I tak se mja vipitovala  
Žebi lem zostal aš do rana.

A ja jej tak otpođival  
Ze mam pojiti konička.  
A ona sebe zaljivala  
Zo solzamy, svoji očička.

THIRD ASENTIRKA - SISTER ANNA MARRIES  
PREPARING FOR AMERICA

Due to my lame arm I was again deferred from military service. The year was 1901 and I was 23 years of age when I reported for the third asentirku as member of class three, My arm actually was not a handicap to me. I was able to perform physical work at the mines as well as any workman. However, it was a relief to know that I would not be required to spend several years in the military. Now I was free to either go to America or stay home and settle down to a family life in Europe.

In this same year of 1901 my sister Anna was married. The wedding took place in the month of May. My new brother-in-law was a young local man named George Rebar. The wedding followed the usual traditional customs and ceremonies. The wedding was held at the Rebar home in the Zakut Dolina where he lived. I served as a druzba for my sister. My new brother-in-law was a havjar and we worked together on Kliperk almost from childhood or when they hired boys. His father was married twice and he was the son of the second wife. At the time of his marriage, he was living alone at home with his mother.

It made me happy to know that I already have two sisters married and only sister Ilona was unmarried from the mother that gave us birth. At the time, father wanted me to get married first and then go to America, but my stepmother was not in favor of this.

After giving it a lot of thought, I finally decided to go first to America. After this decision was made, the matter of finances came up. To go to America, 160 Zlaty were required and father did not have that kind of money to loan me. However, it was my good fortune that my first cousin Anna (daughter of father's brother George) and her husband, Jusko Lescisin, just came back from America and had money to loan. Arrangements were made to borrow the 160 Zlaty from them at an interest rate. The interest agreed upon was to be 10 Zlaty when the principal was paid regardless of length of time for repayment.

The next step after obtaining the money for my trip to America was to obtain a "General Pass" which was required to leave the country. Then another obstacle arose.. It was a government regulation that those young men who were deferred from service were to pay a "Military Porciju" of 3 Zlaty per year for 12 years. Since I was deferred and also wanted to leave the country, the ruling was that I pay the entire porciju of 36 Zlaty before I could obtain a General Pass.

Another interesting side light on the military - it was also a regulation that after serving their three years of conscription, and up to about their thirtieth birthday, a soldier was placed in a reserve that could be called up as combat troops, or first line soldiers. After that period they were placed in a reserve called second line defense troops to the age of 42. After that they received a release or "Opsit."

To pay 36 Zlaty for a General Pass presented another problem in financing my trip. My aunt Julia's German husband (father's sister) who was a railroad conductor whose run. extended to the border promised he could get me across the border without any trouble. However, it was a common practice among young men going to America to mail back their Pass for someone else to use since there was no picture on it. It was my good fortune to borrow a Pass used by my friend Mike Bahrik (nicknamed "Regrut") who was already in America. I was godfather to his oldest daughter Mary, and later I married his wife's sister Mary Mnich. The next step was to set a date so my leaving would not be known.

Finally, a date in the month of June (1901) was selected since I was advised that at this time of year there is less turbulence on the Atlantic Ocean. It was also necessary to notify my place of employment two weeks in advance that I was terminating. As I walked into the Kansalarija (office) and thanked them for the job and-past favors, the supervision looked at me very surprised. It was a custom at the mines to express appreciation for your job when you were terminating. In the event things would not work out for me as I had planned, I asked if they would re-hire me in the event I was turned back at the border. They asked me if I had a Pass to which I replied that I did not have one yet.

In promising me a job if I was to return, supervision told me that my record was very good. Also, they tried to convince me to remain that I could be lucky if I stayed inasmuch as I already had eight years of service and would be eligible for a pension while still quite young.

The date set for my departure was a Saturday evening. I worked at the mine up to Thursday evening and on my way home from work I stopped at the parish house to ask the priest if he would confess me tomorrow that I was leaving for America Saturday. The priest graciously promised to do me this favor. In the very early days when the immigrants were leaving Slovinky to go to America, the priest and the congregation accompanied them with church banners and prayers. This practice, however, changed with the passing of time. In later years it became so common that you saw a person in the village one day, and three days later a letter would arrive from the port of departure that they successfully crossed the border and were on their way to America.

On Friday morning I went prepared to confession and communion and was spiritually prepared to go to America. Since it was a custom when anyone was to confession and communion to drink some wine afterwards, I stopped at the village korchma to have a drink of wine and to say farewell to my Jewish friends where I used to purchase drinks and tobacco on credit. As I paid up my account, the merchants suspected that I was leaving for America. I admitted that I was going tomorrow evening alone from Slovinky and that I probably would return. They assured me that I would not be turned back at the border that I was knowledgeable enough and knew what to do. I was treated to free drinks and cigars and extended their good wishes for a safe journey.

Inasmuch as father was in America on two previous occasions, he knew what was required especially in the matter of dress. He bought me overalls and a small cap to wear on the ship. The cap was to replace my hat while on the ship so the wind would not blow it off. For the train ride he bought me a suit and a straw hat like they wore in America. Also, father gave me his watch and chain that he brought home from America. The watch, however, needed repairs. The suitcase was packed and as I bid my close friends and relatives farewell that I would be leaving tomorrow evening, they all wished me a safe journey.

#### FAREWELL TO SLOVINKY

It was on June 24, 1901, that I bid farewell to my native village of Slovinky. Since I was the first child to leave home for America, the scene became very emotional when it was time to walk out the door of our home. Mother, father, brothers and sisters all began to cry. I tried to console my brothers and sisters by giving them some money and promising that I would return. I was deeply concerned about leaving my dear family but since the decision was finally made to go to America, I felt that if it was God's will, I must put my destiny in His hands.



My suitcase was packed, I had the money for my trip, and, in addition, father gave me an extra 20 Zlaty to supplement what I had borrowed. This I had in a small sack tied around my neck for security purposes. Father, mother and sister Mary accompanied me to Krompachy where I boarded my train. Mother carried my suitcase on her back in a "Zajdu" (bag) and father and sister Mary went on ahead with her, and I followed. When I left home I was dressed in my holoshny so no one would suspect that I was leaving for America. When I came to the dedina (village) to the church, I gave a last look at the beautiful green hills I roamed as a child. Then I knelt on the church steps and said a prayer, and continued to the station where father, mother, and sister Mary were already waiting for me.

At the station I changed from my holoshny to the suit that father bought me for the trip. This change of wearing apparel immediately made me a "Pan" out of a "Sprostak" (commoner). Father bought me the train ticket to the German border at Oderberg (now Bohumin) which amounted to something less than 5 Zlaty. As the train sounded its whistle, I parted with my family in the station because only passengers with tickets were permitted to go near the train. With my suitcase, I boarded the train, and another sound of the whistle and we were on our way. The time was about 6 o'clock on a Saturday evening.

The train accommodations were separated into three classes and the tickets for each class were priced accordingly. The first class accommodations were reserved for the big Panove, the second class for the middle or intermediate Panove, and the third class for which I had a ticket was for the workers or peasants like myself. The third class coach I entered had long benches along both sides already occupied with passengers. And, the aisle was also occupied with passengers sitting on their baggage. Since there was no room to sit, I stood by the door.

Later, as I began making acquaintances thru conversation, I learned that many of the passengers were going to America also. There were men, women, and young ladies. I told them for some unknown reason that this was already my second trip to America which they believed. They were happy to know this, and said they would depend on me for guidance. I was treated to their kolachy and some even gave me whiskey to drink. My journey became less monotonous after I got acquainted with a young lady.

On our way to the German border we crossed several stolicy (counties) viewing the beautiful Tetry Mountains along the way. On one occasion I inadvertently strolled into one of the second class coaches where there were seats comparable to those on trains in America. The inside of the coach was decorated with mirrors, etc. I was soon told I didn't belong there and had to go back into the third class coach.

After traveling all night, we arrived at the German border in Oderberg. This was the check point by the shandars for Passes. As the inspection was being made, I purposely strayed into another direction. I was apprehensive with a borrowed Pass in my possession, but to my good fortune, the shandars did not come my way and I was greatly relieved.

At Oderberg we bought our train tickets (10.95 Zlaty) to take us all the way to Bremen to our port of exit from Germany. In Oderberg we waited about an hour. With our tickets we entered a fenced-in area where another train was waiting for us. At this point we already were on German territory. As the train started, I felt safe that I would not be turned back by the shandars.

The train out of Oderberg was like the one from Krompachy. There was no water on our coach and for toilets we had to use facilities at various stations along the way. When we reached the town of Ratibor, we had to change trains to go to Bremen. At Ratibor we had a four-hour wait. At this station there were agents from the Mislara Company in Bremen with whom we all made a 10 Zlaty deposit for passage on an ocean liner to America.

During our wait for a train in Ratibor, I met a related friend from Slovinky by the name of Elijas Putanko. He was accompanying two children to their parents in America. One of the children was a young girl about 16 years of age, and the other was a boy about 14. I considered myself fortunate to meet up with this friend since he spoke Hungarian, German, and also understood a little American. This was the third trip he was making to America. We traveled together all the way from Ratibor to America.

#### CROSSING THE ATLANTIC ON THE "HANNOVER"

The train we boarded in Ratibor on our way to Bremen was equipped with seats which accommodated two passengers. The seats were very hard and were on both sides of an aisle. I noticed that my traveling direction on the trains was always to the west or sunset. Apparently, the trains I rode must have been specials for immigrants only that were going to America. We changed trains several times with short waiting periods between trains. At each station there were halls in which we were able to relax sitting on our luggage and also over the floor. During train changes made at night that required extended waiting, the people slept on their luggage. The scene took on the atmosphere of cattle being herded to pasture which was so familiar to me.

Traveling with us were two well dressed gypsies. One was very slender and the other was a rather fat person. They both carried violins. Whenever we had to wait at a train stop, they would sit only at tables like big Panove while we sat on our luggage. These two would order beer in mugs and occasionally strike up a tune on their instruments. The thought kept running thru my mind that they must be very wealthy gypsies to carry on in such a high fashion.

Our train passed thru Berlin on an elevated track at high noon and we arrived in Bremen late Monday evening at about 11 o'clock, June 26th. In Bremen there were agents looking for our identifications when we arrived since we made a deposit for passage on an ocean liner back in Ratibor. These agents took us to the Mislara Company headquarters where we were served a meal and given lodging. It was a place where immigrants were passing thru - some arriving and others departing. The next morning breakfast was served to this huge crowd at tables. After breakfast we went into a large adjoining hall where people relaxed to music and dancing awaiting to be examined by doctors and to receive vaccinations.

We were also served our noon and evening meals, and there was plenty to eat. The following day we made arrangements to purchase our passage and to pay for our meals and lodging. My total bill amounted to 110 Zlaty. This included my deposit and transportation all the way to my final destination which was Horatio, Pa. I had 40 Zlaty left which I changed into American money for a total of \$18.00.

While in Bremen we attended a Catholic Church in the morning. Then my friend, Elijas Putanko, took me on a sight-seeing tour of the city. He treated me to some good German beer since he had money and could speak the German language. In our sight-seeing tour we went to the water

front to take in the sights. I noticed my two gypsy travelers also at the water front. When they returned to our headquarters, the fat one went to redeem his ticket explaining to the clerk that he is not going to America, that he decided to go back home. The clerk asked him why he is returning his ticket for a refund. He replied that he is sick and will be unable to work when he gets to America. The clerk asked him the nature of his illness. He replied that he has a very sore back. The clerk asked to see his back. Apparently, he suspected something irregular. The gypsy pulls up the back of his shirt and his back was a solid mass of blubber. The clerk slaps him on the back and says: "Cigan, there is nothing the matter with you. You have to go to America with all the others." Since I was an eyewitness at the water front and also overheard the conversation, it appeared that the fat gypsy became alarmed when he saw the large body of water.

On Thursday morning, June 29th, the agent began rounding us up to a ferry to take us to the ocean liner. The agent led the pack on a bicycle while we all trailed carrying our luggage. We arrived at a high bridge and descended a stairway to the canal where we boarded the ferry. I kept noticing my gypsy friends always trailing behind, wailing and mumbling about being afraid of the water. With all aboard, the ferry started up the canal about eight o'clock in the morning and reached the ocean liner around four in the afternoon.

When we reached the ocean liner, steps were attached to provide easy access. Sailors from the ship were in command at this point so no one would fall into the water. When I entered the huge ship, it was my turn to be bunked in a large room in the center of the vessel. There were two-tiered bunks placed around the walls. The bunks were furnished with bedding and on each bunk there was a pail with a spoon and a fork to be used to carry our food which was dished out three times daily -- breakfast, dinner and supper. Having given a choice, I selected a top bunk. We all placed our luggage on our bunks. Being curious, I went up the steps to the ship's deck to get a view of water. There were people already on deck with the same thought in mind. About five o'clock a deep blast was sounded from the ship's foghorn and we began to pull out of the Bremen harbor very slowly into the North Sea and onto the north Atlantic. Sad expressions were seen on the faces of those with me on the deck as the ship began pulling out. Many of the people burst into tears as the ship began churning the waters and slowly making its way upon the high seas.

When we returned to our quarters the sailors began serving the evening meal. They brought in a large kettle into the room where I was to bunk and began dishing out the preparation into our pails with a ladle as we lined up for our turn. After supper, since we did not know the whereabouts of our acquaintances at this point, we went to bed but slept very little this first night. The large room was illuminated with electric lights, and the sailors kept a constant vigil all night.

When we arose the next morning we began looking for water to wash our faces. To our surprise, there was no water for this purpose. Water was distributed at given times for drinking purposes which we used to wash. After breakfast was served, the sailors commanded us to go on deck to get some fresh air. At this point we began to associate with our traveling acquaintances on these daily trips to the deck for fresh air. When comparing our passage tickets as a pastime, which were in German and I was unable to read, I learned the name of our ship to be the "Hannover" (7305 ton, 430 X 54, 1 funnel) of the North German Lloyd steamship line. It was put in service in 1899, and scrapped in 1929.

About 750 immigrants aboard included: Russians, Slovaks, Germans, Romanians, Serbs, Poles, Hungarians, Croatians, Bohemians, Moravians, etc. The German sailors and service personnel worked three shifts -- the number was sizeable. The Panove traveled 1st or 2nd class and had cabins above deck where kitchen facilities were located. Immigrants like myself traveled 3rd class and were housed below deck. However, compared to stories related by earlier immigrants when ships were equipped with sails and it was not uncommon to drift off course for days, our accommodations were quite adequate for our social position.

On the third day out at sea, the passengers began getting seasick, primarily vomiting. The ship's help began spreading powdered disinfectant everywhere. However, in another three days the sickness began to subside. Fortunately, I was not sick probably because I was accustomed to foul air while working at the ore mines. During the siege, the passengers only drank beer. I was among those that brought beer to the sick. The German beer on board ship was very good quality but rather expensive. A small mug cost seven cents in American money Or twenty-one German Pfennigs.

In about five days a general inspection was made of our vaccinations which we received in Bremen. In the event it did not take, it was renewed by the doctors aboard ship. After the people began feeling well, we would spend our time going on deck where the gypsies supplied dance music on their violins. The young men and young women joined in dance with the sailors. I spent most of my time with an older group of Russians and Slovaks. We would sit back of the ship's funnel and spend our mornings in prayer and singing religious songs out of books, and relating our experiences. It seemed like each nationality would associate with their native countrymen because of the language in which they could communicate. Then there was a group, including my friend Putanko, who occupied their time playing cards. It was forbidden to play cards on board ship but they did it secretly.

Since all the sailors and help were German on the Hannover, on board ship there were committees who were fluent in many languages. In the event someone had a problem, he related it to this committee and they would take it to the ship's captain. We had a German who served as our committee because he could speak Slovak which we understood. On one occasion he gave us a lecture on board deck on the subject of survival in the event our ship was sinking. Every bunk was equipped with a life preserver made of cork block enclosed in a strong fabric. He explained how to pull the preserver over your shoulders and fasten it around your body. This lecture was misinterpreted by many, thinking that the danger was already upon us. It was explained that the life preserver would keep you afloat at least for 24 hours or until a rescue ship arrived.

The menu we were served wasn't the most appetizing. It included rye bread, hard buns called "Cvibaky," meat, soup which was rice or barley, vegetables, butter, black coffee without sugar, and tea. Each day a bulletin was posted indicating the distance traveled during the past 24 hours, and also the distance remaining to port. I believe the total distance was around 3000 miles. On deck you could see nothing but the sky and the water. Out of port we were followed by white birds that looked like pigeons to us. When we were about in the middle of the ocean, it seemed to be very dreary and the sun arose from another direction. At times we would see fish breaking the surface of the water. On the 12th of July we landed at our port in Baltimore about five o'clock in the morning. Hardly anyone slept that last night in anticipation of landing in America where a rhythmic saying led you to believe that it was lined with gold (Amerika zlatom obita).

Everyone was tidying up, men shaving, and getting hair cuts, etc. I took off my overalls that father bought me to wear on the ship and put on my suit. His advice on wearing apparel for the trip was very practical. We still were served breakfast on board ship. Everyone was on deck to watch the American shores appear as the ship slowly made its way to the port. When we reached port, a small cross-over was attached to the ship to permit us to walk to shore. At this point we were taken into a large reception building in the port of Baltimore.

As the last breakfast was served, everyone lined up in their finest apparel. One of the sailors passed out white bread at the head of the line, another placed a helping of butter with a paddle on the bread, and a third sailor passed out coffee. Standing in line was a Polish immigrant all dressed up, sporting a well-groomed handle bar mustache curled neatly upwards at the ends. As he approached the head of the line, he was given his bread. And, as the second sailor began to place the butter on his bread, the Pole tried to explain to him that he didn't want the butter. Apparently, there was a language problem between the Pole and the German sailor. As the dialogue reached a high pitch, in order to dispose of the butter, the sailor smeared it across the Pole's handle bar mustache. As the Pole began to wipe his mustache clean, swearing unheavenly in his native tongue, we all laughed and the sailors began applauding -- truly an unrehearsed "grand finale."

Inside the reception center we all were required to show the address of our destination, and the amount of money we had on our person. I observed my two gypsy friends, who displayed such sophistication much earlier, as they revealed the amount of money they had. To my surprise, one had \$1.50 and other had \$3.00.

#### FROM BALTIMORE TO PUNXSUTAWNEY

As we walked down the gangplank from the Hannover, and put our feet on American soil, the thought went thru my mind that at last I am on the free land of Washington which I heard so much about. The time was about ten o'clock, Thursday morning, July 12, 1901, when we were permitted to disembark. The big reception center in Baltimore was large enough to accommodate everyone that was on the ship. It had bars on each end apparently to protect the immigrants from straying off. We were not permitted to leave and go into the city. On each side of the center were counters filled with a variety of things to eat. As I came into this center, at one end I noticed they were selling bread, bacon, and sausages. I bought myself a loaf of bread and a kolbasu, sat on my suitcase and at last had a meal I was accustomed to. What I did not eat, I stored in my suitcase. Being thirsty, I roamed around looking for something to drink preferably of the stronger beverage type. However, only soda pop and lemonade were sold and no alcoholic drinks. As I kept strolling around and passing away the time, I saw for the first time in my life such a large variety of things to eat -- cakes, cinnamon rolls various pastries, fish, cuts of meat, etc. The thought struck me that it must be good to live in America with so many good things to eat. In fact, I was sorry that I filled up my stomach with kolbasy and bread.

As we looked out the back part of the reception center we could see the unloading of the Hannover. It intrigued us to see how the ship kept rising out of the water as the cargo was being unloaded. It was difficult to realize how much of the ship was actually under the surface of the water. Probably this was the reason we had such a smooth ride over the Atlantic, and we did not encounter any storms. Again, the advice I received from father that the summer months were best for traveling, proved to be true.

On a lower elevation below the reception center were railroad tracks with trains waiting to depart. We were all under close supervision as to what trains to take. When a train was ready to leave, a dispatcher walked thru the center making the announcement on a megaphone. Our tickets, of course, indicated our destination and we were not permitted to stray beyond the gates unless it was our train.

When my train was ready to leave, I parted company with my friend Elijas Putanko. We left at the same time but on different trains. His destination was Connellsville and mine was Horatio, both in Pennsylvania. We left about four o'clock that afternoon and the center in Baltimore was still filled with immigrants. I traveled all night and made no train changes. The next day, Friday, July 13, it was necessary, however, to change trains several times. Late in the evening, about eleven o'clock I arrived at the B.R. & P. station in Punxsutawney and was to take the P.R.R. train to Horatio which was about four miles beyond. The P.R.R. station was about a ten minute walk from the B.R. & P. Being late at night and no one to give me instructions as was done heretofore, I just kept waiting on the station platform. The station was closed and there was a group of black boys roaming around with whom I could not converse. As I stood there with suitcase in hand, the station agent saw me and came over and tried to converse. Since I was not responding to his questions, and after a few attempts, he gave up. However, he did notice the labels on my suitcase "Bremen" and "Baltimore." He wrote something on a piece of paper and handed it to me. Being unable to read his message, I folded up the note and put it in my pocket -- still no progress. To my good fortune, a brakeman doing his rounds came upon the scene. He was dressed in overalls, wearing a brakeman's cap, and carrying a lantern. They both made another attempt to converse with me.

Finally, they asked to see my ticket, which I complied knowing that they meant no harm. My destination being Horatio, they showed me on their watch that the train goes to Horatio the next morning at eight o'clock, and asked if I was Slavish. This I understood, and replied: "Hej Slovjak." With gestures, they asked me if I wanted to sleep. Understanding the gestures, I nodded that I did. The brakeman said: "Come on, John," and motioned me to follow him. He led me back of the station for about three blocks to a hotel, lighting the way with his lantern. At this hotel was a Russian bartender by the name of "Fedor Havrila" but he worked days and was off duty. The hotel clerk had me register and showed me to my room where I spent the night.

Spending my first night at an American hotel was an adventure. The rooms were all occupied for the night and in trying to accommodate me, the hotel clerk placed my suitcase behind his desk and knocked on the door of an adjoining room where the maids were quartered. As they opened their door, he related the problem and asked if I could spend the night in their quarters. Their reply was a loud bang as they slammed their door in our faces.

However, he did accommodate me with a room that was taken but the person was away at the time. The clerk gave me the key and showed me how to work the light. I locked the door since I still had about \$16.00 on my person. After saying my prayers, I tried to sleep but my body was so accustomed to tossing and bouncing on the ship and trains for almost three weeks, that it was a long time before I was able to dose off. I was hungry because I ate the bread and kolbasu I bought in Baltimore on the train ride on Thursday. I was afraid to get off the train to buy something to eat for fear I would be left behind. However, I still had three apples on which I existed all day Friday up to Saturday morning.

FROM PUNXSUTAWNEY TO HORATIO

The next morning when I awoke the overhead position of the sun indicated that the time was late. I quickly dressed, washed, combed my hair since the absent guest whose room I occupied had all his toiletry laying around. As I went downstairs I noticed the wall clock indicated eight o'clock. This was the departure time of my train to Horatio. The hotel clerk spotted me and said something with a smile. I, of course, did not understand what he said but understood the smile and I smiled back. He gave me my suitcase which he put behind his desk, and offered me a chair to sit on. In the meantime, the Russian bartender arrived and the hotel clerk pointed me out to him. Fedor was an elderly man and neatly dressed. As he greeted me, it seemed so strange and yet so pleasing to hear a voice for the first time in America that I could understand. He asked me where I came from. I told him I came from Europe. He said that he understood, but from where in Europe. I replied that I came from the stolica (county) of Spis in Austro-Hungary.

In pursuing the subject, he wanted to know from what village. I told him the name of my village was Slovinky. Then the subject turned to where I was going. Knowing nothing about the area, I did know that my destination was Horatio, and I told him so. In persisting to get all detail, I was asked to whom in Horatio. I replied that I was going to my uncle Grisak. He then asked to what Grisak. I said that I was going to John Grisak. He said that he personally knows John Grisak and that he has a married daughter living nearby (referring to Mrs. Tushim).

At this point, Fedor told me that he is on duty now but it would be very accommodating to me if someone could take me to this daughters He said to be patient that someone from Horatio will show up and I will be able to go with them. As we conversed, the next subject was most welcome. He asked me if I was hungry. To this I replied that I haven't eaten anything all day yesterday. Fedor offered to take me to his home for something to eat but said it was too far to go. I wanted to know if there was some place I could eat. He said that if I had the money I could eat right there. I told him I had money with me. So he took me to an adjoining room where they sold sandwiches and told the waiter something as I sat down. The waiter came to me and apparently wanted to know what kind of sandwich I wanted. Since I couldn't understand, I made a gesture with my hand pointing to my mouth and the result was a cheese sandwich placed before me.

In payment, I gave him some large denomination coins to see what I would receive back in change. The price of the cheese sandwich was ten cents. Still being hungry, I pointed to some ham sandwiches that I spotted and gestured to the waiter to bring me some. Before I finished, I ate four sandwiches. And now, ar drink of something to wash down the four sandwiches. I went back to Fedor and asked if I could get something to drink. He replied that if I had the money I could. The end result was that he served me a glass of beer which cost five cents.

After all this, I felt like I could go another day without anything to eat. One of the first things I learned about America was how to count their money. This was one of the easiest things I picked up while still on the ship. In the meantime, Fedor told me all about the events of the previous evening and how I stood on the station platform which the hotel clerk related to him. As we talked, my brakeman guide came into the tavern for a drink of beer. When he saw me, he said: "Hello John," and smiled. I gestured with my hand and smiled back. Later, I learned that the term "John" was a favorite expression in greeting

newcomers from Europe like myself. The brakeman related the previous evening's experience to Fedor and how he brought me to the hotel. Then Fedor brings the brakeman over to where I was sitting and asks if I could recognize him. I told him that this was the nice man who brought me to the hotel last night. After Fedor told the brakeman that I recognized him, the brakeman treated me to a glass of beer.

In our later conversation with Fedor, he told me that the brakeman noticed I had a watch and chain on my person, and that there was a bunch of black youngsters hanging around me on the station platform. He said the reason the brakeman brought me to the hotel so I wouldn't be robbed since the youngsters were a mean bunch. The watch and chain was the one father brought back from America and gave me as I left home so I could get it repaired in America.

While we were waiting, an elderly gentleman came into the tavern for a glass of beer. Fedor told him that here was a man who came from the old country, and asked him to take me to "Klevir" and have someone take me to John Grisak in Horatio I learned that Klevir was the name local Slavs used when referring to Lindsey, and that Lindsey was sort of a suburb of Punxsutawney. This man's name was "Tomko Macura." He was the sexton at the Lindsey Greek Catholic Church, and Fedor, the bartender, was the church "Starosta."

Tomko, who lived in Lindsey, agreed to take me. On our way we went thru the small but beautiful town of Punxsutawney which was located on level ground. He pointed out a certain house to me in Lindsey. I knocked on the door and was greeted by the lady of the house. I explained to her my situation and asked her to have her boys take me to Horatio, that I was told she had boys. I told her I was coming from the old country, in answer to her question. She asked me my name. I told her I was a Grisak. This was kind of a surprise to her, and she told me that their family name was Grisak also.

This was the family of one Matt Grisak but we were not related. She asked to what Grisak I was going to. I replied that I was going to my uncle John Grisak. She told me her boys could not take me inasmuch as they were not home at the time, but she volunteered to give me the directions to Horatio. As was the friendly custom among the older generation, she asked me if I was hungry. I told her that I was not hungry, that I just ate in town.

The hour was about eleven o'clock in the morning as she took me to a small hill and showed me what road to take to Horatio. Located near the foot of this hill was the No. 6 mine of the Barnum-White Coal Company. The distance to Horatio was about three miles. Since it was a hot July day, on my way with suitcase in hand, I paused to rest in a wooded area. I might point out that this was my first exposure to the American countryside. Everything seemed strange to me compared to a countryside I was brought up in. The meadows of my boyhood had evergreen trees decorating the rolling hills and valleys. All I could now see on my way to Horatio was no evergreen trees but only oaks, etc.

After I left the wooded area, I came upon a public school. Beyond the school was the company town of Horatio. Adjoining Horatio proper was a section populated with Slav immigrants. They referred to this section as "Ungvarsky Place." The name stemmed from the fact that in the early days Russians and Slovaks who lived there were referred to as "Ungvars" or "Hungarians." In the Ungvarsky Place the people lived in



their own shanty-type houses and paid rent to the coal company for use of the land on which the house was situated. Horatio was a sizeable company town with streets, two-story houses, and was owned by the Barnum-White Coal Company.

When I came to this public school, I thought to myself that this must be the place, and now to locate uncle John. As a group of youngsters passed me, I asked if they knew where John Grisak lived. They just laughed at me with my suitcase, and kept on going. Later, I found out that these rascals were Slavs and understood my request. But, it was not uncommon to refer unkindly to a new immigrant as a "greenhorn" and be amused in doing so.

As I came to the houses, a group of boys were out in the street playing baseball. I detoured my course and headed down an alley. There I asked one woman if she knew where John Grisak lived. Apparently, she was of American stock and didn't understand but gestured with her finger for me to go where I came from. Her gesture, probably well intended, but did not seem right to go back to where I came from. I kept on and as I was passing some barns, I met up with a young man. I asked him if he knew where John Grisak lives. This time I hit the target. He understood because he greeted me with a smile and said: "That's my father." "Take me to him," I said. This young man was my first cousin, and uncle John's son, Mike.

#### FIRST DAYS AT UNCLE JOHN'S IN HORATIO

When my first cousin Mike brought me to his home and we entered their kitchen, with me holding my suitcase in my hand, his mother in an unpleasant tone asked him who he brought home this time. Mike, jokingly, told her that he brought a peddler, that maybe she wanted to buy something. Rather sternly, she reprimanded Mike that he has already been told once today not to bring home peddlers, that she didn't want to buy anything. Apparently, a few moments before I entered their home, a peddler actually paid them a visit. In those days it was a common sight for peddlers to carry their merchandise in suitcases of various sizes, strapped to their backs. As they would pass thru the villages and visit homes, mischievous children made attempts to ride' on their backs. At this point I entered into the conversation and said: "Maybe you will buy something from me?"

My aunt (by marriage) took a good look at me and said: "Aren't you Andy's son Joe?" I replied: "Indeed I am Andy's son Joe." After the customary embraces, she offered me a chair as her four sons (Mike, John, George and Joe) encircled me and took my suitcase. The time now was about two o'clock in the afternoon, and traditionally on a Saturday afternoon the Russian housewives from our area in the old country baked "Pankusky" (a type of donut) for the weekend. As she stepped aside, I just kept looking at the coal stove in their kitchen -- an iron box with a fire in it -- something I have never seen before. It was quite a contrast to what we had in our hiza to cook -- a pahrutok. My aunt loaded a plate with her pankusky and urged me to help myself. Not having anything to eat since morning, and traveling all this distance under a hot July sun, I could have done justice to the entire batch but modesty indicated that maybe these are for some doing they have planned and I should be mindful of good manners. She urged me to eat more but I politely refused and asked for a drink of cold water. I never had a drink of good cold water since I left home. She told me that they do not have good drinking water but in the cellar they have some cold milk. Uncle kept a cow as was the general practice among all the Slavs. This was

their source of milk, butter, cottage cheese, cream, and buttermilk. The drink of cold milk sure hit the spot after those freshly baked pankusky and the kind that I was accustomed to eating at home. The aroma of the deep-frying process which greeted me when I entered their kitchen was enough to give me a hearty appetite.

At the time, my uncle John was not at home. He was at the nearby cemetery of the Greek Catholic Church in Punxsutawney. He was the cemetery custodian and grave digger. The sons immediately rounded up their father and word quickly spread thru the neighborhood that a "Greenhorn" just arrived from the old country and is at the John Grisak home. In a very short time a crowd gathered made up primarily of relatives and former inhabitants of Slovinky. I was bombarded with questions from all angles asking about kinfolks in the old country. The arrival of a new immigrant was the best source of information in those days. Many of the people asking questions were unknown to me since they left Slovinky long before I was mature enough to remember.

Uncle John immediately asked me the embarrassing question whether or not I had lice on my body and in my clothes. I told him that I was clean and had no lice. Being afflicted with lice in those days was not too uncommon among the immigrants. He told me, in a fatherly manner, not to be embarrassed, that when they came to America they brought plenty of lice which they picked up on the trip. He ordered me to go into their shanty where they cleaned up after a day's work in the coal mines, and take a complete bath and change into their son Mike's clothes.

By this time my father's brother Mike, his wife, and son Mike, came to welcome me, Also, my father's sister Anna, who was a widow at the time, came to see her nephew. She had a son and a daughter that were adults and living on their own. Her married name was "Slajfer." Aunt Anna was the oldest of the three, uncle John was next., and uncle Mike was the youngest. When uncle Mike welcomed me, he laughed saying that he saw a "Greenhorn" with a suitcase wandering thru the alley by his coal house. He lived in a company house in the section of town referred to as "Anglicky Place."

Uncle John, in the meantime, told his son Mike: "Here is \$10.00, go into the, wholesale house and order two four-gallon kegs of beer and one quart of "Spiritus" (Whiskey). If you meet the beerman on your way, send him here right away." Apparently, every Saturday a beerman made his rounds, with a horse-drawn wagon loaded with kegs of beer, to quench the thirst that faithfully developed each week-end. And, to add to the comfort of the inhabitants of Horatio, there were two breweries located in town.

Very shortly, son Mike came back with the beerman and they unloaded two kegs of beer which uncle John ordered, and one keg which was ordered by uncle Mike. The total cost for the three kegs and one quart of spirits amounted to four dollars. For supper we had fried meat (a treat for me) and kept conversing and drinking. Both of my uncles quizzed me about the suit I was wearing. They told me that I did not come to them direct from the old country, that I must have been working somewhere else in America by the looks of the style of my clothes, I told them that men now wear these kind of clothes in our villages Finally, they agreed that father has been to America before and knew how to outfit me for this trip.

We kept on feasting and drinking far into the evening and when we went to bed I became sick at my stomach during the night, since I was

not accustomed to their type of diet. It was necessary for me to get out of bed and relieve my stomach on the outdoors. In the morning I became embarrassed over my actions during night. Both aunt and uncle consoled me that it was a blessing that I relieved myself otherwise I would become sick. They assured me that this was very common among the immigrants who come to America eating unaccustomed food like that served on the ship, and drinking water with different mineral contents.

The next day was Sunday, July 15th. Uncle John's boys went to town to go to church and uncle John and I went to the cemetery which was about a seven-minute walk. At the cemetery, uncle and I said our prayers at the foot of the Cross. There were other people also saying prayers who did not go to church. Uncle John continued to give me a run-down on conditions in America and we discussed everything in general.

After we had our Sunday dinner, we spent the afternoon finishing up the drinks that were still left from yesterday's feast. Groups of people came over to get information on their kinfolks in the old country. This gave me a good opportunity to make many acquaintances. However, my thoughts were always directed on getting a job so I could start working soon. Uncle John kept consoling me to be patient, to rest up a little, that they will find me a job.

To occupy my time, I went picking cherries with uncle's sons where we gave half to the farmer and kept half for ourselves. I got along splendidly with uncle's sons but when their conversation drifted to the American language, naturally I was lost. They kept referring to me as a "Greenhorn" and I interpreted this to mean that they are calling me a derogatory name. But, it was explained to me that it was a custom for the newly arrived immigrant to automatically be bestowed the designation until such time a later arrival replaces you, then he carries the torch.

On the third day uncle John took me to see the mine where he and his sons worked. It was the same No. 6 mine that I passed on my way to Horatio the previous Saturday. Inside the mine conditions were strange to me and quite different from what I was used to. Machines were used to undercut the coal seam and the coal was pulled out of the mine by cable. After working three days at this mine, I told uncle I would like to work there because working with coal was much easier than working with ore where we had to drill holes into solid rock for blasting with dynamite. Uncle discouraged me from getting a job at the No. 6 because that mine worked only 2 and 3 days a week and I should get a job so I could work every day. I told uncle I would like to get settled near by so I could attend church services on Sunday to which I was accustomed. Also, I explained to uncle that I came to America on borrowed money from my father and I would like to pay it back as soon as I could.

We selected a day when uncle wasn't working and made a tour of the area looking for a job. About four miles from Horatio, traveling over farmland, we came upon a little farming community called "Frostburg." Below this town, about a 15-minute walk, were two farm houses where two Russian families lived. One family was from the Sariska Stolica in the old country by the name of "Stefan Firment." And, the other family was from our village by the name of "Macko Kropinak." I learned that his wife was a distant relative of mine on my mother's side. They once lived at Horatio and still owned a house near uncle's home, and he worked at the Horatio mine at one time. A short distance from the Kropinak's house was a small coal mine called the "Klondike" and it was owned by the B.R. & P. Railroad. Both Kropinak and Firment worked at this mine.

In our conversation, Mrs. Kropinak said that now would be a good time for me to get a job at the Klondike mine because her husband needs a buddy. She promised to discuss this with her husband when he came home from work that evening, and, if it looked promising, they would get in touch with me. I was encouraged that maybe I will get the job as her husband's buddy.

As we kept on our way down the valley from Frostburg, uncle led me to the town of Walston. This was a large coal mining community, a large coal mine, a big wash house to wash the coal, 750 coke ovens lined up on both sides of the valley, etc. This operation was also owned by the B.R. & P. Railroad. As we kept on our way thru Walston, uncle pointed out items of interest. He was a good conversationalist and I learned a lot from him on this tour. Finally, we came to Klevir where uncle's daughter Mary lived. She married a young man by the name of John Tushim.. This was a happy moment for me to meet my first cousin Mary. She graciously prepared a delicious meal for us since it was already in the afternoon and needless to say, we were hungry after all this traveling.

When we left the Tushim home, on our way we stopped to refresh ourselves at a tavern. Uncle wanted to treat me to a glass of beer but the bartender was quite adamant and refused to serve me that I was under the legal age of 21. Uncle knew the bartender and eased the situation by explaining that I was already 23 years old and he would be responsible for me. I was rather fair complexioned and did not appear to look my age. On my later visits, the bartender recognized me as John Grisak's nephew and I had no more problems.

#### MY FIRST JOB AT THE KLONDIKE MINE

The next Sunday, which was July 22nd, Macko Kropinak, on his way from the Punxsutawney church, stopped off in the afternoon at uncle John's home. He called to inform me that if I want to work, I can have the job as his buddy. He was an elderly man with a big mustache and a large beard. I did not know him from the old country. and obviously, he did not know me. I told him that I indeed would take the job as his buddy, that I came to America to work.

I began to make immediate preparations to accompany Mr. Kropinak to Frostburg. I packed my suitcase, and uncle's sons rounded up some unused miner's clothes and a pair of shoes that saw better days. On our way over the farm lands to Frostburg, me with my suitcase in hand, Mr. Kropinak kept quizzing me about everything and everyone in Slovinky. He was a very kind gentleman and very talkative. The next day with a borrowed miner's dinner bucket containing bread, meat and tea, we got an early start to go into the mine to clean up some slate so the machinemen could do the undercut. I was boarding at the Kropinak home which made it very convenient for me.

The working hours at the mine were from six in the morning to six in the evening with an hour for lunch. The operating practices at the mine were such that the coal cars were hoisted onto the tibble by cables where the coal was weighed. Inside the mine the vein was 4 to 5 feet thick which was considered a good seam for mining. The coal cars were of the one-ton capacity. We were paid 33 cents a ton. The coal cars were removed from the rooms by a driver and mule. Black powder was used to blast the coal from the face. A blasting cartridge was formed from newspapers shaped over a wooden rod, placed in the blasting hole, tamped with bug dust, and ignited with a squib. It was necessary for me to learn all these new mining methods but gradually I was getting on to

their mining practices. Mr. Kropinak was a very good and patient instructor. My biggest drawback was the American language. At times I would laugh at myself when I later thought about it. In America everything was like it was in my village. That is, the cows mooed the same; the chickens cackled the same; the roosters crew the same; the birds sang the same songs; and, yet I was unable to converse with people -- they communicated differently. You had to live thru this to appreciate what I am trying to convey.

My friends kept asking me how I liked America so far, but they kept referring to me as the greenhorn. I had a job but the pay was small. At times it was no coal, at other times the cutting machine was broken, etc. On my first pay I drew \$10.00 for two weeks work, and my board with the Kropinak family was \$10.00 a month. This was very reasonable for board but the fare wasn't the best.

Since I wanted to attend church services on Sundays like I did back home, it was necessary for me to buy some new clothes. I still had about \$16.00 left that I brought with me to America. Consequently, on an idle day at the mine, Mr. Kropinak accompanied me to Punxsutawney to a store that he knew was reasonable in prices. I bought a fairly good suit for \$6.00; a hat for \$1.00; shoes for \$1.50 that squeaked which was the style at the time; 25 cents for a necktie; \$1.00 for two shirts; and, resulting from Mr. Kropinak's bargaining technique together with my status as a greenhorn, the storekeeper threw in a pair of socks with the shoes and two handkerchiefs with the suit.

With this new wardrobe, I was now outfitted in the prevailing American style of dress. Every Sunday someone from our house went to church with me where I met various people since the entire area around Punxsutawney had a large Slav population. And, on occasion, uncle's sons would take me for Sunday dinner to their home. But, it was very difficult for me to forget the old country for about two years. It seemed that during the day I was in America but at night in my dreams I was in Slovinky. Homesickness probably was the best explanation.

#### MULE KILLED IN COAL MINE

In the very early days of my employment at the Klondike mine near Frostburg, my buddy and I had a misfortune in connection with our work one afternoon. On occasion, when we were working the pillars which were located on an elevation, the driver gave us two cars for loading. When we loaded the two cars we were attempting to send them to the lower level. In our attempt, the first car began gathering momentum and we were unable to check the speed. The general practice in these situations was to place a sprague (wooden block) into the spokes of the wheels to retard the speed. This we were unable to do in time.

In the meantime, a driver was delivering an empty car in the entry. Our loaded car struck the mule that was pulling the empty with the driver seated in it, and broke the mule's leg. The driver, fortunately, was not injured. Consequently, the company had to destroy the injured mule. Following this unfortunate incident, I was filled with apprehension -- now what? We destroyed a company mule. What is the company policy governing this type of accident? I turned to my buddy and asked him what the policy was. He said we either pay for the mule or lose our jobs. I asked my buddy what a mule costs in the event we have to pay for it. My buddy replied that it could be anywhere from \$75 to a \$100. Jokingly, I told my buddy that I haven't even earned that much money and I already will be forced to buy the company mules.

Being curious for more information, I paid a visit to the workers in the next place who happened to be Russians, and told them what my buddy said. They started to laugh knowing the shy nature or my buddy as being afraid of everything out of the ordinary course of events. They told me that the company has plenty of mules and that the accident was unavoidable under the circumstances.

Following the accident, we all had to go home from our territory in the mine because there was no one to pull our cars. And, in a very short time, the entire mine learned of our accident and the story began circulating that two Poles killed a mule. I told my buddy that it was good that they blame two Poles instead of two Russians. My buddy told me that I won't be joking when we lose our jobs or have to pay for the mule.

When we came home earlier than usual that afternoon, my buddy who was afraid of his wife, didn't even go into the house at the outset. My landlady began asking me why we came home so early. I was trying to formulate an explanation as I smiled at her. She said that maybe things went favorably for us when she saw me smile. I replied that they did go good, but if she only knew what happened. At the time she was kneading dough for noodles for supper and paused to ask more seriously what really happened. I told her we killed a mule in the mine. At this point, Mrs. Kropinak began wringing her hands and wailing as she went outdoors to her husband and began scolding him that there goes his pay and mine. She labeled him as a fool of all fools, that why didn't he use a block of some kind to retard the speed of the car if they couldn't insert a sprague into the spokes. My buddy tried to explain to her that we didn't even have a block to use.

In those early days when the immigrants were working at the coal mines, the women had very little housework to do to occupy their time since they lived in company houses and the company took care of many chores. In order to occupy their idle time, the women would assemble and discuss the jobs of their husbands in minute detail. They would relate to each other an account of the kind of place the husband worked in; when the machine would or wouldn't undercut her husband's place; the number of cars loaded; when and where a husband had a derail; they knew all the details but never saw the inside of a mine.

The next day my buddy and I went to the mine to see our boss if we still had a job. The boss told my buddy, who was the spokesman, that how can we have a job when the company doesn't have a mule to pull cars out of our territory, that we will have to wait until the company gets another mule. As my buddy related to me what the boss told him, I consoled myself and my rather timid buddy, if that is the case, our fears are over. Consequently, we didn't have to pay for the mule and didn't lose our jobs. My buddy paid a visit to the mine everyday to determine if the company acquired another mule for our territory. Finally, in about three days, the company was able to get another mule.

The house where I was boarding was out on a farm and it was rented from a farmer. Being out of touch with people, I became very lonesome. Here I was a young man of 23 with practically no social life but required to sit at home. On Sundays, there was nothing to drink at home to quench our thirst. After about three months of this type of existence, my buddy and I went to Walston and somehow managed to bring back a four-gallon keg of beer which cost us \$1.00. It was about a half-hour walk to Walston. Beermen made deliveries to towns but since we lived out on a farm, it was not profitable to make deliveries to two farm houses.

### PRESIDENT MCKINLEY ASSASSINATED

In the third month of my arrival in America, President William McKinley was assassinated. On September 5th, 1901, he delivered an address at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, N.Y. While holding a reception in the Music Hall of the Exposition the next day, he was shot twice by Leon Czolgosz, an anarchist, and died September 14th. The assassin was born in Detroit, Michigan, of Polish parentage.

News of the assassination reached us the following morning. A telephone call came to the Klondike mine as we miners, and drivers with their mules harnessed, were preparing to go into the mine for our day shift. Everyone became alarmed when told of the assassination and turmoil followed. The mining operations were cancelled for the day and we all returned home discussing the assassination. It appeared so strange to me at the time that it was so easy to kill the nation's President. I kept wondering what will be next? In the old country an event of this magnitude usually precipitated the mustering of armed forces, cancelling of maneuvers, etc., in anticipation of some type of unrest.

The same summer of 1901 the B.R. & P. Railroad began opening a new mine above the old Klondike. It was called the Frostburg Mine, and my buddy and I had high hopes of getting a job there. The two of us did lay track from the mine to the tipple at this new operation. The pay was \$1.25 for 10 hours of work. Following this, we did get jobs at the new mine. As more miners were being hired, some of them boarded at the Kropinak home. This made it more pleasant for me and dispelled my loneliness for company. The company began erecting shanty-type houses for its employees at the new mine, and soon it became a settlement. We continued to live, however, in the old farmhouse and the Kropinak family considered me as one of their klan among all the new boarders.

When I left the old country, I did not write a letter home from the waterfront in Bremen as was the custom. However, I did write after I got a job and enclosed the General Pass that I borrowed with my letter. The envelope was rather bulky and apparently it never reached my parents. Later, I was told that it was good that my letter containing the Pass got lost. However, in the meantime my parents were waiting a letter from me and I was waiting one from them. Three months passed and my parents became quite concerned whether or not something happened to me on the trip to America.

In the month of October my brother-in-law, George Malinak, who married my oldest sister Mary came to Frostburg from the old country. When we met, his first question was why I am not writing to my parents, that they are worrying themselves sick about me. I told him that I already wrote and also returned the General Pass. Immediately, I again wrote to my parents and explained what could have happened. My brother-in-law, in the meantime, got a job laying track to the new mine. And, shortly thereafter he received a job at the new Frostburg Mine mining coal.

Adapting to life in America was much easier for my brother-in-law than it was for me since he spoke fluent Hungarian and had some knowledge of German which gave him a wider area to make friends. He also became one of the boarders at the Kropinak household. Around the month of December my buddy Kropinak left Frostburg to work at Horatio and my brother-in-law and I boarded at the Firment home. After my old buddy left, my new buddy was my brother-in-law. At the Firment home we had up to nine boarders at one time or another, all were Slavs of various ancestral roots.

At our boarding house we would spend our idle time sitting around the kitchen table especially on Sundays. Some of the boarders played cards, some would entertain others with various clever tricks they knew, and others would write letters. The beermen would make regular stops. The penmanship of some of these men was of 'diplomatic' quality and something to admire. I hesitated to reveal my crude penmanship when asked to write. In those days handwriting was a status symbol. However, this set me to thinking why I couldn't have such a beautiful handwriting. So when I had idle time in the mine I would take my lamppick and practice writing on pieces of slate. I learned a lot from these experts and I began writing letters to everyone I knew. I also began doing arithmetic problems to advance my knowledge in that area as well. This experience convinced me the importance of an education which father encouraged.

The new mine at Frostburg was a drift mine with coal about 4-1/2 feet high. The operating practices were similar to the Klondike with the exception that drivers with mules were not used and the bottom had water but there were no hills. The workmen themselves had to position their cars for a motor to haul them away. Some of the workmen already belonged to the new union that was being organized as the United Mine Workers of America. But, it was not compulsory. Many of the Italian miners dug coal on a contract basis and made the undercuts by pick rather than machine.

On one occasion, while my buddy and I were working a midnight shift on a breakthru, we had a very unpleasant experience. As we pushed the loaded car of coal, my head came in contact with a 250 volt overhead power line used for motor trolleys. As I was wedged with my back against the car and my feet against the ties, my head touched the exposed wire. My buddy George Malinak tried to tear me away but he also received the charge. Since he was knowledgeable as what to do, he jumped away and with a dry coat pulled me away also. We both were stunned for a time but resumed working and being more careful of the overhead power lines.

After working a few more hours, my buddy wanted to spend the rest of the night sleeping in the boiler house but I refused in fear of a boiler explosion. As a result of this experience, my back was very sore and scarred with bolt marks as I was positioned against the car when the contact was made. Since my buddy and I were dissatisfied working at this new mine, he quit and went to Walston to work where he had friends. I made up my mind to stay until about spring during which time I worked with strangers for buddies.

On December 19, 1901, I joined the "Sojedenenija Lodge," Cislo 79, in Horatio where both of my uncles were members. In February of the following year I was able to return the borrowed money for my trip to America. I had \$50 saved from my earnings and I borrowed \$30 from uncle John and sent the \$80 to my father. At the prevailing rate of exchange at the time, father received 200 Zlaty. This took care of the borrowed money and interest with 40 Zlaty for father to help out with the family finances. Having fulfilled this obligation, it was a relief and gave me a sense of independence.

About the middle of March the following year (1902) which happened to be during the Great Lent prior to Easter, I made up my mind to go looking for a job so that I could earn more money. The big question, obviously, was where should I go. Changing jobs was common in the area as word would get around. Coal companies advertised for miners in ethnic lodge newspapers. Jobs were available in Alabama, Colorado, Illinois, Montana, Ohio, Wyoming, West Virginia, Canada, etc.



#### WORK AT THE VINTONDALE MINE

As I made it known that I was looking for a new job and one that I could earn more money, it so happened that my uncle Mike at the time was working at Horatio and he also was thinking of changing jobs. The work at Horatio was very slow and he had no property to keep him there. Uncle Mike's son Mike, who was younger than me, and Mike Slifka were interested in changing jobs about this same time. Slifka was a brother to uncle Mike's wife, Hazel. I knew him in the old country.

Since we were all in agreement, I accompanied them to Vintondale in Cambria County. The train fare from Punxsutawney to Vintondale was about \$3.00. At Vintondale uncle Mike had friends who put us up temporarily. Uncle Mike and his son got jobs immediately. Uncle began working on tracks, and his son got a job in the mines as a driver. Since my friend Slifka and I were unable to converse in American, we asked uncle Mike to come with us to see the boss. We also asked his son, but they both told us to go ourselves that the boss will be able to understand us.

Since friend Slifka was in America over two years, he understood American to a degree and acted as our spokesman. At first glance, the boss sized us up as workers and not merely drifters. He asked us from what town we came to Vintondale. Slifka understood the question and was able to reply. He also told the boss that the Mike Grisak he gave a job to was closely related to us. The boss asked to see our hands. Seeing our calloused palms, he told us to report for work in the morning. We were pleased with our interview and happy that we got jobs even without an interpreter.

Inasmuch as the language was my number one problem at the time, it is interesting to note that when a family first emigrates, it will first change its habits of lodging, then clothing, then language. The last link with the old country that remains even for generations is the food it eats, the way the food is prepared, and even its psychological role during religious observances. Obviously, the language barrier was a major handicap to the early immigrant coming to America. The immigrants with a Slav ancestry, especially in the coal mines, related to each other as brothers since they could converse and make themselves understood. It must be recognized that the immigrant brought his skills and intelligence with him but the language was about all that he didn't know. However, divisiveness in religious persuasion and ancestral birth began to appear with the arrival of the educated class who, as a matter of course, followed the peasant. This generated animosity among us Slavs.

Vintondale was a much larger and more beautiful town than Frostburg. It had a postoffice, a company store, three taverns, and three operating mines owned by the Vinton Coal Company. Uncle Mike brought his family to Vintondale from Horatio and they lived in a company house. They took Slifka and me as boarders. My friend and I got a job at the No. 3 mine. We did day work for a few days at \$2.00 for a 10-hour shift until the boss found us a place in the mine. The process of removing coal was far more modernized when compared to the Frostburg operation, and the working conditions were much more favorable. The drift mine was dry with a hard sandrock top. After we got on to the operations, my buddy and I were able to earn more money. Since the vein was four feet thick, we were paid 37 cents per ton. Mules were used to position cars.

Since Slifka and I were both eligible bachelors, our attempts at socializing with young people were constantly being ignored. Everyone kept referring to us as greenhorns even though there were many other

more recent immigrants. We noticed that the young people that were born in America and those who were in the country for any length of time, conversed only in American among themselves even though their native language was spoken in the home. The young ladies refused to dance with us at social gatherings. Also, eligible young ladies were very scarce since most of the immigrants were young men. A young lady 16 to 17 years of age was already receiving proposals for marriage and exploring the prospects for the best catch -- a handsome man who had money.

The language problem and our immigrant status also reared its ugly head at uncle Mike's home where we boarded. We paid \$15.00 a month board which was just fair and we were constantly antagonized by his son. Subtle remarks about Slifka and me as to our dress and manner of conducting ourselves in town would enter our conversations. The only thing he had going for him was being able to converse in American. Also, uncle Mike's daughter Mary, who was about 16 years of age would ridicule us in front of others. This all made Slifka and me very upset. Their guidance would have been more appreciated than ridicule.

Finally, the two of us talked it over at work and decided that even if we were so closely related, we have no obligation to board with them. I already had about \$75 saved which uncle Mike's wife kept for me, and Slifka had about \$200. The time of the year was approaching fall, and my buddy asks me if I was to confession this year. I told him that I had no opportunity to go so far. lie said that we should give it some thought since he wasn't to confession this year either.

As a matter of general interest, that same summer (1902) a new settlement called "Wehrum" was developing below Vintondale. A large mine was put in operation with coal washing facilities, etc. Company houses were being built as well as a company store. Also, in another nearby area, another new mine was put in operation. Work was plentiful but it was all non-union. You were required to deal in the company store by means of a coupon book valued from one cent to a dollar. Your purchases were limited to your earnings at the mine. However, these restrictions did not apply to our status as boarders.

#### WORK AT THE DUNLO MINE

Since my buddy and I decided that we must go to confession, it was necessary to select a suitable nearby church and to set a date. There was a Catholic Church in Vintondale but no church of our persuasion. We agreed on a date of September 27th, which was our Orthodox holiday "The Elevation of the All-Holy and Life-Giving Cross." My buddy suggested that we go to Johnstown since he worked in that area at one time. I agreed to his suggestion. The train fare was around \$1.50. After we charted our course there and back, we told our boarding-lady who was my aunt by marriage and Slifka's sister, that we are going to Johnstown.

As we traveled on the train, my buddy was making plans where we would sleep since we started a day before the holiday. He had a brother at Bench Creek and he worked there and also at Dunlo. But he thought that we should go to Dunlo that there are more friends and countrymen at Dunlo. While at Dunlo, Slifka boarded at a friend named "Pete Libertin" who was from our village of Slovinky. Pete had been in America for some time. We had. to change trains at South Fork to go to Dunlo and when we arrived in Dunlo, we quenched our thirst at a tavern then proceeded to go to the Libertin home where Slifka once boarded. The Libertins lived in a section adjacent to Dunlo called Lanfer. Following an exchange of greetings at the Libertin home, the customary questions that followed were directed to establishing kinship.

It was finally agreed that I was related to the Libertins but very distantly which was insignificant as long as we were related or that our cows pastured in the same meadows. After the Libertins wined and dined us, they asked what brought us to Dunlo. We told them we are going to confession tomorrow to Johnstown since it was our holiday. This was a Friday, and they told us that on Sunday a priest from Windber is coming to their hall to serve Liturgy, that we can go to confession then. Also, we were told that a neighbor of mine from the old country was having a child baptized. I was invited to attend the christening. The new arrangement was agreeable to us and we had no polite way to refuse all the hospitality showered upon us. We agreed to stay over the weekend.

The festivities following the baptism were held on Saturday where I met many friends and countrymen. They all tried to persuade us with one thought, that we remain in Dunlo and not go back to Vintondale. It was pointed out that a new mine shaft just opened up and we will be able to get jobs. As the christening celebration was tapering off, I came home to the Libertins about 11 o'clock that evening, and my buddy turned in about 2 A.M. The next morning on our way to the hall where services were to be held, Slifka asks me if I was under the weather the night before. I told him that I wasn't entirely sober either. He admitted to me that he was quite intoxicated when he turned in.

Then he asked my opinion, in view of the unplanned circumstances, whether or not we should go thru with our plans of going to confession. I told him that I wasn't going, that it would be a bigger sin if I went. When we came to the hall where the services were scheduled, we learned that the priest already left. This gave us the excuse we looked for.

Upon the insistence of our friends, the next day we went to the mine where Slifka knew the boss from previous employment. The boss, without hesitation, immediately hired us; our friends, rounded up the necessary mine tools; and, the next day which was a Tuesday, we started to work. My buddy told me not to worry, that he will teach me since the working conditions were a little different from my previous experience.

The job appealed to both of us and we had many friends in the area. It was all pick work and we were paid 66 cents per ton. At this point my buddy tells me to go back to Vintondale to get our mining tools and our trunks. Here it was less than a year and I am already changing jobs again. We agreed to split the expenses and his earnings while I was gone. He said he would like to go also but his sister would not let him leave and that I was a smooth talker and could handle the delicate predicament we were in.

When I stepped into uncle Mike's home, my aunt immediately asked about her brother. I told her that Mike was working at Dunlo and I came for our belongings that I have a job there also. It made uncle Mike angry that we told them we were going to confession but actually went looking for work. After I explained to him what transpired, he agreed that everyone should do what is best for themselves. However, their son Mike was quite upset about our leaving Vintondale.

On Thursday morning I went to the mine to get our tools. After I had everything crated, uncle Mike's daughter Mary was my interpreter at the train depot. I sent the tools and one trunk by Adams Express, and one trunk with my ticket. Friday morning I left Vintondale and when I arrived in Dunlo my buddy and a delegation of friends were at the station waiting for me. They shouldered the tools and trunks and headed for Lanfer. Slifka admitted he was worried that I would get lost.

### EARLY DAYS AT DUNLO

The Dunlo community was a prospering area. There were six coal mines operated by three different companies. It was all non-union work. The town had five taverns and one warehouse for intoxicating beverages. The Slav population in the area had their own hall where they held lodge meetings, dances, etc. I transferred my lodge membership from Cislo 79 in Horatio to Cislo 91 in Dunlo of the Sojedinenija. My buddy also transferred into the same Cislo at Dunlo from Vintondale. I bought myself a lodge cap that the brethren wore on specific occasions, and also a large lapel emblem. The Cislo at Dunlo had about 125 members which was considered a large unit. Slifka and I both boarded at Libertins.

After becoming a member of the Dunlo Cislo, I began attending their social affairs, their lodge meetings, and also funeral services when a brother died. Even in the mine I was greeted by lodge members as a brother. This made me very happy as I broadened my acquaintanceship, and the thought went thru my mind that maybe I will finally settle here.

The area around Dunlo was heavily populated with Slav immigrants from the Carpathian Mountains. And, it was very surprising to me to learn how many of these were actually from our village of Slovinky, and had been in America for quite a number of years. It was necessary for us to go to Windber on a train to attend church services. The priest at Windber was Father Damachin Polifka. In addition to special needs, he also held services once a month at our hall in Dunlo. In the event of a death in Dunlo, burial was at the church cemetery in Windber. The Dunlo parishioners paid a monthly assessment to the Windber church.

Church rituals for christenings and weddings were conducted according to practices in the old country but the social festivities were by American style. That is, socializing for christening-s began on a Saturday evening, and for weddings they began on a Saturday morning. Young single men and women attended many of the christenings but in our village only the elder folks attended. At christenings it was the custom to collect one dollar from each person each day who attended.

After about a month at Dunlo, I received a call to serve as godfather for my friend, John Uhrin, with whom I was a cowherd in the old country and had that trying experience with tobacco while pasturing cows. Friend John and former neighbor with whom I grew up in the old country was in Dunlo for sometime prior to my coming there. I served as his godfather to their first child who received the name of Mary at baptism.

The time of year was approaching Christmas and I hadn't fulfilled my Easter obligation of confession during the Great Lent. My buddy Slifka and I talked it over at work in the mine and came to the conclusion that since the priest was coming to Dunlo to hold Divine Liturgy and a memorial service for the lodge brethren, we will go to confession. The Dunlo Cislo held an annual service on St. Michael's Day, November 21st, who was their patron saint. Our first attempt, with all good intentions, at confession was a complete failure, but we fulfilled our obligation at this time.

Since Christmas was only weeks away, I thought it to be a nice gesture to send something to my parents for the holidays. Work was coming along very good and I had a little money saved up. To my two sisters, Ilona and Katherine, who were now of marriageable age, I sent each a silken handkerchief thru the mails. And, just before Christmas I sent my parents \$17 which gave them something more than 40 Zlaty.

At Christmas time the taverns in Dunlo gave each good customer a pint of whiskey and a big cigar. Each landlord received a dressed turkey from the company butcher shop which was operated by the Henrietta Coal Company. Our boarding lady, Mrs. Libertin, prepared a big meal for us for Christmas and we all contributed a dollar for the liquid refreshments. When we sat down to the Christmas Eve Holy Supper, a custom we all followed very religiously in the old country, a prayer was to be said. We both, Slifka and I, looked to the man of the house to offer the blessing. He tried to talk himself out of it. Then we turned to his wife, she likewise made up excuses. Since neither of them could say prayers, Slifka and I came to their rescue. This incident did not come to me as a complete surprise because my buddy told me in the mine what to expect. The Libertins, two adults with eight children, were unable to say prayers.

After the Christmas Eve Supper, my buddy and I sang the Christmas Hymn for our boarding friends and their family, and then went caroling to our neighbors who invited us to sing carols. These neighbors were from the Galicia Province and showed us their religious books and told us they also know the carols that Slifka and I sang. When we returned home, a group of card players were sitting around the table playing for money, with a keg of beer on tap. They invited us to join in. My buddy accepted their invitation. To me it did not appear proper to play cards for money on this religious evening. However, after being referred to as cheap and not drinking, I joined the group rather reluctantly.

As time went on, the landlord's son served the beer. All of a sudden about 11:30, an argument arose over the money in the pot. My buddy claimed that there was more in the pot. After I counted the money, it was less than he claimed. This infuriated him, and as he emptied his mug of beer, for some unknown reason, struck me over the head with the empty mug. When I saw that blood was coming from my head, and in defense, I struck him with an empty pail over his head that was on the table.

Then the landlord attacked by buddy, the instigator, and a fist fight followed between the two, resulting in torn shirts. No attempt was made by the other card players to stop the fight. However, in due time everything subsided and we went to bed. My buddy and I slept on the same bed at the time. I kept thinking to myself, what is this that happened to us? Is this the way to observe Christmas?

The next morning as we got up, no one said a word about yesterday. I went to pay a visit to my hmoter, John Uhrin. After I recited the customary Christmas greeting. I asked them to remove the matted hair on my head and to dress my wound. Being alarmed, they asked me what happened. After I related the details, my hmoter tells me to go away from there as soon as I can, that my landlord picks fights with all his boarders, and that he also had a fight with him when he boarded there. He told me that all you will see at that home is gambling and drinking.

When I returned, my landlady had the two torn shirts, the broken mug, and the bent pail, assembled as evidence that she was going to have us arrested. I told her to put the evidence away that she may go to jail herself, that gambling is not permitted in many company houses such as they live in. At this point everyone started talking and making excuses to free himself of any guilt. My buddy began apologizing to me that he was drunk at the time and did not know what he was doing. I told my buddy we can forgive one another but where is our pride and self-respect. The admonishment of my father when I left home to conduct myself always as a gentleman, became more meaningful than ever following this unpleasant incident. And, my card gambling came to an abrupt end.

#### FATHER PASSES AWAY IN 1902

One day when the mine wasn't working at Dunlo, the miners were assembling at their popular hangout to idle away the time and especially to keep out of the kitchens of their landladies since most of the miners were boarders in various homes. This hangout was located in a wooded area near town and was referred to as the "Skalka." The miners would entertain themselves by bowling, rolling dice, and if the weather was favorable, they would toss horseshoes on the outdoors. It was a custom for the tavern keeper to treat all the men to a glass of beer twice a day -- once in the morning and once in the afternoon. The losers at various games would treat the winners, etc.

I was idling away the time at this miners' retreat when my hmother's brother-in-law, Joe Sladek, who lived with the John Uhrin family, approached me and asked whether or not I received a letter from the old country. I told him that I did not. Then he said: "Your father died in the old country." This left me speechless as we both stared at each other. Then Sladek repeated: "Yes, your father passed away." I asked him: "How do you know?" He replied: "Today we received a letter from my mother in the old country."

I immediately went to the home of John Uhrin to see this letter. When I arrived at their home I asked if they received a letter from the old country. They replied that they did. I asked if there was anything new. They replied that here is the letter and asked that I read it for myself. I began reading; the letter and when I came to this part: "Today funeral services were held for hmother Andrew Grisak," I quit reading and was convinced that father passed away.

Upon returning to my boarding home, my landlady, Mrs. Libertain, asked me why I am so sad. I told her that I just found out that my father passed away in the old country. As she tried to console me, I kept thinking what to do now. Father just passed away and there are nine children left, they will need help at home. I have been in America less than two years and just paid my passage. Maybe I should go back home but it was a struggle for me to come to America. I am now 2 years old and should be thinking about getting married and settling down to a family life myself.

In the meantime, I kept going to the post office every day in anticipation of receiving some notification from home. It was difficult for me to eat and sleep thinking and speculating as to what happened to father. Maybe it was an accident in the ore mine at Kliperk where he worked. Finally, on the day of Epiphany, January 19, 1903, I received a registered letter from my folks in the old country. It was a very sad letter indeed, outlining circumstances evolving the death of father. He was laid up for two weeks after developing a severe case of pneumonia and passed away on December 2, 1902. There was no possible cure for his recovery. Father fulfilled his religious obligation of the Last Rites by the church and died at the age of 52. The funeral services were quite elaborate inasmuch as he belonged to a local lodge. Mother asked in her letter that I notify all the relatives in America. I wrote a letter to every known relative that I could think of giving details of father's death.

Immediately following receipt of this letter from mother, I wrote back asking what debt was incurred due to father's death. They wrote that there were only minor items of expense amounting to 30 Zlaty. I sent mother \$20 which amounted to 50 Zlaty in their money and wrote her

to pay all the bills and to be sure to have the children attend school. At the time, mother had two cows and calves. She received 100 Zlaty from the lodge in which father was a member. Also, the friends and neighbors of the family made her a donation. At the time sister Ilona who was 20 years old, and Katherine who was 18, were working and staying at home with mother which was a big help to her until the boys grew up. Brother Andrew was 13 at the time of father's death, sister Julia was 11, and brother John was 9 years old. The other three children -- Hazel, George and Susan -- were much younger. Brother Steve, who was born after I left home (whom I never saw) was just a few months old when father died.

I was convinced that I could be more useful in assisting mother with the family if I remained in America rather than going back home. Then, as the children became of age, especially the older ones, to assist them to come to America in search of a better life. And, as one settled in America for them to sponsor the next child.

Thus, as our Grisak family continued to migrate to the new world, history was repeating itself -- leaving one ancestral home in the Kiev regions of Russia an untold number of years ago to settle in Spiš County of eastern Slovakia. Then, branching out from that ancestral home initially during the later part of the 19th century to come to the Americas.

#### CONCLUSION

Based on genealogical information handed down thru family circles, it can be concluded with certainty that the roots of our branch of the Grisak family are traceable to early ancestors (predky) emigrating from the general area of the city of Kiev in Russia, to work in the ore mines in eastern Slovakia. This conclusion is based on the fact that "ot Kiova" was among the gleanings constantly laced into conversations when the subject was discussed at family gatherings.

As to a date of timing of this migration one must think in terms of a continuing process possibly covering many years and comparable to that of the Grisak family migrating to America when history began repeating itself. However, it can be speculated with a degree of certainty that as the mining of ore deposits across the Carpathian Mountains in eastern Slovakia were expanding, our ancestors began leaving the family nest in Russia (possibly a life of agriculture) to seek new horizons.

However, our branch of the Grisak family tree is reliably traceable to about the year 1820, to one George Grisak who distinguished himself for military bravery, built the family homestead in the Furmanec Valley of Slovinky, was critically injured in the local ore mines, and died in a hospital in the city of Spisske-Podhradie where he was buried. He married into the Troyan family and to this union the following children were born: George, Andrew, John, Mike, Anna and Julia. His son George and daughter Julia remained in the old country while sons John and Mike and daughter Anna came to America and made their home in Pennsylvania.

As this history is being compiled it was possible to develop fairly complete family trees from available information only for two sons of this George Grisak: Andrew and John -- for George, Mike, Anna and Julia, information is being compiled and family trees are pending.

The son Andrew (father of Joseph around whom this history unfolds) came to America on two different occasions and returned to his native Slovinky where he passed away in 1902. His first wife was Katherine Mofljar and to this union were born: Mary, Joseph, Anna, and Ilona -- one child died in infancy. Upon her death he married Anna Djorko to which union were born: Katherine, Andrew, Julia, John, Hazel, George, Susan and Steve. The following is a brief account of each child:

MARY (1876-1929), the oldest daughter of Andrew, married George Malinak. The wedding was held in the Grisak homestead in Furmanec. coming to America, they originally established themselves in Pennsylvania and later moved to Robins (Trail Run), Ohio. He also worked in coal mines around Mt. Olive and Christopher, Illinois. However, most of their lives were spent in Gary, Indiana, where he worked in the steel mills. Both she and her husband are buried in Calumet Park Cemetery in Merrillville, Indiana. Their one daughter Helen is presently living in Garland, Texas.

JOSEPH (1878-1950), the oldest son who made this history possible, after coming to Pennsylvania in 1901, he married Mary Mnich in Horatio. She was from Slovinky and came to America to marry Joseph. To this union the following children were born; Nary, John, Joseph, Michael and Andrew. The family moved to Robins (Guernsey County), Ohio in the spring of 1910 where he worked in the coal mines and did farming to a degree. He passed away on March 16, 1950, and is buried in the Russian Orthodox Cemetery in Robins (Upper Trail Run).

ANNA (1880-1977) and her husband George Rebar were married in the Rebar home in the Zakut Valley in Slovinky. They came to Robins, Ohio, from the old country. To this union the following children were born: George, Joseph, Anna, Michael, Mary, Steve, Helen, Julia and Olga. They spent their lives in Robins, and are buried in the Bethlehem Cemetery in Robins (lower Trail Run).

ILONA (Nellie 1882-1974) came to America thru arrangements made by her oldest sister Mary and her husband. She came directly to Robins where she married Steve Uhrin who was a native of Slovinky. Young Steve and his brother John and two sisters were orphans in the old country. To this union the following children were born:

John, Steve, Nick, Andrew, Joseph, Nellie and Mary. Later the family moved to Newton Falls, Ohio. Ilona and her husband are both buried in Newton Falls, Ohio.

KATHERINE (1884-1965) was married in Slovinky to Michael Morris (Maras). The wedding was held in his father's home. The father was a sedlak and lived in the village. The young Morris, before coming to America, assisted his father cultivating their land. From the old country they moved to Belt, Montana, where he worked in the coal mine. Later, the family moved on a ranch in Augusta, Montana. To this union the following children were born: George, Ellen, Mary Fern, Katherine, Pauline, Michael and Fred. Both Mr. and Mrs. Morris are buried in Helena, Mont., Forestvale Cemetery.

ANDREW (1889-1956) as a young man migrated to Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada. He married Mary Zemany who was born in Lethbridge. Her parents were John Zemany (1866-1932) and Julia Rebar (1872-1934). They both were born in the old country and were married in Spangler, Pa. The following children were born to Andrew and his wife Mary: Helen, Lucille, Hazel and Annette. They both are buried in the family plot in St. Patrick's Cemetery in Lethbridge.

JULIA (1891-1974) was married to Steve Daymut in Slovinky. The wedding was held in his parents home in a section referred to as "Hrady." He came to America first, was drafted into the American army during World War I but was released on account of not being an American citizen at the time. Julia came to Robins directly from the old country with their oldest son Michael who was born in Slovinky. Their other three children - - Steve, Andrew and Olga -- were born in Robins. Both Mr. and Mrs. Daymut are buried in Greenwood Cemetery in Byesville, Ohio.



JOHN (1893-1957) came to America thru arrangements made by his oldest brother Joseph. He worked in the coal mine in Robins and married a local girl by the name of Amelia Sabol. The wedding was held at his brother Joseph's home in Robins with whom he lived for a short time. To this union the following children were born:

Amelia, Helen, Margaret, John, George and Carl. He is buried in Bethlehem Cemetery in Robins (lower Trail Run).

HAZEL (1895-19 ) was married in Slovinky to George Uhrin. While bathing sheep she caught a severe cold from which she never recovered and died in the first year of her married life. They had no children. She is buried in Slovinky.

GEORGE (1898-1970) was married in Slovinky to Anna Mizikar and came to America in 1926 thru arrangements made by his brother John. He lived in Robins for a while then worked at different locations. Finally, he moved to Newton Falls, Ohio, where he established

himself on a farm. When he came to America his wife and children remained in the old country. After World War II he brought his wife to America. After his death in Newton Falls, she returned to Slovinky where she died shortly thereafter. Born to this union were the following children: Steve, John, Helen and George. He is buried in Newton Falls, and his wife is buried in Slovinky.

SUSAN (1900- ) married Andrew Chipkar in Slovinky. To this union the following children were born: Andrew, Michael, John, Mary and Susan. They are presently living in Slovinky.

STEVE (1902-1948), the youngest of the children of Andrew Grisak, was married in Slovinky where he passed away. He never came to America. He married into the Kalas family and to this union the following children were born: Mary and Steve.

POSTWEDDING PHOTO - Joseph and his bride (Mary Mních) were married on Saturday, November 21, 1903 (Feast of St. Michael), in the Greek Catholic Eastern Rite Church of Punxsutawney, Pa. The wedding ceremony was performed by the Rev. Anthony Michlejš. The Matron of Honor (Svaska) was Mrs. Mary Tushim, and Starosta (Elder) was Joseph Djorko -- not shown in above photo. The wedding celebration was held in the home of Uncle John Grisak in Horatio. When the dancing got under way, it was necessary to relocate the festivities to another location to avoid collapse of Uncle John's floor.

Seated in photo (L.to R.): Alice Grisak, daughter of Uncle John who married Gust Bellot; Mary, the bride; Joseph, the groom; and, Nary Grisak, daughter of Uncle Mike Grisak who married Julius Uhrin. Standing in rear: Mary Vargo, a friend; Mike Grisak, son of Uncle Mike; Mike Grisak, son of Uncle John; and, Anna Grisak, daughter of Uncle John who married Mike Sakash.

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