

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DSCHAAKF AMIL.- Y

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For the Dschaak: Family Reunion

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In honor of our visiting Cousins from Germany

And to pay tribute to oUr beloved Dschaak Ancestors
on two continents

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DSCHAAK FAMIL., Y

In order to record for posterity the story of the Dschaak family, I will do my best to write down that which I have knowledge of. Each individual family will have to fill in their own information and traditions that cannot be included in this over-all picture. I am now one of the "older" generation, even though there are older cousins than myself who are living and who will have pieces of this puzzle tucked somewhere in their memories. But there are so many of us, that is impossible to get every known fact recorded to everyone's satisfaction. So, of necessity this will be an overview that can be placed along side each family's own personal records, and hopefully each family will proudly keep these stories alive for those coming behind us.

As an introduction, I am the 7th of the 11 children of Henry and Frieda Dschaak. I was born on Dec 27, 1942. I began doing research on my family lines, all who were Germans from Russia, when I was 20 years old, which means I have been at this for over 40 years. Several of my sisters joined me in this joyous, but puzzling research at various intervals in the following years, first Nelda, then Sandie and Evelyn, and then Vera, who has done much of the microfilm reading in the past ten years; so it is a joint project. You might say that "genealogy" became my middle name, inasmuch as I was not given a middle name at birth, it would be appropriate CUmru .. "Jenny Genealogy" doesn't sound too bad)!

At the beginning, the then still living older generation were either not able or not willing to supply a few scant clues to this search. Some could not answer my English letters as they only spoke/read German. A few said they had no information. I learned years later that many of them illtd conditioned themselves to answer as little as they could as they had felt ashamed because of the two world wars, to either say they were German or Russian. Our own mother told me that even though their small country school was taught by a German man, and all of the students were German; that he had to punish them if they spoke German while at school. Our mother was born in 1910 in Mercer County (where most of our families lived), and so you can see the era I am speaking of. Back to my story: One day an answer to one of my letters came that brought the break-through! It was dated January 25, 1963, from Christ Ost of Beulah, North Dakota. He was the son of Gottfried Ost and Wilhelmina Boeshans, the oldest brother of our own grandmother Louisa Ost (Jacob) Dschaak (or Barbara "Vahra" Ost Dschaak if you descend from Peter Dsehaak, since brothers married sisters). Christ Ost who sent the letter was born in 1895 in Russia, and he died in January, 1965, just two years after sending me the letter that started unraveling the answers. I will always be grateful for his efforts. In his very broken English writing, he wrote down the names of his Ost Grandparents .and aunts and uncles. He also sent a funeral card from his Aunt Fredericka Ost Stohler from the year 1954. In that card it listed her birth place as: Basseiribin, Kloslitz, Russia (Germanized Spelling) on Sept. 24, 1863. I was transfixed! Here was a place name, the first I had ever seen or heard about, even though it meant nothing to me in terms of where it might be in that huge, mysterious country of Russia. I was attending Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah at the time, and they had a genealogical research library. I asked an attendant to help me find any records from Russia on Microfilm. They only had one microfilm from Russia Territories back in those days. She showed me how to

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load the microfilm and wished me luck. There were several strikes against me finding anything. First of all, there were scant records on this film, mostly from Jewish settlements. A few Russian cities had some of their records microfilmed; church records and civil records from various time periods, hit and miss. The biggest draw back was it was all in the Russian language. A needle in a hay stack! Dead end!

As I rewound the microfilm back onto the spool, I noticed something that interested me. Areas of Russia were listed alphabetically in English by the person who did the filming. I saw the title of "Romania" on one of the title pages and thought it odd that Romania would be listed with Russia. Little did I know that often in the history of Romania, her boundaries shifted to belong to Russia, depending on the wars. I also did not know at that time that "Basseirbin" was actually the area called "Bessarabia" which shifted between Russian and Romanian borders through history. This area is north west of the Black Sea. Knowing nothing of this the night I was reading the microfilm, I was still prompted to scan the area of the film marked "Romania". There was an index of towns and villages, in very odd spellings that meant nothing to me. But. ... there it was, a village that had almost the same spelling as the "KIolitz" of Great Aunt Fredericka. It was off by one letter ... could it be this KIotitz in Romania (not Russia) be one and the same? I asked the attendant to order in the microfilm that held the records for this village, and then waited for a week or more for it to arrive. The night that I came to the library to view that film will forever be etched into my mind. Even though I could not read this record because it was in German, I still knew in my heart I was onto something because it WAS in German script and not Russian. I scanned unfamiliar headings and documents and was getting eye strain from an hour or more of staring at the screen as I turned the handle page after page. I told myself to just look away at the wall so that my eyes could find relief, which I did. After a few moments, I set my hand once more to the handle of the machine, but was awe struck as I read what I had stopped on. Although I could not read the German text, I could see plainly the names of Christian Ost and Carolina Wolt, married 23 June, 1860 in Klostitz, Bessarabia, Russia. If I had not gotten the names of these Great Grandparents just months before from Christ Ost, and the place name on the Funeral card, I would not have been able to recognize the information I had just found. I knew without a doubt that this information and way in which I stopped reading to rest my eyes was the direct hand of the Lord, as I know that He directs all of our affairs and supports and answers our prayers for assistance. I know that He wants us to have success in finding our ancestors so that we may honor them and be families forever in the eternities. That night I was floating on a cloud, and continued to search that film for many other records and to have pictures photo copied of those records to leave a lasting legacy. The Ost family began to come together through the months and years, but the Dschaak family was harder to unravel, even though two Ost sisters married two Dschaak brothers somewhere in Russia, but I could not find them there. I also began having much success with a couple of other families on my mother's side. However, this particular history is about the Dschaak family, so I won't digress. There is so much more to this story.

In 1964, when I spoke with a German genealogy specialist about my problem of ancestry from Russia, I was told that I just was not going to have any success. But I then told her of finding the Bessarabian German Colonies in the Romanian section which now lay within the Russian Homeland. The library was excited and stunned that this had been overlooked, and changes were made to include these records under Russian headings. They were lost records up until then. Here is another miracle. In investigating how this particular area had some records microfilmed, it was determined through the catalog file number, that these villages (perhaps 20 villages of German colonies within Bessarabia) were the only ones out of possibly 3000 German colonies to have been microfilmed by the LDS Church. Another interesting fact was that they were microfilmed in Berlin, Germany shortly after World War II, where they were stored in archives for safety. They had arrived in Berlin in a most heart rending way. During World War II, the German Army had advanced into Russian Territory, what we now refer to as the Russian Front, and here they found German Settlements that were still in existence, even though those who were still alive were under extreme hardship, they liberated those Germans to return to Germany. It will be noted that the area of Bessarabia was reached first, and German colonies located further into Russia were not reached before the Germans were pushed back. For those who were liberated, it was a great and arduous trek. They took their church records that were still intact with them. How these records survived after that to arrive in Berlin, I do not know; but what I do know is that those same German settlers were sent back to Russia once the German's lost the war, and most of their fate is unknown to us. To remember why there were all these German Colonists in Russia in the first place, we need to go backwards in time to 1763, when Catharine The Great was on the Russian throne. She had been a German Princess before her marriage to Peter who was Czar at that time. She was a strong ruler, and saw the benefits of having Russia's extreme south and eastern borders settled by people she could trust, to be a buffer between the lawless tribes that lived beyond those borders and to farm and to make productive those outlying areas. She issued a manifesto to the Germanic countries to colonize the vast borders of Russia, with the condition that they would never have to become Russian Citizens, serve in the Russia Armies or teach Russian language in their schools. That epic story is now well published for any who would like to learn more. But at the time I began my research, it was little known about; almost having been lost in history. Many German speaking countries responded and thousands immigrated to Russia in various waves to different areas of colonization. Predominately, those families I was doing research on entered Russia after 1800. But shortly before 1900, after 100 or more years of thriving colonies, things in Russia began changing for everyone, including our German ancestors. The German colonizers were being forced to serve in the military and other freedoms were being taken away. For those of us born in America, we have our particular grandparents to thank for leaving Russia when they did. The Ost family (Christian and Caroline who I found the marriage record for) came over early, in the 1890's, and settled in Krem (named after the Crimea), Mercer county, N. D. Their married children came at different times, and the last ones were Louisa and Barbara who were married to Jacob and Peter Dschaak. Theirship records say that they left Eupatoria, Crimea, Russia; traveled to Hamburg, Germany where they sailed on the ship "Armenia" and landed in Novia Scotia, Canada on 19 November 1902, destination, New Salem, North Dakota where they had family to receive them (actually New Salem was a jumping off place, not where the Ost family was living). The Osts and the Dschaaks

all homesteaded in Mercer County. So the American Dschaak connection began there. The mystery to me was that we had located all the Ost children, including Lousia and Barbara in Klostitz, Bessarabia, yet the ship record said the two Dschaak marriages left from the Crimea. How did the two sisters meet and marry two brothers in the Crimea when the Ost family lived quite a ways north west above the Crimean Peninsula? It has never been totally solved, but we do have some good insight after years of digging. When grandfather Jacob Dschaak died in 1952, in Mercer County, the names of his parents were listed on the death certificate as "Peter Dschaak and Elizabeth F eetz". Those were the only clues for quite some years. All of our sources dried up, so I continued searching other lines of my Germans from Russian ancestors who had lived in the Bessarabian area and who remarkably had their villages microfilmed. This still strikes me with such force that those were the villages our families came from. No coincidence. In the 1970's another remarkable thing happened. A group of farsighted individuals in Colorado and Nebraska (where many Germans from Russia had also settled, mostly those from the Volga River Colonies), began an organization called "The American Historical Society of the Germans from Russia" or AHSGR. Their first address was in Greeley, Colorado, but they are now located in Lincoln, Nebraska. About 5 years later, another organization was formed in Bismark, North Dakota that represented more of the North Dakota German's from Russia, who had come mostly from The Bessarabia and the Crimea. My brother Leonard had written to me about the AHSGR after someone had told him. What a boon! It was just starting and they only had a few hundred members, unlike today where they are numbered in the thousands! Nowadays, it is wonderful to tell people that we are "Germans from Russia", and many achievements are credited to these remarkable ancestors of ours who have added so much to the homesteading and farming techniques of the west. The sugar beet industry is one of these areas.

In writing to people in the AHSGR, I told them of the villages in Bessarabia that had been microfilmed but almost lost to the world. They were so excited and these microfilms then became known to any of our heritage who were interested, and the research was like lighting a match to prairie grass! It took off. That still did not help find our Dschaak family however, but I did get several leads. One of the charter members of AHSGR was a very educated man who taught German at the University of Indiana. His name was Professor Joseph Height, and his family had also come over from Russia. He is the one I sent the list of microfilmed records to, and he in turn helped me so much with understanding the colonies in Russia, and in particular understanding some things about our Dschaak name. I am enclosing a copy of two of his letters in this brief, because he wrote it better than I could try to rephrase it. Because of his help, we now had a lead that the Dschaaks may have immigrated from the Danzig, Poland area into Russia, but no lead as to what year or what area in Russia they settled. This lead came first from a now out of print publication of the pioneer settlers from Germany to Russia. That initial small book was later enlarged upon and became a very noted work of over one thousand pages by Dr. Karl Stumpp (now deceased), entitled "The Emigration From Germany To Russia in The Years 1763 to 1862". Dr. Stumpp was born in 1896 in a German Colony near Odessa, Russia. He got his Doctoral Degree in Tubingen, Germany, and his dissertation was on the German Colonies in the Black Sea region. He spent his life researching and compiling lists and records of the those who

inunigrated to Russia. He is called the "patriarch of the Gennan-Russians" In his book there was a listing for a Martin Schaak from Steegen/Danzig, but with no year or place of colonization. In those early days we had no proof of anything, but in the late 1970's I had checked out films from the Danzig area and did find families there with the "Dzaak" spelling. For future reference to document my search, I did make photocopies of some entries and handwrote down others, though there was no way to make a connection yet.

In the early 1990's an exciting chapter in Russian research began, which exploded the knowledge we now have about the Dschaak Family. With the disintegrating of the USSR, the LDS Church was given permission to microfilm records within Russia, and in St. Petersburg where the Church records of the Crimea and other areas were kept. To make a long story short, as soon as we were aware of this, we searched those records and discovered with great excitement that the Dschaaks had indeed settled in the Crimea! And now we know the rest of that story (though not every detail). There in the Village of Neusatz, Crimea, we found not only the marriage of Peter and Elizabeth Fietz Dschaak, but most of the births of their children. It took a lot of piecing together, but that generation is nearly complete. With these records being made available to the general public (in old Gennan script), there was another piece of the puzzle that we had kept on the back burner that we could now also fit together. In the year 1978, my sister Vera and I made a trip to Mercer County and visited some of our Dschaak Aunts and Uncles. Aunt Barbara, the oldest child of Jacob and Louisa Dschaak, let us tape-record her talking with Uncle Bill. It was all in German conversation. We sent that tape to the North Dakota Historical Society of German's from Russia where a great lady, Alice Essig, transcribed it. Some of it did not mean much at the time because we did not know the people or places she was speaking about. Oh how I wish we had asked more! As I said, we kept that on the back burner, and then two years ago (April, 2002) we got the famous email from our cousins from Russia who are now living in Germany. Actually, the email came to my nephew Larry Dschaak, brother Leonard's son. He and his wife called me because they knew I was into family research, and forwarded the email to me! After 100 years of separation, and over 40 years of research, our family has come full circle and much of what happened is being fleshed out. Now, when we add what our dear German cousins know, even though they did not have tangible records except for their Grandfather Heinrich Dschaak's marriage certificate, mingled with the records we have, it is a story about which it is worthy of having a novel written. It is tempting to continue to talk about our living family members in Germany at this point in the story, and what has happened since our families were separated from each other in Russia in 1902, but in order to stay with the sequence of events, I need to go back to the recently microfilmed records out of St. Petersburg, Russia.

I must give great credit to my sister Vera. She and her husband Vern (now deceased), were spending their winters in Salt Lake City since Vern's heart transplant there in 1993, and so they spent time at the Family History Library doing research. I was able to see them there a couple of times a year and it was exciting to join forces in doing the research. Vera was so instrumental in finding many direct family as well as collateral, and then I was later able to work them into the jigsaw puzzle of our ancestral family.

In the records for the German Village of Neusatz in the Crimea, for the year 1863, we found the marriage of two brothers, Peter David Dschaak (Dzauk in that record) and Elizabeth Fietz, along with Martin Dzauk and Christina Steblar. So now we had the documented proof of our Great Grandparent's names and village in which they were living. We did not know when they arrived, from where, or if the Dzauk and Fietz families knew each other before their Russian homesteading experience.

The information that we had put on the back burner, given on tape by Aunt Barbara Dschaak Miller was also fleshed out. Barbara had named Dschaak aunts and uncles, but no dates, and so it had been guesswork as to order of birth. But it did not take long (a year?) to find the births of Peter David and Elizabeth's children, and of course when we did, we put it together with Aunt Barbara's information and found how correct she was. Now we had proof of birth of all of them (the first two died as infants), except for the last two she mentioned, Heinrich and Wilhelm. The family may have moved to another Village before the last two births, and we will keep looking. There was Louisa (Lisa), Johana, Jacob, Peter, Karoline, Heinrich and Wilhelm. The fact that she had recalled these Aunts and Uncles who she had not seen since she was eight years old was amazing to us, especially in her advanced age. We only wish she and other of our Aunts and Uncles could be alive now to be a part of all of this. But somehow, I know they are aware even though they have left the earth, and we, their children are here to reap the blessings. They must be celebrating with us, and maybe they even may have helped orchestrate all of this!

In those days, the minister or priest who did the recording often spelled names phonetically, so we looked for and found the name Dschaak spelled "Jauk, Jaak, Schaak, Dzaak, Dzauk, Dzauck and our current spelling of Dschaak. The various spellings were even used within the same Parish record and with births from the same parentage! We had pretty much put together the families of our Peter David Dzauk and Elizabeth Fietz, and Martin Dzauk and Christina Steblar, but we could go no further back until we found the birth and parentage of our Peter David. We had guessed at his birth date based on when he was married and going back 21 years (to 1842), but there was nothing in the Crimean records in which we were searching, even going backwards and forwards give or take a few years. A major breakthrough came when we found the death date of Johann George Dzauck, dying at age 27 1/2 years in Neusatz on 31 Oct 1875. Subtracting his age from his death date, we recognized that he could be another brother of our Peter David. The death information stated that he was the son of Michael Dzauck who was a Prussian Soldier from Neukrugerkampe. So we immediately looked for microfilm from Prussia (which is now Poland) and to the old lead we had of the Dschaak's coming from the Danzig area. And there we hit the jackpot. Danzig was like a City/State in West Prussia, and within that was the region of Steegen, where the village of Neukrugerskampe was located and where the Dschaak family came from. Listed in the Steegen area were many villages that kept their records together since they were only miles apart, and those villages intermarried with each other. Going through the records for Neukrugerskampe we were looking for the birth of Johann Georg around 1847 because he was our first solid lead. We did find him, a couple of years off, in 1845, but that did not concern us as he had died in Russia and was born in Prussia, and there obviously had been some guesswork there. Now we had the parentage for him of Michael Dzaack and Renata Muller. We

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later found the parent's full names to be Johann Michael and Dorothea Renata Muller. But we needed to find our own Peter David's birth before we could prove that this was one and the same family. We had estimated that Peter David was born in the year 1842, but happily and surprisingly found him born to Michael Schaak and Renata Muller on 3 Dec 1834. So Peter was 29 years old when he was married, 8 years older than our estimation. After that, it didn't take long to find a total of 9 children born in this family, all in Neukrugerskampe, Steegen, West Prussia. In Aunt Barbara's taped conversation, she had told us that the name of her Papa's grandmother was Miller. Again, allowing for the "umlaut" in pronunciation, she was correct! So we had another family surname to research. We began adding more surnames and going back further and further until at this point (summer 2004) we are back to the mid 1600's with our family still in the Steegen/Danzig area. The main Parish the records were found in was Tiegenort, and some of the families also lived in Tiegenort, as well as other small villages near by. Before we go much further with the Dschaak lines, I should tell you that we have not yet found the birth or parentage for our Great Grandmother Elizabeth Fietz. We have some leads about the spelling of her name, as we have misspelled it as F etz in our first records. We also do not know what year the three Dzaack brothers left Neukrugerskampe for the Crimea in Russia. Nor do we know if others of the family were with them. We know they were all married after they arrived in the Crimea, so they were fairly young men when they left their homeland of Prussia. Did their parents travel with them, or did they stay behind and die in Neukrugerskampe? According to the Parish records of the Steegen area, many other Dzaaks (Dzaack) stayed behind because records of families with that name continue on into the late 1800's (and probably into the 1900's, but we stopped looking because our immediate family was then living in Russia). We often wondered if we might still have family there as of this date: There are other family names of concern as well; Duwensee, Muller, Rohlandt, and Gadjarhs. It would take another story at another time to tell you why we are fairly certain that none by those names *exist* there now (in today's Poland). But perhaps I may tell it later in this history.

The Prussian/Poland connection is an ongoing search. How and when did our families come to be there and from where did they come? We have an educated guess based on historical facts. Remember the letter from Joseph Height in 1970? He said the French name Jacques was germanized into Dschaak (and various spellings) during the days of the French Huguenots. A little history lesson tells us that the Huguenots were contemporary with the Lutherans in Germany. They were members of the reformed church and followed the teachings of John Calvin. They may have gotten their name from a man named Besancon Hugues who was a Swiss Religious leader. In the mid 1500's they became a large and influential political group but were persecuted more and more by the Catholic government. In 1572 the government began the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day in which thousands of Huguenots were killed .. Even though some Huguenots fled France, they did not leave en masse until around 1685. Holland, England, America and Prussia were the places they settled in. The City of Berlin was the capital of Prussia, and there were more Huguenots there than any other place in Prussia/Germany. Most were craftsmen or textile workers. With that as a background, we suspect that our Dschaak family were Huguenots. I would take another educated guess that they settled in Berlin in the early

1600's before moving further into Prussia to the Baltic Seaport area of Danzigi Steegen. You can see by a map that Berlin is not far from Danzig (200 miles?). Neukrugerskampe was a barrel making camp just a few miles from the Baltic Sea.

This brings me to the most exciting part of our drama; back to the year 1902. What happened to our grandparent's brothers and sisters in that fateful year when they separated with a continent and an ocean between them? With two World Wars involving Germany and Russia, and knowing of the inhumane treatment the Germans in Russia had received, were any of them still alive? And if they were alive, were they assimilated into the Russian culture or did they retain their German language and heritage? A story had been handed down that the last letters that our grandparents received from them, they were living in Siberia, and then the correspondence stopped. I had just assumed until a couple of years ago that the rest of the Dschaak family stayed in the Crimea when Jacob and Peter left for America, and somehow were later sent to Siberia, even after Aunt Barbara had said, "Papa's father died in Siberia ... we were here three years, then his father died".

, In 1978 when we talked to Aunt Barbara she said " .. Papa's father died in Siberia .. we were here three years, then his father died". (That would make it 1906). After some questioning and translating, she continued .. "Yes, I can recall them all, but with the oldest one, Johann, I was never well acquainted. I can remember a little, he was once with us. He was such a strong, stout one. Grandfather (peter David) was just like Heinrich - so dark. Uncle Johann was the same; but Papa, Uncle Peter and Heinrich were larger. The girls also. The oldest was named Johann, the second was Papa, and then was Peter - after Papa. Then was Heinrich, then was Wilhelm. Wilhelm was- he died very young. Him I never knew, he was already dead". At the beginning of the tape she talked about Aunt Lisa (Luisa) and her boys, Jacob and Peter and a girl named Maria, they got to Germany.

You will find the typed transcript of Aunt Barbara's conversation very interesting and I am still picking out bits of information that make the picture clearer as time goes on. It was hard knowing what she was saying in German at the time, and so the questions Vera and I asked may have interrupted her flow of thought. But we did the best we could at the time with the information we had. I can still see her standing outside the doorway waving her white handkerchief goodbye as we pulled away in our car. One brief connection, but it will live forever in our hearts. As a side-line, you will notice above that she mentioned Uncle Johann, saying " I remember a little, he was once with us". And in her detailed narrative she mentions not knowing what happened to him. I have a partial theory that I will bring up again later on.

Two years ago, in April, 2002, I got a phone call from my nephew, Larry Dschaak and his wife, Alice. Their question: Do we have Dschaak relatives in Germany? They had received an E-mail from a Peter Dschaak from Hamm, Germany, looking for relatives who immigrated to Canada. (Our grandparent's ship had landed in Canada from Hamburg, as mentioned earlier). I do not know the process over the internet by which Peter found Dschaaks in America or how he picked Larry. After we became acquainted later on, Peter told us that his teenage daughters told him it

wouldn't work, but he was determined to try and bravely sent out a message across cyberspace. All of Heaven must have been urging him to do it; it was no coincidence that he found his target.. Larry forwarded the E-mail to me that same evening, and that same evening I emailed Peter Dschaak in Germany. We were indeed the family he was looking for!! His Grandfather Heinrich was brother of our Grandfathers Jacob and Peter. Even though we had not found a birth record for Heinrich in the Crimea, it was just as Aunt Barbara had said, there was a Heinrich and a Wilhelm as well! Who can ever prepare themselves for such a moment? You just pray that you keep your senses about you and praise the Lord for the Miracle! When I mailed our records over to Germany, they were overwhelmed. They did not know anything past Peter David and Elizabeth Dschaak; where the Dschaak family came from before the Crimea; nor anything about Jacob and Peter Dschaak's families here in the United States after 1930. But they kept us alive in their family traditions and stories, so it was natural to want to seek us out at the first opportunity.

Here is their story the best I can tell it for our current purpose: I can never do justice to all they have lived through in Russia in the last 100 years. They themselves must write that story and I hope we all will become acquainted with it for ourselves and our ancestor's sakes. I will give the information that I do have. After finding the name Dschaak spelled in various ways, I was very pleased and surprised to find that they also spelled it the same way we do, especially after so many years in another country. They mainly spoke Russian, but they kept their German name and traditions intact. Today, almost all living members of our Dschaak family that lived in Siberia are now in Germany. Family by family they left Siberia in the early 1990's after the Soviet Union disintegrated. So two miracles were happening simultaneously: they were leaving Siberia, which would lead to them to find us, about the same time as their/our family records were being microfilmed in St. Petersburg, so we could join our families records as well as meet each other! It is also powerful to think about the fact that about this same time, my sister Vera was placed in a position to search these records in the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, on a weekly basis, which brings me to believe the hand of the Lord was in that timing as well. At today's writing, most of our family in Germany live in different cities, but they all stay in close touch. When they found us in 2002, there were two of Great Uncle Heinrich's (1878) six children still living. The oldest child, Karoline Dschaak Kuhn, born in Schilling/Omsk, Siberia, in 1907, was living in Bielfeld, Germany with a son and family, but sadly within a month after our first contact, Karoline passed away, and we are sorry that we did not get to know her. August Dschaak, the youngest, born in Schilling/Omsk, Siberia in 1923 lives in Sulzbach-Rosenberg (Bavaria) with his wife Luisa and their daughter Nathalia and her family. Nathalia's husband Waldemar is Russian by nationality and goes by the last name of Dschaak because it is less complicated in Germany. August is a very active, spry 80 year old who is a delight to know and to correspond with. He is so thrilled to know of us, and has many stories and memories to share. He is a first cousin to our parents, and wishes he were able to travel to the United States to meet all of us. August built the 3 story house that he now lives in by himself with a little help from family, when he was 75 years old. He truly is amazing. In August of 2002, August flew to Siberia alone, without Luisa (her health is not good) to meet with old friends and to go to the family burial grounds to put up a memorial to the Dschaak graves there. He had a video made that was sent to us, of that occasion,

and many of you have viewed a copy of that. It was a bitter-sweet trip for him because he knew it would be the last time he would see his place of birth and where he had lived for over 70 years, and where his parents and grandparents had settled and endured so much. Because things were so difficult for them, especially during WWII, they destroyed most of their documents and pictures so they could not be identified as Germans.

We owe such a debt of gratitude to Peter (our first cousin 1 time removed) for his efforts to find us and to be the go-between for us here in the United States and the family who are now in Germany. He has a real heart for finding family and has been working on the family records and has a CD for us in German Format which fills in the blanks of their family that we did not have. Peter is the Nephew of August, his own father Wilhelm died in Siberia in 1989. Peter and his wife Walentina were married in Siberia and their two oldest daughters Maria (18) and Anna (17) were born there. Sofie who is 8 this year, was born in Germany.

As I have already mentioned, around the turn of the 1900's, things were becoming difficult for the German Colonists in Russia, and many were leaving to colonize elsewhere; some went to South America, some to Canada, a few found their way back to Germany, but most came to the United States. Of course, the majority stayed in Russia for various reasons, usually due to lack of money. Often family bought out the farms of other family members to give them a chance to go. We had been under the impression that those of our family who stayed behind in Russia were sent to Siberia sometime after the Russian Revolution or World War I, like many other Germans, especially during and after World War II. But this was not the case with them. When we began corresponding with Peter, we learned that his Grandparents Heinrich and Anna Frederike Jekel Dschaak went to Siberia of their own free will, the same year that our grandparents left for America, in 1902. Russia was offering free land (15 hectares per adult male) for those who would be sturdy enough to make a go of it in an area near Omsk, Siberia. They settled in a village named Schilling. Leaving with Heinrich and family were our Great Grandfather Peter David and wife Elizabeth who were then in their 60's, as well as Great Aunt Karoline Dschaak Scheffer and her family. Peter and August suspect that Uncle Johann went to Germany, as well as did Aunt Luisa (Lisa). That is not clear. They do not know exactly what-became of Wilhelm, some say he went with Johann, some say he died (Aunt Barbara thought he died, too). Earlier I said I had a theory about Johann, and that theory is that somehow he came to North Dakota as well, but how, when and for how long, I don't have any idea yet. We have not found a ship record for him, but in the old Mercer County Cemetery records, there is an entry for Elizabeth Dschaak, wife of Johann Dschaak, buried in the Kronthal Trinity Lutheran Cemetery. Elizabeth died on 4 June 1902, age 36 years 9 months and 24 days. That means she would have been born in the month of Sept 1865. Our Great Uncle Johann was born in 1869, and even though that makes her four years older than he, the age difference is not a problem, quite common. The other reason I hang on to this theory is that in 1978, long before we even knew there was a Great Uncle Johann, Aunt Barbara said "Uncle Johann was once with us". The catch is that she died in Mercer County in June, and the other two brothers arrived in Mercer County in November of that same year. Did Johann go ahead to North Dakota, being the older brother, much like the Ost family had gone

ahead of the two Ost sisters who married the two Dschaak brothers? If Johann and his wife were in Mercer County, and being in their 30's, they likely had children. With his wife dying, did he get discouraged and leave? For where? Aunt Barbara said "he was once with us", so he must have stayed for awhile. Did he go to Germany? Aunt Barbara also refers to some trouble Johann was in before he left Russia, that is interesting; but what does it mean? Does anyone have any family traditions that have been passed down but almost forgotten that you can enlighten us with?

There is another surprise and one that is sad/hard to know about. Cousin August in Germany told us that in 1912 (before he was born, but his oldest two siblings were born) his father, our Great Uncle Heinrich, left his family in Siberia and traveled alone under much sacrifice to come to North Dakota to see his brothers and to see about moving his family here. I cannot even imagine that long trip alone, and the expense of it. To think of traveling about 1000 miles from the interior of Russia before even getting to Europe, and then to sail to America, just boggles my mind. I do not know how long he stayed, but he returned to Siberia determined to sell his farm and to immigrate with his family to North Dakota. However, he could not find anyone with enough money to buy him out. Before he could do anything more about it, other tragedies hit. His father Peter David had died in 1906 and his mother Elizabeth died in 1914, as near as they can remember without documentation. The Russian Revolution also began and the doors for immigration were closed to them. He then investigated moving to the German settlements in the Kaukaus Mountains, but according to August, as told to him by his mother, the people there were too harsh and loud and it cost more to live there. She did not like the cold of Siberia, but nevertheless, it became their home for over 90 years. In the early days they continued to write letters to our family in North Dakota, and they were not lost to each other even though they were on separate continents. This past summer (2003) my husband and I traveled to Germany to meet our family there, and Peter arranged a day when several of the families traveled to Cousin August's home in Sulzbach-Rosenberg and we had a very special gathering. Great Aunt Karoline Scheffer's grandson, Alexander Scheffer was there and he said that his grandmother wrote many letters to Uncle Peter in No. Dakota until about 1930, but under Stalin's government things changed and eventually no letters came back. He said that Great Uncle Peter in North Dakota was a very good letter writer. He also said the Scheffer family also wanted to move to America. It is such a sad story, they must have felt forgotten. This is a story that we have heard many times in our research, on other lines I am working on as well as stories from other "German Russians"; that letters and care packages stopped getting through to Russia. The Russian Government stopped the delivery of their mail or censored it. It is such a heart breaking story that Heinrich had made such a huge effort to relocate to America but time ran out and the door closed. Somehow this story did not get handed down to us in our generation here in the United States.. But they never forgot about us and we must not ever forget them, nor forget the blessings we have of being born here in America.

When we hold our Dschaak family reunion on August 6 & 7 (2004), maybe only be a handful of the Dschaak cousins will be able to attend. We have grown into a large family and counting the grandchildren and great grandchildren, there are now hundreds descended from Jacob and Peter here in the United States. When we visited in Germany, the numbers there are much smaller, but

we were privileged to meet quite a few. The very first day there, we met Peter's sister Irma, and she and Walentina cooked up quite a meal for us with a lot of the old German recipes. Later that day we met Peter's brother Wilhelm and his wife Nina, and Peter's mother, Maria who lives with Wilhelm and Nina. The next day we began a trip south along the Rhine River to see the famous City of Koln, and by day's end we reached the most beautiful city of Andemach on the Rhine, where another cousin Maria Djaak lives (she uses the old spelling). We spent the night at her home and will never forget her gentle nature, nor the charm of Andemach. Maria is the daughter of another of the six children of Great U nele Heinrich, whose name was also Heinrich, and who died in 1993 in Siberia. We also met her daughter Elana & husband Igor, and sons Thomas and Christian. The following day we arrived at Cousin August and Luisa's in Bavaria where we became acquainted with them as well as their daughter Nathalia, Waldemar and their son Paul. We also met a granddaughter of August and Luisa's, Maria Dschaak who is 21 years old and who lives with them when she is not away at school in Munich. She is the daughter of their son Arkadij who passed away shortly after they arrived in Germany from Siberia. When they held a gathering at August's home a couple of days later, we met another branch of the family that I have already mentioned, a grandson of Great Aunt Karoline Dschaak Scheffer, Alexander Scheffer, his wife Nina and one of their granddaughters, Ina. They drove a short distance from where August and Lusia live. But another young couple arrived who had driven a long distance that day to meet us. Their names were Valerian and Rosalie Kuhn, the grandson of Cousin Karoline Dschaak Kuhn (1907) who was the oldest of Cousin August's siblings, and who I mentioned passed away soon after our first contact. Valerian and Rosalie drove the equivalent of 300 miles from a town right on the Netherlands border to meet us, and then after a few hours turned around to drive home. They left two little children at home with other family that day, so they made quite a sacrifice. These were by no means all the family that are there in Germany now, but these are the ones that we had the rare honor of meeting and we once again give thanks to Peter and Walentina for making all the arrangements that made it possible. We also give thanks to August and Luisa for generously opening up their home to us and for the wonderful food everyone fed us. Our one regret was that our trip was terribly short, and it was so hard to leave these people after just making their acquaintance. I think they felt the same way, but it was all we were able to do at that time, and thank God as well as our German family for the privilege. Because this is intended to be a family history, I have tried to leave out the sights that we saw, unless it ties in with the importance of the family connection (that's hard). I will be writing a more detailed account of those experiences for my own children to keep with the photos.

Included in this history you will find some of the letters, documents and pictures that apply to our history; only a few because there are so many. Also included are pedigrees and a few family group sheets of the main families on our family tree. This will introduce you to Great Uncle Heinrich's family, Great Aunt Karoline (Scheffer), as well as notes on Grandfather Jacob and Great Uncle Peter. Cousin Peter's CD will have more complete information for his Grandfather Heinrich and their branch of the family; and the Scheffer family. I will include some of the older generations back in Steegen/Danzig. Hopefully, this will increase your desire to share this with your children/grandchildren and to begin your own research, not only the Dschaak line, but you

are each a part of many, many surnames/families who have all contributed to who you are, and are all begging to be discovered and known. Once you experience it, you will be "bitten by the genealogy bug" and will never be the same. Modern science has proven that our DNA contains Genes that have a memory of who we are and what those before us experienced. We truly are a part of who went before us!! Also, it is amazing to see the similarities between us and our German Cousins. We blend and fit in so very well, and even family resemblances.

I am in hopes that stories will be coming forth from our "Siberian/German" family in a written form to add to this history. Cousin August told us about how he met his wife Luisa during WWII while he was in a "hard labor camp" in Siberia, where she was also sent. She and her father had only recently been sent there (from the Black Sea area, then to the Kaukaus, eventually to Siberia), since her family was one of those that stayed in their colonies by the Black Sea until WWII. August, his four brothers and sister Karoline were all sent to hard Labor for four years, which left their mother alone. She sustained them with her prayers that they would return alive, which they did. However, she died before they returned, which was heartbreaking for them. Since his older sister Karoline was 16 years older than he was, she became like his mother figure, and they were very close until she died two years ago.

Under Communist Russia, the German's suffered immensely. They were expected to be a "godless" people, but their parents taught them about God in private, although they could not outwardly worship. They did not have formal religious training, or have access to the scriptures, but they still kept their faith alive. Before Karoline died in May, 2002, August was able to make a trip to visit with her and together they talked about the "old times". She was told that we had been "found" in America and she was thrilled. They talked about some of her earliest memories; how their Grandmother, Elizabeth Fietz Dschaak died, since Karoline was about 7 years old in 1914 and remembers the day it happened. Grandfather Peter David had been dead about 8 years (before Karoline was born), and Grandmother Elizabeth lived with her daughter Karoline Dschaak Scheffer (1876) and family. Great Aunt Karoline Scheffer had several daughters that cousin Karoline (1907) played with. She was at their home playing outside with the girl cousins, when Grandmother Elizabeth came *out* to the yard to gather up sticks to start a small fire to boil some coffee. She apparently had a stroke or heart attack out in the yard. She was holding the sticks of wood so tightly that they could not get them out of her hand and she was buried with the wood still gripped in her hand. What a memory that was! So our illusive Great Grandmother Elizabeth begins to become a real person to us. Then, later at Christmas this year a picture was sent to us that another of our cousins had in his family records. It could only have been Elizabeth Fietz, even though no writing was on the back to identify her. At the bottom of the picture (in Russian) it was translated to say the photographer was in Eupatoria, Crimea in 1902, which was exactly where our Jacob and Peter Dschaak left from in 1902. The woman appears to be in her 60's, which would be about the age Elizabeth would have been in 1902. We do not have any information on Elizabeth Fietz's birth place, date or parentage yet, but we estimate her birth date based on her marriage in 1863 and the birth of her first child (who died) in 1864.

We were also given a picture of Great Aunt Karoline Dschaak Scheffer with two of her children and a grandchild. These two pictures are very precious to us, as are some other more recent pictures of our relatives there in Germany. We hope you enjoy them as much as we do. We wish we had more pictures of our own relatives right here in America. We do not have a picture of Uncle Peter, but surely someone in the family does, and we would like to locate one.

I wish there was a way to tell you about another part of our trip to Germany with the depth of feeling that I have about **it**. I am very inadequate in my ability to portray it, but I am going to try, because I feel I owe it to the whole family to tell you about it. When we knew we were going to Germany, even though it would be for just a short two weeks; one of the greatest desires of my heart, besides meeting our family; was to see our ancestral home of Neukrugerskampe and Tiegenort, West Prussia. Looking at a current map, it seems to be about 200 miles from Berlin. Since it is also the ancestral home of our German cousins, although they themselves knew no more about it than I did, I got my courage up to present my desire to Peter (through Email). He is a very intelligent and capable man .. an engineer by training and quick on a computer. He took a copy of the map of "old Prussia" that **1** had sent to him, with Neukrugerskampe, Tiegenort and other villages on it, and figured out the latitude and longitude. He then got the corresponding towns in today's Poland (I don't think you could call them towns, even by today's standards .. very small dots in the road) and charted a course for us. To begin with, Peter, his wife Walentina and their three daughters, Maria, Anna and Sofie arranged a trip to Berlin for all of us, which was unexpected. We were able to see so many things that we had heard about in our history books, and visited some spectacular museums. My object here is not to give you a travelog of our trip, but to lay the groundwork for our adventure into Poland. After 5 days in Berlin, Maria and Sofie took the train back to their home in Hamm, while Peter, Walentina and Anna took Wilson and me into Poland (Berlin is close to the border of Poland). They did not know what to expect either. Because Peter had charted the course, we followed his excellent lead. Walentina had packed food, which saw us through the entire time, and we have some tender memories of our "roadside picnics", especially the one in a field when we thought a combine was going to run right over us! Now we affectionately refer to it as the "combine picnic"! We found Poland to be an impoverished country, and the highway we traveled on for the entire time was a two-lane road with a speed limit of 40 MPH (the kilometer equivalent), so it took us much longer than we planned. We dubbed it "the Polish Autobahn". It is a beautiful land, with many forests and fields dotted with many small towns. Modern (semi) equipment was being used in some fields, but in others we saw men working with old hand sickles, the same as for hundreds of years. The further north we drove, the thicker were the forests. Along side the road during one long stretch we saw people holding something out to get the attention of travelers. I thought they were snakes, but we stopped because Walentina knew they were smoke eel, a delicacy, which she bought one of and we divided for supper. Quite tasty and different. It was getting close to evening before we got to the area of our quest. Peter followed his map carefully and my heart was beating hard within me because I knew we were in the very area our family had lived in for so many years. But everything was written in Polish, and the names were all strange and confusing. There was no indication of what we were looking for. You can just imagine this scene. Peter and Walentina

speak German and Russian (Peter is learning a few English words), Anna speaks German and Russian and has learned English in school (thank heavens for the girls to help us, they speak English very well). Wilson and I speak just English and have learned how to say "thank you, please, goodbye, excuse me and where's the toilet", and we are all in a country that speaks only Polish! In my mind I imagined that since Poland was once Germanic Prussia, people would still be speaking German (somewhat), and I could still understand some German words, (I understand more than I can speak). Whenever Peter would stop to talk to someone, we would listen intently, and say, "what were they saying, were they speaking German?" The answer was often like this, "no, they were speaking Polish and I was speaking Russian". We would just shake our heads and wonder at the miracle of it all. Apparently there are enough similar words in the two languages that Peter and the other party could understand each other. Another false impression I had was that we would be driving through some cities with overnight lodging. The sun was setting and we were out in the country with no place to sleep. Peter was driving on these little roads with a farm here or there, and from my calculations we just HAD to be within a stone's throw of Neukrugerskampe or Tiegenort. Where were they, and what were their Polish names today? Would they be large enough to have a motel? Peter inquired at a farm about a place to stay for the night. He was directed back down the road and to take a turn in a direction away from where we had turned. We did so, right as the most beautiful sunset was displayed, and we found a spot in the road that had a motel called "Angela". This was so meaningful to me, as I felt an angel had directed our journey to this place. It was here that we shared the rolls, tomatoes from August's garden, and the smoked eel. After a good night's rest, we traveled back to where Peter had asked directions, a place called "Stobiec". But instead of stopping where he asked directions the night before, he kept driving onward further into the little village, where no one was around. He parked the car, without saying anything, got out and began walking around behind this empty building, which looked like it might have once been a church. He didn't understand the questions I bombarded him with, so I just jumped out and followed him. Obviously, as we discovered many times on our trip, Peter is a man who listens to his inner promptings. He kept walking through a grassy area, over a little board lying across an irrigation ditch and up an embankment that led to a quaint little home. Here he knocked on the door, and a lady came out. They talked in their usual Polish/Russian interchange and then he turned to go. What? What? I wanted to know. Peter said nothing, we walked back to the car, and stood there, trying to make sense of it all. At this time another lady came out of a house across the street as she had been watching us. Again there was a Polish/Russian conversation. I stood there transfixed, taking everything around me in and praying within me for some sign from God what to do, since this was our one and only chance to find our ancestral home, and we only had this day to do it in. At this very moment, while we all stood there, the first lady from the house beyond the irrigation ditch came walking from behind the building we were parked by. Without a word, she put something into my hand and kept walking. It was a book, a new book, with a title in the Polish language and as far as I could see, only Polish writing as a text. We got into the car and began to drive and Peter, through Anna, told us what he had found out: Both women he talked to were Polish. They both basically told him the same thing, that there were no German people around these parts, and neither had ever heard of a Dschaak family. The first lady had told him that Tiegenort

may have existed close by, but was no more, that if we drove across a canal bridge/road we might find a place it once was. Peter now was looking for that road. It was a mere path in tall grasses and weeds, but he found it and drove across the canal and saw a sign saying we were now entering a town called "Tujsk", which was just a few houses. Beyond that his instincts once more told him to stop at a farm with a very long old barn. He stopped and went into the barn where he found and talked with another Polish man, who then invited us to come into the barn. He told us that it was one of the few remaining "German" barns in the area.. There were pigs, which we watched while Peter and he talked. Then we loaded back into the car. The man had told Peter that there was an old woman living further down the road who had married a "German". Maybe she could help us. Meanwhile, I was looking at this book in my hands and marveling at what I was holding. Although I could understand nothing of the book, inside the back cover were two folded, in a separate sleeve, reproductions of very old maps of the area, one from 1811, and another from 1722. Everything was listed by its German name, right down to the smallest details, even the canals. There were all of our German villages, and as I studied them I realized that at that moment we were right in the middle of old Tiegenort! Stobeic and Tujsk joined together were once Tiegenort! Was this lady an angel? Who was she and after she walked away, where had she gone? I wanted to find her and thank her. There was nothing much I could say right then, because Peter found the house where the woman who had married a German lived, and he walked to her door and knocked. We again watched in fascination as she came out and stood at the gate with all of us, and again talked with Peter in a mixture of languages. She told Peter there were no Germans there any longer, but gave directions to the church where there was a cemetery, and maybe we could find some names of our family in that cemetery. Her own husband had died and she lived alone. We back tracked over the canal bridge that said "Stobeic", found the church yard, but were puzzled because it looked fairly new, not old like the rest of the town. We could only find Polish names on the headstones, and none of them were old enough to belong to our family. I do not believe any of them were later than the mid 1900's.

Peter is quite a match for us, he absolutely is determined when he sets his mind to things and has no fear of people or situations at all. He then went to the side door of the church (front was locked) and began knocking. From out of the back yard came a man who was a workman of sorts, who talked with Peter and then went to the little house beside the church and got the "priest", who let us into the church, and after a few minutes of talking with Peter (again in Polish/Russian) he went back to his house and returned with some photo copies of a picture of the original Church from before WWII, as well a copy of a map of the area with a large printed name of the town that said "Tiegenort"! He also gave us some other papers, and as I stood there, I literally had goose flesh throughout my body. This was the very parish that those microfilm records we had copies of originated! This very ground was where our family had attended church, although the original church had been destroyed during the war, and under communism had not been rebuilt until recently. And where are the graves of the old ones, we asked? The answer was a shock. Under a tree he told us, was a mass grave of the Germans who once were buried here. There were no names, just a series of short stone columns around the small area. Such joy, and such sadness. How grateful we were that we had reached the object of our

adventure into Poland, though we did not find the answers we had hoped for. Until that moment, we hadn't realized how thoroughly the area had been cleansed of the hated Germans after World War II, even though that had been their homeland for at least 300 years or more. This Parish Priest was another answer to our prayers. We had found all we could for now, so we were ready to leave Tiegenort to find Neukrugerskampe. Now we had a detailed map to show us where it used to be, as well as instructions from the Priest .. Could we contain another Miracle! Before leaving Stobeic/Tujusk, I asked Peter to drive back to the first lady's house so we could thank her, or if she was not there, leave some money with her for the wonderful, heaven sent gift of the book and maps. No one answered the door, so we put money (Euros) in a shoe at the back step with a note (in English), with Peter's address and our address in America, telling her thank you for the great, insightful, timely gift, and telling her that she truly was an angel to us ..

We next drove a few miles north and came to the vast Baltic Sea (we were east of Danzig, never did go there), and drove through the wonderful village of Steegen (now Stegna) that was the regional center, like a county seat. We continued east along the shore until we figured we were . with a mere 10 miles from Russia. We just had to park and wade out into the water and take pictures. It was a popular beach and many people were around, and all felt so festive. We knew that our own families must have frequented this very shore. From there we backtracked, looking for the signs that would tell us we had found the former Neukrugerskampe. Again we drove through fields and over canals (the whole area is a series of canals and islands within those waterways). Dogs would bark and children and adults would come out to see this "car" passing by. (Peter drives a Ford van). Peter made us all laugh in his attempts to explain what he thought these people must all be thinking as they saw and met us. He said "the aliens have landed"! in perfect (with an accent) English! He also told us that for most of these people; we not only made their day, but maybe their entire life time, and they would be talking about these people that came from Germany and America who were looking for their family, for many weeks to come. After crossing another canal, we found a lovely cluster of houses, maybe 5 or 6, out in a field. This once had been Neukrugerskampe. Once again, Peter chose one of the houses, and by so doing, his instincts were right. A little old lady, maybe in her late 80's, came out. She was the only German in the area. She invited us into her tiny, well kept up home, with many flowers growing outside. As they all talked German, I was amazed that I could understand much of what she was saying. Visitors were almost non-existent for her, and now to have other Germans come to visit just brightened her day and her life. She had lived there since she was a girl, married a German man, who had since died and her children had all moved to Germany. Her children had convinced her to stay there because that is where her husband was buried, and now she was too old to move. She was a German Island amongst the Polish people, but she was not familiar with our family name. She said the winters were not too cold there, and her little stove kept her warm. Every few weeks another resident of the area brought her some groceries. When we left, Peter gave her some money from his pocket, which was so kind of him, and once outside there were children from the other houses gathered around out of curiosity. To these he gave some candy he had in the car. As we drove away, we again felt sad, but good at knowing we had cheered someone, and also that we now knew for a certainty that there was no one with our family name left there. The

old German towns had all been renamed with Polish names after World War II, and those who lived there either found their way to Germany or somehow died trying, or were killed. There had been so much suffering on all sides, I am afraid. It was interesting that I could understand her so much better than the German I had heard spoken for days. I told this to Peter, and he answered that she spoke "the old German that they also had spoken in Siberia" (and that our parents spoke in our home as we grew up). He also explained to us that when they moved to Germany 10 years ago, people laughed at their German, and could not understand them, so they had to take classes to learn proper German!

After our experience with this little lady, we began our long drive back to Germany right after that, but not just to Berlin, but all the way across the country to Peter and Walentina's home in Hamm. So, even though it might have been 5 or 6 hours to Berlin, it would take twice as long to arrive in Hamm. Actually, once inside Germany we pulled over somewhere and slept for awhile in the car, arriving home in the morning. At the Polish/German border, we saw lines of cars coming into Poland, but we were about the only one leaving Poland. We were puzzled, but decided that it must be because gas was cheaper in Poland (averaged about \$5 a gallon in Germany), and also the Baltic Sea was a wonderful destination for someone who might want a beach experience. Otherwise, where were they all headed?

With the Poland Adventure ending, there was so much to think about, to ponder and to visualize. Earlier in this narrative I said it was another story for another time why I felt there was no one of our surnames left in the old places, but now I have given you that story. There are scenes that live in my heart that I can see in my mind's eye even today, and I hope forever. Even though they were no longer there, it is enough that I can envision it. There was a place along the highway close by the area south of the region of Steegen (Stegna) that we passed both coming and going that intrigued me, and if there had been time, I would have loved to have investigated it. On today's maps it is called "Malbork", but I know that it was the German place name of "Marienburg". It is along the river and was a fortress/castle. It would have been the main manor house or castle for the area just south of where our Dschaak family lived. They had walled cities in the old days, and the walls for this city still stood, glowing in the setting sun, as we drove away from our ancestral homeland. I believe in love letters from God, and on this day, with this setting sun shining on an emblem of the old days, I found the sunset to be a fitting message from God to us, as we finished this part of our mission.