

## A DESTINY FULL OF CHANGES

Told by Elisabeth Zipf née Reichert

### Family and Childhood

Elisabeth Zipf was born in Glogowatz on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1928, actually on the Lange Gasse<sup>1</sup> (old, running house number 636), as a daughter of Franz Reichert (\* 3 Dec 1903) and Eva Hoff (\* 25 May 1905). She describes all the phases of her own life from childhood up to her present retirement in Sindelfingen. Her résumé is exemplary for many compatriots and reminds the readers of their own experiences; therefore it was included in this text collection.

My father was a master weaver and my mother a forewoman in the Arader textile factory. Many Glogowatzers have worked in Arader concerns, above all in the textile, freight car and cotton jersey factories, since the First World War. In addition, there were many craftsmen, like mechanics, masons, painters and housepainters, joiners and others, who worked in various concerns and agricultural day-workers as well. Glogowatz is a large community so that a considerable part of the population was farmers and the other part belonged to other occupational groups.

My father had a bicycle accident on the way home from work. Due to the wrong treatment, his foot remained stiff and he no longer was able to practice his profession in the factory. Since my mother was a forewoman, she continued to go to work my father took over the role of the mother. When we were 6 weeks old and my mother had to go to work, my father looked after the upbringing of children and the housekeeping. In order to be able to contribute to the family till, he learned the repair of clocks and in addition worked on a handloom. He wove various things like rag rugs, tablecloths, towels, linens, indeed even fabrics for clothes. Thus, my parents earned the family living together.

We were only two lasses because two lads died as infants from children's diseases. I went to the kindergarten, which unfortunately was really far away from us, quite early. Seen from the Lange Gasse situated to the north, church, school and kindergarten were almost at the other end of the village. So, one had to go to the kindergarten by the Landstraße<sup>2</sup> and the long Aradergasse<sup>3</sup>. Our kindergarten teacher at that time was Mrs. Crainic, whose husband was the station chief of the railroad station situated north of the community. My sister Eva was born on the 14<sup>th</sup> of January 1931. She was about three years younger than I and I took her along to the kindergarten quite early. Since the walk was so long, now and then I had to carry my small sister piggy-back when she no longer was able to walk.

Our father worked at home as far as orders came and looked after us at the same time. Mother had to work many hours of overtime almost so that we only saw her on Sunday. So our relationship with father also was stronger than with mother. This told that she and many other female and male workers, occasionally in summer as in

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<sup>1</sup> Long Street

<sup>2</sup> Highway

<sup>3</sup> Arader Street

winter, went the 8 km<sup>4</sup> to Arad to the job by foot. The narrow-gauge railroad called “Motor) indeed ran from 1906 but many people were not able to afford the fare. There were also time when the textile factory put on a “special motor” (the “Farbikler”<sup>5</sup>) because indeed there was work in two shifts. Many workers also traveled by bicycle.

In the 1940s, before our people were pulled into the war, our community had about 1000 house numbers and more than 4000 inhabitants. Since the city was so close and also had several industrial concerns, the people had the opportunity to earn their livelihood here. Apart from the farmers and workers, there were also many day-workers who carried out the auxiliary work for the masons or in summer worked in the cutting (grain harvest) or on the threshing machine to earn their annual bread<sup>6</sup> that way.

At the age of seven years, I went to school which—as said—was far away from us. Therefore especially in winter, we remained in the school over midday and had to take a cold midday meal with us. Now and then, there was punishment because we had roasted our sausage or bacon in the stove and gotten grease on everything. That happened because of the wrangling since everyone wanted to roast his bacon first.

We girls were taught by school sisters<sup>7</sup> (of the Notre Dame order) who brought us correctly and taught us obedience and discipline. At that time, there still was proper respect for the superiors and also for the parents. The boys were taught by teachers. My future husband was indeed with Teacher Katharina Vormittag in the first grade but in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades he had Teacher Wilhelm Krier and in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades Teacher Johann Etienne.

After the end of the seventh elementary school grade, I was supposed to be sent to Germany for further education by the German ethnic group. For that, there was a requirement that I do a year of compulsory domestic service beforehand. Therefore, I worked for 14 months in Kronstadt<sup>8</sup> in the household of a family. After that, the situation had become really more difficult due to the war and there no longer was a prospect for me to be sent to Germany.

In July 1944, I came home from Kronstadt. I began a two-year education as a kindergarten teacher, which however was interrupted as a result of the war action. At the same time, I was employed in the kindergarten as an assistant. The two of us were kindergarten teacher and I. There was also a cook because the children were looked after full-time. We played with the children and often told them nursery rhymes like these:

- Schlaf Kindlein schlaf, dein Vater hüt' die Schaf,  
ein schwarzes und ein weißse, die wollen das Kindlein beißen.  
Schlaf Kindlein, schlaf.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> 5 mi

<sup>5</sup> Factory worker

<sup>6</sup> Living

<sup>7</sup> Nuns

<sup>8</sup> Braşova, Romania; 210 miles ESE of Arad

<sup>9</sup> Sleep little child sleep, your father minds the sheep,  
One black and one white which want to bite the little child.  
Sleep little child, sleep.

- Hei mei memele, hei mei memele, Gänsel geht in Garte,  
Treib sie raus, schlag sie raus, macht ja soviel Schade.<sup>10</sup>
- Ringl, Ringl raaje, im Summe kumt'r Maije, im Summe blicht der Hollerbusch,  
na mach mr dreimal Husch, Husch, Husch.<sup>11</sup>
- Schau di net um, schau di net um, de roti Fuchs geht rum:<sup>12</sup>  
(In the process, one child goes around the circle, which the children have formed,  
and lets a handkerchief fall at the child who now has to make the next walk.)
- Goldene, goldene Brücke, wer hat sie zerbrochen?  
Der Goldschmied mit seiner jüngsten Tochter.  
Sind alle durch, sind alle durch, den letzten wollen wir fangen.  
Mit Spießen und mit Stangen.<sup>13</sup>  
(Two children raise their hands and form a "bridge." Everyone slips through, in the  
course of which the last child is caught and eliminated from the game.)

Other popular children's games were: blind cow, rope jumping, hide and seek, chasing someone and for the girls doll playing (with rag and cornstalk dolls). The doll's clothes were made from cloth remnants. The boys still played Uffschlageles, i.e. hitting someone with a cap, Drufschuckeles<sup>14</sup> with the "Lunda" (a round piece of metal pounded wide).

One experience from this time I will never forget. I was supposed to go for a walk with the children. When we were on the way, the air-raid warning was triggered. Then the anxiety was great because of the many children with whom I was on the way. The airplanes, however, flew over us in the direction of Arad; the shadow of the war filed past. At that time, nothing happened to us, thank God; one sometimes does have a guardian angel. The work in the kindergarten was a beautiful time for me because the activity with the children was a lot of fun for me.

### **The War and the Difficult Post-War Time**

So the coup also came on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 1944 when Romania switched over from the Germans to the Russians and difficult times after that. My future dream was destroyed. Father was taken on in the office of the ethnic group. As an invalid, he did not have to go to the war, so he had gotten this post. Therefore, he was arrested in addition on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August and put into a camp. For some weeks, we did not know where he was and what had happened. Then, he reported from a property near

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<sup>10</sup> Hey, my little gummer, hey, my little gummer, gosling goes in garden,  
Drive it out, beat it out, does indeed so much damage.

<sup>11</sup> Little ring, little ring string, in summer comes visiting, in summer the elder bush blooms,  
Then one makes three times hurry, hurry, hurry.

<sup>12</sup> Don't look around; don't look around, the red, red fox wanders around:

<sup>13</sup> Golden, golden bridge, who has broken it into pieces?  
The gold smith with his youngest daughter.

Everyone is through, everyone is through, we want to catch the last,  
With spears and with poles.

<sup>14</sup> Throwing at someone

Drautz (Drăuț,<sup>15</sup>) in the West Carpathians (Zarandului Mountains). All of us had to travel 14 days there and supply him with some food.

The Russian front drew closer in September 1944. The Hungarian military also advanced here from Hungary. The front stood near Paulisch<sup>16</sup> in the “mountains” a few times. There, great battles took place and there were a lot of dead people. Soon, the Hungarians and the Russians advanced and also came to Glogowatz. Out of fear of the Russians, we stayed in the cellar a long time. Our father indeed was gone, so we were alone with our mother. The Russians came here from all over with tanks, from the railroad and from the highway. They were hungry and they took what they found. Mother cooked them a potato soup with bacon as long as the supply lasted. We dressed ourselves as old women, veiled our faces behind headscarves and kept ourselves hidden. Thus, the front went past us. There were three fatalities from the population of the community.

Then the Romanian military came and was billeted everywhere. The situation calmed down a little and we sought work in a canned food factory. But that did not last long. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of January 1945, the great misfortune of the Germans began: the great manhunts and the deportation to forced labor in the Soviet Union. All the men 17-45 years old and the women 18-40 years old (but also many younger) one caught and locked up. The trucks came every day to take the people to the collection point where one penned them in stock cars. Thus, one abducted the people to Russia and to the Ukraine. Many mothers were torn away from their children and many very small children were left alone because the father was in the war and the mother at forced labor.

One day, one also arrested me and my mother like criminals with a raised rifle. We were driven to the village hall along with many others. It was a long night; my mother cried the whole night because my sister was alone at home and was only 14 years old. On the next morning, a commission came and checked all the people again. So mother and I were released because mother was a little too old and I still too young.

### **The War Experiences of my Future Husband Johann Zipf**

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1943, Johann Zipf and his older brother Sebastian were drafted into the German military like all the German men 19-45 years old. They went to Germany for training. But first my husband was operated on his hernia in Marienbad<sup>17</sup> where many Banaters had to go through the same operation. For convalescence after that, he received a few days home leave.

After the training, they set off to the front. Johann Zipf went to Narwa<sup>18</sup> where the troops laid mines. The accident happened there. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 1944, a horse ran over the minefield and many mines exploded. In the course of this, many soldiers died. Johann, still alive but seriously wounded, was taken out of the minefield. His entire body was wrapped in plaster; after that, he set slowly in the

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<sup>15</sup> 22 miles NE of Glogowatz

<sup>16</sup> Păuliș, 10 miles ESE of Glogowatz

<sup>17</sup> Mariánské Lázně, 31 miles NE of Plzeň, Czech Republic

<sup>18</sup> Narva, Estonia

direction of Germany. Helpless and despairing, Johann traveled by train and by ship from one military hospital to the other. In view of that, he was lucky that a good doctor looked after him. The wounds were already all inflamed so that he had to be operated on several times. After that, he spent the time up to the end of the war in the military hospital.

At the end of the war, Johann Zipf was taken prisoner near Bratislava/Pressburg.<sup>19</sup> After several examinations, he was released as unfit for work and ill. But now it was hard to know what to do: one was not able to go home and there nobody gave them anything to eat. Therefore, the people released had to go begging to struggle along. It was a hopeless situation until Johann finally got admitted to a camp. At this time, there were many camps with refugees and soldiers, from whom the healthy people were abducted to Russia for construction work. Finally, in the year 1946, Johann succeeded, in a roundabout way, to arrive in the homeland with a refugee transport. But there the misery started anew. The arrivals had to hide for a long time because one was again rounding up and putting into camps the soldiers who had served with the German military.

In April 1947, Johann Zipf was actually captured and taken to Großwardein<sup>20</sup> to a camp. There, the healthy people had to go to work and were harassed a lot. The food was insufficient and bad. The parents of the prisoners from Glogowatz traveled alternately to Großwardein and brought along something to eat for every relative. In June 1947, Johann Zipf was set free because of his not-healed wound. At home, he relaxed and the wounds healed so slowly. His father was already old and ill so that Johann along with his brother Sebastian ran the blacksmith workshop until it was dissolved.

## Life Must Go On

Now back to me. In spring 1945, my sister and I found work on a construction site. The Arader freight car factory was partly bombed-out and was rebuilt new. That was hard work for us young girls. Since there were no machines, all the construction material had to be carried up. We climbed up on temporary stairs. The connection from one story to the other was made with the help of two posts which were connected to one another with crossbars for steps. There, one was quite frequently dizzy.

Mostly, we went to work and in the evening home again on foot because there was no money for the electric train. The salary was not big; nevertheless we were the main wage-earners of the family. Mother was no longer able to work in the factory for health reasons and father was really a victim of persecution.

In autumn 1946, the colonists came to the village and the expropriation of the fields, of the livestock and also the dwelling houses of the German population took place. Now there were no more possibilities to work privately. And thus, many Glogowatzers were forced to look for work in the city. In autumn 1946, I was employed on a permanent basis in a small private concern in Arad. Later, this

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<sup>19</sup> Now in Slovakia

<sup>20</sup> Oradea, 68 miles NNE of Glogowatz

concern was also expropriated and we were taken on by the Arader Orthodox church. I was employed there for 12 years; after that I worked in the factory.

In August 1948, I married my husband Johann Zipf (\* 11 Jan 1924). We had two children 13 month apart. Anna came to the world on the 20<sup>th</sup> of January 1949 and Elisabeth on the 20<sup>th</sup> of February 1950. The children were taken care of by my mother because I had to go to work again after 6 weeks of birth leave. At that time, there really was no paid extended maternity leave like today.

In the year 1952, we moved to the sister of my husband on the Brettergasse.<sup>21</sup> Since my smaller sister now also had her own family, they remained in the parental home. The children grew up and went to school after the kindergarten. At that time, the Pretz teaching married couple, which enjoyed a good reputation in the village, came to Glogowatz. Our girls also occasionally had classes with the teachers Theresia and Franz Pretz.

In the year 1957, we built ourselves a dwelling with the parents-in-law, in that we extended the house. At this time, there were also building sites designated by the community on the edge of the village. Since my husband was disabled in the war, however, we did not want to move out of the middle of the village. Because of his injury, the walk to work was difficult for him. He also was no longer able to practice the blacksmith profession which he had learned with his father. Therefore, it was a difficult situation for us. I worked in three shifts in the Arader textile factory which was not easy with two children and the management of the household, with standing in line often for hours—and often unsuccessfully—to obtain groceries. So the children already were independent at an early age and it worked well in the end. Our Zipf-Oma<sup>22</sup> also still had a little supervision in the house right up to her death in 1960.

### **The Children Move Out**

So the years went by, more bad than right; one had to try hard to make the best out of it. Our girls became grown-up and after the elementary school looked for a vocation school. Anna trained as a textile knitter, Elisabeth one year later as a seamstress after her future dream had burst. She wanted to become a kindergarten teacher, also had the best qualifications for it since she was a good pupil. She stood for the entrance examination and passed it as well but unfortunately she received no college place. Thus were the times then. If one had no advocate and no money for the “greasing,”<sup>23</sup> one got no result despite ability. It was a great disappointment for the child. But due to her good school report, she still received a place in the textile sewing works at the last minute.

The years went by, and the girls wanted to marry in 1970. They expressed the wish that both marry on the same day, therefore organize a double wedding. We were pleased about this news and thought that it is something especially beautiful. Then, however, the old wives came forward with their sayings: “One does not do such a thing because that will bring bad luck!” As the mother, I was desperate about

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<sup>21</sup> Boards Street

<sup>22</sup> Grandma Zipf

<sup>23</sup> Bribes

that because one does want the best for his children. I did not know what to do and went to the pastor to beg for advice. The pastor comforted me: The gossip is only superstition. We should calm down and celebrate the double wedding. And it actually turned out something special. Many spectators appeared because the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 1970 was also a holiday. The weather was as lovely as if God and nature had been pleased along with us. Only I, despite the universal joy, shed many tears because I had to give away both girls, who were my entire purpose in life, all at once. But everything has its time and one has to accept his fate which God assigns to one.

### **Parting from the Home and New Beginning**

Soon the final parting from Elisabeth, the youngest daughter, also came. Already after two months, at the end of June, she was able to travel to Germany to her husband. And that was at the same time the first step for us for our departure to Germany. In August 1970, we had filed the first application but unfortunately in vain. At the same time, I filed the application for a visit trip. I succeeded with that so that I was able to travel to Germany already in December 1970 on a visit. Here, I experienced and saw a lot since it truly was Christmas time. To me, it seemed like a dream or in a fairytale: The many beautiful things which spoke Christmas! I was as if enchanted. With a heavy heart, I traveled home again from the big, free world, home to the old routine in a different world. I was really unhappy. One the one hand the separation from my child, on the other hand the great contrast and the worry whether we would come together once again. One always lived in fear, of course, behind the iron curtain.

The wave of emigration had started and so many had already left the country. The deficiencies could no longer be overlooked but I must say that I was pulled back and forth. One the one side was the beautiful freedom and the child for whom one yearns. On the other side were the homeland, the family and the deceased in the cemetery. I always asked myself: "Is it not betrayal of our ancestors? They built up this homeland with their industriousness and lives. How much sacrifice, effort and trouble they had summoned up for it in the 250 years! And now one is supposed to leave in the lurch and go?"

At that time, one really did not think one time that everything is being ruined and that the homeland is turning into a foreign country to us. But our destiny was like that. My husband always maintained that we will emigrate one day. He had to suffer a whole lot precisely because he served with the German military and was even wounded in the war with it and no longer was able to work hard. When he looked for assistance in Romania, he was often sent, with cruel ridicule, there where he had served. But they, the former Wehrmacht<sup>24</sup> soldiers, were not responsible for that. Then, we tried again and again and applied for the journey abroad which involved a lot of hardships and expenses.

Finally after four years of struggling, waiting and hoping, we received the permit for the departure. In June 1974, we received the approval and on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August set off from Arad in the direction of Germany. In Nürnberg,<sup>25</sup> we were registered a few

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<sup>24</sup> German armed forces

<sup>25</sup> Bavaria

days then set off to Rastatt<sup>26</sup> to the state transitional camp for Baden-Württemberg and after overcoming a few obstacles we arrived in Böblingen<sup>27</sup> on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August.

Since no room was available to us in the transitional hostel, we had to live with the daughter Elisabeth. The other daughter Anni along with her child and husband got a room in the hostel. We were with the daughter for two weeks up to the 1<sup>st</sup> of September then one also gave us a room in the hostel. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September, the second grandchild was presented to us by Elisabeth. That was the most beautiful welcoming gift for us in the new homeland.

We only had to spend three months in the hostel in Böblingen then a newly-built dwelling was offered to us for rent. We, however, had no job and thus no money either. The state loans for the new acquisition of furniture and other household equipment was a great help to us. The new dwelling was situated quite close to the dwelling of the daughter Elisabeth. We, therefore, accepted the offer and again lived close together.

Anni and Peter had found work in a textile factory. My husband, because of his handicap, had difficulties with obtaining work. At first, he had to consult a doctor who examines patients off sick for lengthy periods. This state of affairs lasted quite a long time and that was a great disappointment for us. Finally, some assistance came from the Verbund der Kriegssopfer (VDK)<sup>28</sup> which Johann had joined. The VDK promised assistance, worked through the case and after four years Johann received a small pension because of his handicap. After one and a half years, a job in a mail order firm was found for him, where I also was employed.

I worked eleven and a half years in the mail order firm until the workforce was reduced and I at 59 years of age left the working life. My husband found work in a small concern after two years. But pretty soon, he had to change jobs because the work was too hard for him. He worked at various jobs for seven years in addition until he started drawing a pension at 60 years of age because of inability to work.

We lived for seven years in Böblingen-Dagersheim. In the year 1981, we together with our daughter Anni and her family purchased a terraced house in Sindelfingen<sup>29</sup> where we feel very happy to this day. Sindelfingen is a beautiful city where we settled down and like to live.

In the year 1981, the Kreisverband der Banater Schwaben<sup>30</sup> Böblingen-Sindelfingen was founded in Sindelfingen. We were involved with the founding and we are still active in it today as well. We also took part in the founding of a seniors' club for Banater Swabians in the Haus der Donauschwaben<sup>31</sup> in Sindelfingen in 1998. We are actively involved in our Heimatortsgemeinschaft<sup>32</sup> Glogowatz.

When I retired in 1987, I immediately involved myself socially with the senior citizens' club "Frohes Alter" (Happy Age) of the city of Sindelfingen where I am still active today. It is fun to help and to give joy to other people. And I pray that God gives us health so that we are still able to do a lot of good.

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<sup>26</sup> 46 miles W of Stuttgart

<sup>27</sup> A suburb of Stuttgart

<sup>28</sup> Alliance of the War Victims

<sup>29</sup> Adjacent to Böblingen

<sup>30</sup> District Association of the Banater Swabians

<sup>31</sup> House of the Danube Swabians

<sup>32</sup> HOG, Hometown Association

Recently, I have another hobby: now genealogy occupies me. A distant cousin from the USA has gotten in touch and we conduct a lively exchange of letters, mostly over the internet. We want to investigate our roots, are on the track of the origin of our ancestors and the traditions handed down.

## Customs and Traditions

In Glogowatz, there were many old traditions which in the last decades, limited by difficult circumstances, unfortunately were lost. In the last 50 years, the situation was different than earlier. The people were no longer as free as they once were earlier. Up to the Second World War, the large part of the Glogowatzers was employed at home, mostly in agriculture. Then, they were able to celebrate their festivals for 2-3 days as well. Shrovetide lasted three days, wedding 2-3 days with 4-5 days' preparation, the church festival<sup>33</sup> as well.

One always celebrated the **Name Day**. On the evening before the name day, one went congratulating then the musicians came and things were cheerful. I still remember that in the 1930s a lot went on with us at Franziskus<sup>34</sup> on the name day of my father. Two groups of musicians always came because there were many musicians in Glogowatz at that time. There were the old musicians, the "Schrammelpartie",<sup>35</sup> and the young. It quite frequently happened that even three groups came for the congratulation or for the New Year's wish. That one was no longer able to carry out that way the last 40 years because many people worked in the factories in two or three shifts. Because of that, the opportunities had to be taken advantage of when one had time off work. After the war, the abduction and expropriation brought a lot of sorrow and trouble in addition so that the people changed and had to adapt to the new conditions: It had become a different world. Freedom, joy and luck had seldom grown; a lot was torn apart. But everything in life passes, thank God, the good and the bad as well.

On the evening before **New Year**, on New Year's Eve, the people went to church. One went to give thanks for the old year and to pray for a good new year. At the end of the service, the pastor along with the entire community greeted the New Year with the best wishes. Upstairs on the choir loft of the church, the brass band played the New Year's Song and all the people went joyfully home accompanied by the beautiful melodies. Many inhabitants then went right away to the parents or to close relatives to wish them luck. Sometimes, the musicians went around in the village the whole night, each to his relative, so that New Year's night was quite strenuous: One group was hardly gone when the other came. Hosts and musicians got no rest at all.

New Year's Eve balls took place for the younger generation. Early in the morning, the children and the men, the neighbors and the relatives, came to wish the New Year. As thanks, there were coins and candy for the little ones and naturally schnapps and wine for the grown-ups, often something to eat as well. Mostly, one cooked sausage and served horseradish or red beets with it. Usually, the wine would

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<sup>33</sup> Kermis, celebrates the consecration of the parish church

<sup>34</sup> St. Francis Assisi, October 4

<sup>35</sup> Popular Viennese Music Party

have no longer tasted good when one got different wine or schnapps in every house. For many wishers, it also became too much by the end.

The children had various verses for the New Year's wishes:

- Ich bin ein kleiner König,/ gibt mir net so wenich,  
laßt mich so lange stehn,/ ich will a Häusl weiter gehen.<sup>36</sup>

Or:

- Ein kleines Mädchen bin ich,/ drum wünsch ich froh und innig,  
ein glückliches Neujahr,/ viel besser als das alte war.<sup>37</sup>
- Ich wünsch, ich wünsch, ich waaß net was,/ Hinnerm Ofe hockt e Has,  
langt im Sack und gebt mer was.<sup>38</sup>

The grown-ups mostly said a different saying:

- Gelobt sei Jesus Christus (oder Guten Morten).  
Ich wünsch eng a glückseliges neies Johr,/ lang's Lewe, Gsundheit,  
Friede und Einigkeit,/ nach dem Tod das Himmelreich.<sup>39</sup>

Then, the **Shrovetide period**, the foolish time, came. That was the right time for weddings. The old people used to say: "In winter, one must marry; because it is cold then, one slips close together then." Especially earlier, one indeed slept close together in one bed. Admittedly, there also were many marriages which had not been brought together out of love. With these, the parents determined who suited whom or there was match-making. The old woman with the "Kuppelpelz"<sup>40</sup> had this job. Or one said: "Money to money, love just follows later!" After the Second World War, these were just isolated cases because the people were indeed almost all equally rich after the expropriation; that would be better called equally poor.

The **weddings** were carried out according to the financial capabilities of the family. With large weddings, one already made the preparations 4-5 days beforehand. The cook and the women of the close relations met. At the baking of pastry, several hundred eggs were used for the tortes and cookies. For the wedding, some swine, one calf or cow and many chickens were slaughtered. Likewise, several hundred liters of wine and schnapps were acquired, in the last years beer as well. The weddings normally lasted 2-3 days.

For the wedding, one was invited for nine AM three days before it by two young men, the "Bräutführer"<sup>41</sup> (wedding inviters). The Bräutführers already welcomed the

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<sup>36</sup> I am a little king,/ don't give me so little,  
don't let me stand so long,/ I want to go on to a little house.

<sup>37</sup> A little girl am I,/ that's why I wish gladly and from the heart,  
a happy New Year,/ much better than the old one was.

<sup>38</sup> I wish, I wish, I don't know what,/ behind the stove squats a hare,  
reach in the sack and give me something.

<sup>39</sup> Praised be Jesus Christ (or Good Morning).  
I wish you a blissful New Year,/ long the life, health,  
Peace and harmony,/ after death the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>40</sup> A new hide—Kuppelpelz—was the reward for a successful match-maker

<sup>41</sup> Literally, bride leaders

wedding guests at the gate with the shout of joy, “Huju Hochzeit!”<sup>42</sup> Depending on the number of wedding guests, the whole house was made ready. For that, one collected large tables and benches in the whole village. For breakfast, boiled ham, fresh liver and blood sausages, boiled red beets or sour gherkins, everything home-prepared, were offered. Then there were fresh poppy and nut strudels in addition. The beverage, principally wine and schnapps, was not allowed to run out.

The men each took along a decorated quarter-liter<sup>43</sup> bottle of schnapps on the way to the church. They drank from them on the way and offered them to the spectators on the way. It is also supposed to have happened once that a wedding guest in a hurry got hold of the holy water bottle, which was intended for other purposes. During the ceremony of the “Drehen”<sup>44</sup> before the bridal couple leaves the wedding house, both were “turned” in a ritual dance at the door by the godfathers, during which the musicians played the “Ehstandslied”.<sup>45</sup> Bride and groom were sprinkled with holy water and thrown at with grains of rice or wheat to conjure up fertility. That was supposed to bring luck. The High Mass was usually at eleven o’clock AM. The wedding guests went to the church with musical accompaniment. At the same time, many spectators always stood on the roadside.

After the Wedding Mass, the procession proceeded to the wedding house again where the bride dances were danced. After this ceremony, most of the guests went home to take off the festive silk raiment. At 3 PM when all the guests were back again, there was the midday meal which consisted of several courses:

1<sup>st</sup> course—chicken soup with rice or noodles

2<sup>nd</sup> course—cooked chicken and beef with sauces. They were mostly “Milchgrießsoße”<sup>46</sup> (horseradish sauce improved with lemon and sweet and sour cream), but “Paradeissoße” (tomato sauce) as well

3<sup>rd</sup> course—pork roasted in the oven, breaded veal, with it preserved gherkins or salad

4<sup>th</sup> course—as dessert, before the war, there was rice pudding with raisins, sprinkled with sugar and cinnamon. Afterwards, the tortes and cakes came onto the table.

The whole thing lasted 2-3 hours. After the tables were cleared away, there was dancing. In the evening, the guests went home again, changed clothes and one brought along the gifts for the bridal couple. The dancing continued the whole night, in between there was food again: stuffed cabbage, paprikasch (goulash) or boiled sausage or else roast with vegetables.

Towards morning, the bride was “un-garlanded.” In the process, one took off her chaplet and she got a scarf tied on her head. The women stood around her in a circle, who all danced with the bride as a sign that she now is admitted to the union of the married women.

In the morning, the last remaining guests danced the “Schlangentanz”<sup>47</sup> with the musicians. In the course of this, they fetched many guests from their beds again, the bridal couple which had retired as well. In the afternoon, the younger guests again

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<sup>42</sup> “Wow, wedding!”

<sup>43</sup> About a half-pint

<sup>44</sup> Turning; bride and groom were turned around

<sup>45</sup> “Marriage Song”

<sup>46</sup> Literally, milk semolina sauce

<sup>47</sup> “Snake dance”

came for a meal; with it, the leftovers were served. Many helped afterwards with the tidying-up because everything had to be cleared away again. The wedding house was made clean in the end, the floors scrubbed and the furniture put in its place again.

## Shrovetide

Shrovetide was always a cheerful time; in the course of this, the people danced and celebrated for three days. At Shrovetide, one cooked stuffed (with ground meat) cabbage, ham and red beets for three days up to Ash Wednesday. In the Shrovetide period, the children also danced in the “Bollerwirthaus”<sup>48</sup> and shared the happiness of the grown-ups. Glogowatz was a large community and had several occupational groups: farmers, craftsmen, factory workers (workers) and day-workers.

We had two big dance halls and therefore the inhabitants were also divided into groups. The farmers danced at “Jergers’,” the second group at the “Jockl”<sup>49</sup> on the highway. In each of the inns there was also a tavern and a bowling alley with it. There, things were always cheerful and sometimes there were also scraps among the boys. They said: “If the white shirt had no blood splashes, then Shrovetide was not nice!” On Shrove Tuesday at midnight, Shrovetide was “buried,” that was traditional. The following Lent was quiet and contemplative.

## May Traditions

On the evening before the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, in Walpurgis Night, the boys put “Mays,” i.e. fixed green twigs and flowers on the gate, at the girls’. If a boy was just angry with a girl, then in place of the green twigs there was only straw or manure on the path in front of the house. In the morning, the girl had to take the trouble to sweep the path clean again.

Such pranks were just some “Buwestickl”<sup>50</sup> such as also one time fetching a few chickens from the henhouse to cook a “Hendlpaprikasch”<sup>51</sup> from them or stealing a few eggs and preparing scrambled eggs. With it, a jug of wine was acquired from somewhere in addition and a nice evening spent with the group of comrades. Those were just “boys’ stunts” like that from the time before the world war.

In Glogowatz were the brick holes. Here, the people earlier struck the clay brick with which they built their houses. With that, many earned their daily bread; it was a hard job in summer. In May there was still no work in the “Lacke”<sup>52</sup> because the frogs held their concerts here. I can still remember well how nice it was in the evening after the end of work. One had to water the vegetable garden and the flowers in the yard, spray and sweep the street and yard so that everything was fresh and clean. After that, we often sat on the bench and listened to the frog concert. It was like a fairytale; one was able to dream and be happy at the same time after the burden of the day. In summer, we sat on the street and sang folksongs until late in the night.

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<sup>48</sup> Thumper inn, a workshop or other place cleared out for dancing

<sup>49</sup> Inn owned by the Freer family

<sup>50</sup> Boys’ stunt

<sup>51</sup> Paprika chicken, chicken goulash

<sup>52</sup> Puddles

Now and then, a window was opened where a silent eavesdropper sat then. Those were our happy hours because we were indeed modest. The small gifts of life still gave one pleasure.

## Kermis

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of May, St. Johann of Nepomuk day, we had the Glogowatzer kermis festival. Young and old looked forward to it. On the first Sunday after this date, the festival was celebrated. Johann of Nepomuk is the patron saint of our parish church.<sup>53</sup> On the evening before, a decorated pole was put up which the boys had brought from the Glogowatzer woods. The girls had collected flowers in the whole village and bound a long garland out of them. The pole was put up on the kermis place with the sounds of the band. As soon as the pole stood, one man climbed up and fastened one end of the garland beneath the top of the pole. That was an arduous task which always only a certain man performed. While he climbed down, the boys wound the garland around the trunk as they ran around the pole. When the pole was put upright, the kermis couples were allowed to dance in addition.

On Sunday, the kermis couples assembled and went to the church with some march-music of the brass band. The girls wore green or beige-brown silk clothes which earlier were the wedding clothes as well. The boys wore white shirts, black “Leiwl” (vests) with silver buttons, black trousers and hats. The hat was decorated with wax flowers, small mirrors and blue ribbons. Every kermis boy carried a bottle of wine decorated with colored ribbons. Thus, they marched through the village to the church, to the pastor and to the mayor.

After the High Mass, they went again together to the assembly point then every boy went home with his girl for a meal. At 3 o’clock PM, one assembled again. The girls were dressed completely in white and had a colorfully-embroidered “Seide-Leiwl”<sup>54</sup> on and were adorned with a blue ribbon. They moved through the village with musical accompaniment to the kermis place where the decorated pole stood. Naturally, the whole village took part in the festival and everyone conjectured which kermis girl surely is the prettiest.

The kermis couples went and stood in a circle around the pole. The lead dancer greeted all the guests and opened the dance. First came three “Stück”<sup>55</sup> (dances) for the kermis couples then general dancing followed. The lead dancer said a kermis saying and the kermis lamb was auctioned off. The winner was accompanied home by music and the kermis couples. This demonstration of honor admittedly also cost something because he had to pour one<sup>56</sup> for all the escorts. In the evening, the girls put on bright clothes. The day ended with a dance in the hall. The lamb was prepared eight days after the festival and consumed by the kermis company.

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<sup>53</sup> Also patron saint of the Banat

<sup>54</sup> Silk vest

<sup>55</sup> Pieces

<sup>56</sup> A drink

## Pilgrimage

The pilgrimage day for the Glogowatzers was on the feast of Holy Trinity. On this day, the community made a pilgrimage in a procession to the pilgrimage place Maria Radna. One went (the 20 km)<sup>57</sup> either on foot or traveled by horse wagon; after the expropriation, by the “Motor” (the narrow-gauge electric train), more rarely by the railroad. In Paulisch, a stop was made to eat; after that, it was on to the cross before Radna.<sup>58</sup> There, the Marienmädchen<sup>59</sup> already waited with the banner and the statue of the Mother of God. From there, they walked festively with music and singing to the church where a Holy Mass was celebrated.

Every pilgrim had to find privately an overnight accommodation for himself; there, one mostly slept on straw in rank and file. There was a lot of praying and mostly singing of hymns to Mary. On the next day, a Holy Mass was celebrated again then they set off homewards. After the arrival in the community, the pilgrims moved festively into the native church with music and singing. The people thanked God that they were allowed to have this grace.

Earlier in Maria Radna, there were many sales booths where one was able to buy a “Radnastickl,”<sup>60</sup> i.e. a memento of the pilgrimage place. The kermis boys likewise bought their girls a present; it was traditional at that time.

## Pentecost

At Pentecost, the boys rode, accompanied by musicians, to the girls “Pfingstling.”<sup>61</sup> The musicians played one-two songs and the girls offered the riders cake and wine. That was always so beautiful and exciting.

## Sausage Supper<sup>62</sup>

In summer during the harvest time, there was no dance. On the other hand, there was more time for celebrating in autumn and winter. In autumn, the grape ball<sup>63</sup> and later the Kathreiner ball<sup>64</sup> took place. Now one celebrated in turn all the feasts and name days. One already congratulated the name day children<sup>65</sup> on the evening before.<sup>66</sup>

Then it became cold and the time came to slaughter the swine. The swine slaughter was very important for the farm because one had indeed lived the entire year on the prepared and preserved meat products (sausage, bacon and ham, lard too).

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<sup>57</sup> 12.4 mi east of Glogowatz to Radna where the church is Maria

<sup>58</sup> There were a lot of crosses along the path

<sup>59</sup> Mary’s girls, an organization for girls in Glogowatz

<sup>60</sup> Little Radna piece

<sup>61</sup> As object of the ride

<sup>62</sup> “Suppe” can mean either “soup” or “meal”

<sup>63</sup> Ball after the grape harvest in which the venue was decorated with grape vines and grapes

<sup>64</sup> St. Catharine, around November 25

<sup>65</sup> In the sense of those named after a saint, not literally children

<sup>66</sup> The name day was celebrated rather than the birthday. The feast days were printed on the calendar, making it easier to keep track of feast days than birthdays.

Pork was the foundation of our nutrition, above all in the last 40 years when there no longer were butcher shops in the village and when one also got to buy no meat in the city.

Actually from time immemorial, the swine slaughter was a community celebration. All the relations came to help and the neighbors to the following “Wurschtsupp”<sup>67</sup> as well. It was customary that in the course of the day the neighbors had somehow or other “stolen” the “Schwängl”<sup>68</sup> and one foot from the swine, which were then brought back in the evening on a platter decorated with flowers. That was an opportunity to invite oneself to a meal and celebrating in the evening. The children wanted to be everywhere in the course of this and one had his fun with them. So for example, one sent them into the neighborhood to fetch a “Schwartenmagenpresse.”<sup>69</sup> In its place, one gave them really heavy bricks in a sack to take with. It was just fun; at that time, people still had a sense of humor. There was singing indeed even dancing when a cheerful group of people was together and had tasted enough schnapps and wine.

I can still remember such a slaughter day. My father was invited to his brother’s to help. My mother worked in the factory so that my sister and I also went to our uncle’s after the school lessons. He lived on the other end so that we had to go crosswise through the village. It had become very late, almost midnight, when we went home. It was very cold and a lot of hard-frozen snow lay on the ground. Especially since the full moon shone, it was very bright. Father and we two went through the whole village, through the long Arader Gasse, the highway and the Lange Gasse, and no human was to be seen. Only we three in the night, the moon shone bright and clear, the snow crunched with every step, now and then a dog barked—this picture is among the nicest memories from my childhood.

## Christmas

After waiting a long time, the last feast in the year, the feast of Christmas, also came. The children naturally looked forward, most of all, to seeing the “Chrischtkindl.”<sup>70</sup> Earlier, it was indeed so, that several children had performed a Christ-Child play on the evening of the 24<sup>th</sup> of December. The actors were Mary with the Child Jesus, Joseph, the first and the second angels, and another angel which, as the Christ Child, brought the gifts for the children. There was also the “Esel”<sup>71</sup> (with linen cloth and horse head in which needles were fixed for the “Stupfen”<sup>72</sup>) in addition, as well as a boy with a bell who went from house to house, rang the bell and asked whether the Christ Child would be allowed to come into the house. The children had to prove that they were able to pray. Before going to bed, the mother prayed with her children:

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<sup>67</sup> Sausage supper

<sup>68</sup> Little tail

<sup>69</sup> Headcheese press

<sup>70</sup> Little Christ Child

<sup>71</sup> Donkey

<sup>72</sup> Pricking bad children

- Gotts Name schlofe gange,/ 14 Engel mit mr gange,/ 2 zu Kopf, 2 zu Fuß,  
2 zu meiner Rechten, 2 zu meiner Linken,/ 2 solln mich zudecke,  
2 solln mich ufwecke,/ 2 solln mich führe ins himmlische Paradies. Amen.<sup>73</sup>

Or one said:

- Müde bin ich geh zur Ruh, schließe meine Äuglein zu,  
Vater laß die Augen Dein über meinem Bette sein.<sup>74</sup>

And all the children:

- Ich bin klein, mein Herz ist rein, darf niemand hinein,  
als Du mein liebes Jesulein. Amen.<sup>75</sup>

For the bad child, the “Chrischtkindl” once also left behind a switch. The actors moved from house to house like that and announced the happy message.

Earlier, winters were more severe since there was a lot of snow. It was simply more romantic and festive than today in the cold consumer society. When we also only got some nuts, apples and candy, one was pleased with every present and was simply happy. Now and then, there were also oranges or figs; then that was something quite special. In the evening, one went warmly dressed through the crunching snow to the midnight vespers because the church indeed was not heated.

The course of our year was like that. In the last years, much of it has already been lost because the circumstances of life had changed: A different time has dawned. After the war, the abduction and all the rest which has otherwise come over us in addition, it has become quieter; it was a different time.

XXX XXX XXX

I have grammatically edited and supplemented the text through the—separately written—war experiences of the husband Johann Zipf. Nothing stands in the way of the writing of other life-stories full of changes and their publication in similar form (for the compatriots and also outsiders).

Dr. Hans Gehl  
Tübingen, 27 January 2005

Translated by:  
George Bretträger  
Loves Park, 16 June 2005

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<sup>73</sup> Gone to sleep in God’s name,/ 14 angels went with me,/ 2 at my head, 2 at my feet,  
2 to my right, 2 to my left, 2 should cover me,  
2 should wake me,/ 2 should lead me to the heavenly paradise. Amen.

<sup>74</sup> I’m tired going to rest, lock my little eyes closed,  
Father let the eyes over my bed be yours.

<sup>75</sup> I’m small, my heart is pure, nobody is allowed in,  
other than You my dear little Jesus. Amen.

The translator's footnotes are intended for those not familiar with Glogowatz. The history and culture of the village are covered in detail in *Heimatbuch der Gemeinde Glogowatz im Arader Komitat* by Dr. Hans Gehl. The translator apologizes if the footnotes are unnecessary or tedious to old hands.