



Merv visits the homeland – Selz, Russia 2006

Above: Merv telling the crowd about his ancestors who were born in Selz, with Inna Stryukova translating Margaretta Budayev on right.

May 2006 - Dear Kutschurganers. Selz Museum.....

I just wanted to be sure that members of this list (KRIG) were aware of this local initiative in Selz, driven mainly by Louisa Riesling. I have twice been a guest in Louisa's home.... Louisa's life-story mirrors the story told by so many Kutschurganers who were expelled from their homes in 1944 and herded to Poland, only to be scattered in exile throughout Soviet Russia in 1945. Louisa has been able to return to Selz and re-claim her grandfather's home, the home of Pius Rissling, across the street from the decaying Cathedral of Selz.

Karolina Fromm, Margaretha Budayev





Above: Margaretta Budayev, Louisa Riesling, Inna Stryukova, historian Vladimir Jakovlevich Bukovsky, & Alexei Köhler.

Louisa feels driven to preserve and tell the story of the Germans who once lived in the Kutschurgan district. She has been promoting the Museum idea with foreign visitors for several years, and has slowly accumulated enough money from sympathetic supporters to establish a German Museum in Selz.

Of course, there is no local money for such an initiative. I have been most anxious to return to see what Frau Riesling has been able to do since my last visit in June, 2005. At that time, members of the Robert Schneider group gave her the amount of further monies, which she calculated was necessary to "open the doors". So I was pleased to read Michael Miller's report, and my visit is now full of anticipation.

I am sure that Frau Riesling will also have a budget figure in mind for future work at the Museum. She will be looking to North Americans and Europeans with Kutschurgan roots to help her with this project. I have been to similar museums in the former German villages of Karlsruhe and Katharinental. They are the best way to make sure that "our" story is not forgotten in today's Ukraine.

My ancestors, by Mervin Weiss 2007

One of my eight paternal great great grandmothers was **Agatha Keller**. She was born 16 May 1824 in Wintzenbach, Bas Rhin (Alsace, France), daughter of **Peter (or Pierre Johann) Keller** and **Francoise Klein**. This family emigrated to South Russia in 1835, settling in the village of Selz, about 40 miles north-west of Odessa, on the Kutschurgan Liman (estuary of the Dniester River). Agatha had at the least one sibling who accompanied them to Selz. This was Magdalena, born in 1819, who later married Franz Jakob of Selz in 1841.

Agatha Keller married my great-great-grandfather **Karl Fetsch**, who was born in Selz about 1825, based on his age listed on their 1847 marriage record. Karl was the son of one of the original settlers in Selz, Odessa district, **Michael**

Fetsch, who also served as the village's first mayor. Karl's mother was **Elizabeth Reinhart**. Karl's father, Michael Fetsch, was married 4 times, and fathered 21 children. One of Karl's brothers was also named Michael Fetsch. He too was married four times, and had twelve children. The Fetsches were one of the more prominent families in Selz, and their progeny born in Selz numbers in the hundreds.

Selz birth records in the Saratov Archives reveal six children born to Agatha and Karl – Helena 1848, Franziska 1849, Johann 1854, Elisabeth 1855, Michael 1857, and Peter 1861. Of these, I have further information on only Franziska and Michael. I do not know what year Agatha died, only that Karl outlived her, this coming from a World War II era EWZ record which listed Karl Fetsch and wife Anna Jerger. This was either a mistake, or Karl had married a second time. Neither do I know when Karl Fetsch died.

Franziska Fetsch, born 21 December 1849 in Selz married **Kasimir Riffel** of Mannheim. They were married in Selz on 13 October 1869. Weddings were frequently celebrated during this season immediately following the harvest. In the quest for land, Kasimir and Franziska moved to Culelia, in the Dobrudja region of Romania. Five of their children accompanied them to Canada in 1906, when they were some of the first settlers in the Prelate, Saskatchewan (Canada) area. Both Kasimir and Franziska are buried in the Blumenfeld cemetery behind Sts. Peter and Paul church. This was the first Catholic Church in the district, and the Riffel family was instrumental in its founding. The Riffels of Prelate produced five Catholic priests and two nuns.

Michael Fetsch, born 05 May 1857, was my great grandfather. On 04 November 1880 he married Barbara Schwab of Mannheim. They had eight children, although I located only seven birth records. Of these, I know that four lived to adulthood. Two stayed in Russia, and two emigrated to Canada. The eldest son, Adam Fetsch, came to Canada, through North Dakota in 1909, settling in the Prelate, Saskatchewan area, taking up a homestead right beside his Riffel cousins mentioned above. Four years later, his younger sister, Brigetta, married to Conrad Weiss, followed Adam to Canada. Brigetta Fetsch and Conrad Weiss, both born in Selz and married in Selz in 1908, are my They took up a homestead south of grandparents. Blumenfeld, closer to present day Fox Valley, Sask. where I grew up. My dad was born in the sod-hut they built on land they could call their own - a privilege denied them in Selz, Odessa district.

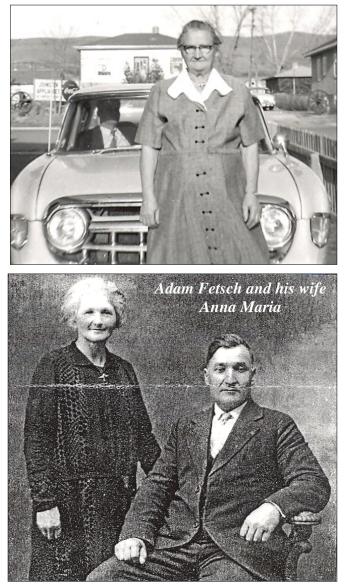
Barbara Fetsch (1895) was another daughter of Michael Fetsch and Barbara Schwab. She married Joseph Goldade of Selz. Barbara and Joseph and six children are registered in the EWZ records of World War Two Poland, but no trace has ever been found of them since 1944. It is assumed this family perished in exile. They are some of the "victims of Yalta".

Michael Fetsch and Barbara Schwab also had a son named Michael, born in the year 1900 in Selz, continuing the traditional name of their ancestor who first came to Selz in 1808. He married Katharina Baumann of Strasburg. They and their two children born in Selz also made the Trek to Poland in 1944. Michael was drafted into the Wafen SS and later captured. He was subsequently held in a French reconstruction labor camp near Lyons, and not released until the fall of 1948. This heart-wrenching family story was told to me by his children, Eugen and Ida, when I visited them in Leverkusen, Germany in 2006.

Photo ca. 1910 -Barbara Fetsch (1895) and Michael Fetsch (1900) in Selz on the occasion of Michael's First Holy Communion.



Below - Brigetta Weiss, born Fetsch (1888). Photo ca. 1956



AGATHA⁶ KOEHLER/KELLER (PIERRE (JOHANN)⁵ KELLER, GEORGE MICHAEL⁴, GEORG (HANS GÖRG KÖLLER)³, NICOLAS (JOHANNES)², MARTIN¹

Notes for AGATHA KOEHLER/KELLER:

A.) Name spelled Koehler, which we have seen several times in the Russian records for Keller. <> 1852 census HH# 62. The names of children look like they were taken right out of the Keller Family Bible! NOTE: Agatha's grandfather Keller signed his name as "Michael", father (Johann) Peter, mother Franciska, etc. TJK06

B.) Fetsch and Vetsch are the same name with the "f" sound. In German, the "f" sound is printed "v", in English, the "f" sound is of course printed "f". My cousins in Germany spell it as Vetsch. My cousins in Canada spell it as Fetsch. I have seen both spellings in the Dakotas. MW06

C.) An August 2004 note from Bob Schuh has a Magdalena Fetsch, daughter of Karl Fetsch and Agatha Koehler, married to Franz J. Jakob born abt. 1823. Franz is the son of Michael Jakob born about 1798 in Neeweiler and Viktoria Becker. I cannot substantiate this because I have not seen another reference to this statement, and Franz Jakob would have been a lot older than Magdalena who could not have been born until after 1847. MW06

D.) Genealogy for Karl and Agatha Keller/Koehler Fetsch courtesy of Merv Weiss <> The results of Merv's own extensive research and investment in the work of a professional genealogist, Dr. Pleve of Saratov, Ukraine.

.. 6 Agatha Koehler/Keller (Primary source for this subject Merv Weiss.) b: May 16, 1824 Wintzenbach, Alsace -Daughter of Pierre age 32 & Francoise Klein. Witnesses, Xavier Wagner age 45, Michel Schoeder age 32 - both from Wintzenbach. AGAWE ECN 38, page 101.

+Karl Fetsch b: 1826 m: September 11, 1847 Selz, Russia <> Pleve record from Saratov Archives which gives the parents of Agatha Koehler as Peter Koehler and Fransisca Klein <> Karl and Agatha both listed as age 22. Karl's parents as Michael and Elisabeth Reinhardt. MW06

Father: Michael Fetsch Mother: Elisabeth Reinhardt

.....7 Helena Fetsch b: October 28, 1848 Selz, Kut. District -Saratov birth record - Pleve.

.....7 Franziska Fetsch b: December 21, 1849 Selz, Odessa District, Russia. 1852 Kutschurgan Church Lists--Selz, age from marriage record - Saratov birth record -- Pleve. MW06

d: January 05, 1918 Prelate, Sask., Canada area.

..... +Kasimir RIFFEL b: ? See HH 95, 1852 census for Mannheim. 1882 Kandel census, HH # 212. This family emigrated from Culelia, Dobrudja, or Romania in 1906 or 07.

m: Selz marriage record says Kasimir is from Kandel. Saratov marriage record -- LM. MW06

...... 8 Ann RIFFEL b: Abt. 1873 Kandel Census 1882, Household 212. MW06

+Jakob GUCKERT b: 1876 Karlsruhe, Odessa District - MW06

Household 212. MW06

+Rochus WEICHERT

Franziska WEICHERT

+Rudolph Thomas KOPP b: December 26, m: February 11, 1918 Krasna Catholic 1895 Romania Church, SK.

Father: Thomas Kopp Mother: Katharina MARTE

 9	Melchior WEICHERT
 9	Ralph WEICHERT
 9	Frances WEICHERT
 9	Katherine WEICHERT

HH # 212. MW06

+Pius Ziebart

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...... 8 Otilla RIFFEL b: August 28, 1881 Kandel, Odessa District, Russia. d: October 17, 1881 Kandel, Odessa District, Russia - Kandel records, Odessa Archives - Kutschurgan website. DR06

d: December 04, 1956 ?

See Prelate Community History book - MW06

..... +Katharina DRESCHER b: March 21, 1882 d: June 02, 1971

Father: George Michael DRESCHER Mother: Teresa GETZ Peter RIFFEL b: ? (Father Peter - OMI) MW06 Paul RIFFEL 9

- +Christina WEISBECK
- Alexander RIFFEL d: 1935 Michael RIFFEL d: 1997
- +Nora LARSON b: January 08, 1920 Canada,

SK d: January 11, 2006 Calgary, Canada

(7) Children: David, Noreen, Gordon, Ronald, Ida, Richard, Edward, MW06

Father: Verner Ferdinand LARSON Mother: Ida Kristina BERGSTROM

Sk. (Fr. John, OMI) - MW06 d: April 20, 2005 Regina, SK.

+Regina DEIS b: Vibank, Sk.

d: 1975 Regina, SK. m: November 26, 1940 ?

(10) Children; John, Thomas, James, Virginia, Philip, Susan, Margaret, MaryLou, Lorna, Gerard.

Father: Ben DEIS Mother: Magdalene KLECKNER

- 9 Jacob RIFFEL Angela RIFFEL d: Estevan, SK. Died as infant. 9 9 Teresa RIFFEL Burial: Blumenfeld, SK - infant. 9 Frances RIFFEL Elizabeth Riffel
- 9 b: (Sr. Elizabeth OUS) -
- 9 Rose RIFFEL

..... 8 Peter RIFFEL b: October 15, 1886 Culelia, Romania. d: December 18, 1939 MW06

+Maria Anna HAAG m: 1905 Plelate -..... See Prelate Community History Book. Peter father to three Riffel priests including Father Tim Riffel, parish priest in Fox Valley during the 1960's. Fr. Tim conducted the funeral service of my Dad in 1988. MW06 Father: Timothy HAAG

...... 9 Anthony RIFFEL b: November 06, 1911 Prelate, Sk. (Father Tony), OMI d: 2003 Saskatoon

...... 9 Casimir RIFFEL b: September 12, 1913 Prelate, d: September 10, 1982 Regina, SK. MW06 Sk.

(Fr. Tim, OMI) 9 Ralph RIFFEL b: October 23, 1917 Prelate, Sk 9 Pius RIFFEL b: November 13, 1919 Prelate, Sk d: March 23, 1978 Daytona, Florida -(Fr. Pius, Jesuit) MW06 +Irene FORGET b: Ponteix ? m: October 15, 1946 Ponteix, SK +Madeleine MOREL d: September 03, 1948 9 Clementine RIFFEL b: July 12, 1928 Prelate, Sk 9 Peter RIFFEL b: January 25, 1930 Prelate, Sk. +Patricia SCHNITZLER m: April 14, 1956

......7 Johann Fetsch b: September 28, 1854 Selz, Odessa District - Pleve.

.....7 Elisabeth Fetsch b: November 06, 1855 Selz, Odessa District - Pleve.

.....7 Michael Fetsch b: May 05, 1857 Selz, Odessa District, Russia. Michael's birth date from Pete Goldade--EWZ of Barbara Goldade. Oct, 2004. Pleve record gives Michael's birth date as 24 May 1858 - MW06

d: Abt. 1935 ? See notes - MW06

...... +Barbara SCHWAB b: March 20, 1856 Mannheim, Odessa District, Russia - MW06

d: Abt. 1928

Father: Martin SCHWAB Mother: Magdalena GEIGER

District, Russia - MW06

+Rose MARSHALL

(7) Children; George, Mary, John, Elisabeth, Barbara, Adam, Anna. MW06

Father: Georg MARSHALL Mother: Barbara SCHANTZ

+Joseph C. RISSLING b: February 15, 1909 Franzfeld, Liebental

Father: Frank RISSLING Mother: Emelia MOFFENBEIER

.....+Steve ANDREAS b: 1914

d: April 16, 1996 m: February 02, 1942 Prelate, Sk.

(9) Children; Margaret, Charles, Bernie, Irene, Stanley, Richard, Loretta, Steve, Allan. MW06

.....+Anne HEISLER

+Conrad WEISS b: December 14, 1882 Selz, Odessa District, Russia. A Pleve record lists Conrad's birth date as 09 December, 1882. Family history has his birthday as 14 December, 1882. MW06 d: December 02, 1948 Maple Creek, SK m: August 10, 1908 Selz, Odessa District, Russia

Father: Joseph WEISS Mother: Margaretha GOLDADE Emigration: January 20, 1913 Russia

d: 1912 Russia - Run over by a wagon shortly before Conrad and Brigetta emigrated in 1913. MW06

d: 1914 Fox Valley, Sk at homestead.

+Mabel SCHNEIDER b: Abt. 1922

d: December 16, 1976 Edmonton, AB m: 1938 Medicine Hat, Ab ?.

.....*2nd Wife of Joseph WEISS:

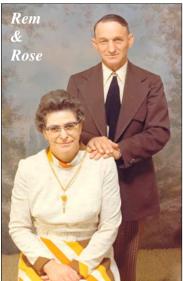
+Rachael ZIMMERMAN m: Aft. 1939 ? Children; Wesley and Marilyn ZIMMERMAN

+Elizabeth KLUG b: November 21, 1921 Fox

Valley, Sk. m: January 22, 1940 Fox Valley, Sk 9 Julia WEISS b: November 22, 1917 Fox Valley, Sk, Weiss Homestead. d: April 05, 1938 Fox Valley, Sk, Weiss Family Farm. 9 Remigius Vincent WEISS b: January 05, 1919 d: January 05, 1988 Calgary, Alberta - MW06 +Rose SCHAFER

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b: July 29, 1923 Anaka-Ely, Crimea, Russia MW06 d: January 10, 1990 Medicine Hat, Ab.





m: December 27, 1943 Fox Valley, Sk. Father: Philip SCHAFER Mother: Elizabeth TICHY

1944 Medicine Hat, Ab. <> Ken spells his name "Wiess", because that's the way Dad was spelling it the day he was born. MW06

..... 10 Mervin Philip WEISS born : July 23, 1949 Prelate, Sk. Loretta Rose WEISS born: September 04, 1951 Medicine Hat, Ab. Remigius Thomas (Jr.) WEISS 10 born : September 11, 1957 Maple Creek, SK.

b: October 13, 1920 Fox Valley, Sk. Weiss Homestead 23 Jun d: June 23, 2003 Calgary, Alberta

+Sebastian STACH

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m: October 07, 1940 Fox Valley, Sk (5) Children; Lillian, Doreen, Harold, Bernice, Larry. MW06

- Weiss Homestead.

+Kasper WETSCH b: October 28, 1915

d: November 25, 2003 Medicine Hat, Ab. m: October 28, 1944 Fox Valley, Sk. (5) Jane, Paulette, Beatrice, Frank, Bernadette. **MW06**

Father: Frank WETSCH Mother: Phillemina WEISGERBER

...... 9 Nicholaus WEISS b: 1924 Fox Valley, Sk. Weiss d: 1924 Homestead

d: May 05, 1987 Calgary, Alberta Weiss Homestead. +Pearl KRANKOWSKY

m: June 04, 1954 ? Children; Debbie and Holly. MW06

14, 1927 Beiseker, AB.

+Dan DIRK b: Liebenthal, SK ? d: January 28, 2006 Medicine Hat, Ab. m: January 19, 1949 Fox Valley, Sk. (4) Children; Dwight, Ronald, Denise, Daniel. MW06

*2nd Husband of Brigetta FETSCH: +Rafael STEINKEY b: 1884

d: November 18, 1954 Fox Valley, Sk, son of [1452] and Agnes m: 1953 Fox Valley, Sk. MW06 WINTER Father: Jacob STEINKEY Mother: Agnes WINTER

District. Russia.

1891 Selz, Odessa District, Russia. Saratov Record. MW06

Selz, Odessa District, Russia. MW06 d: ? Barbara and husband Joseph Goldade and family are presumed to have "disappeared" in Siberia after WW II. PG06

+Unknown GOELZENLICHTER First spouse.

*2nd Husband of Barbara FETSCH:

+Joseph GOLDADE

9 Rochus GOLDADE

b: December 13, 1918 Selz, Odessa District

...... 9 Emma GOLDADE b: April 12, 1921 Selz, Odessa District

+Edmund USSELMAN b: July 30, 1917 m: February 05, 1942 ? Selz, Russia

Children; Edmund and Erna. EWZ50-I070, 2044. LW

Father: Wendelin USSELMAN Mother: Anna FETSCH 9 Nicholas GOLDADE b: September 27, 1923 Selz, Odessa District

...... 9 Barbara GOLDADE b: June 29, 1928 Selz, Odessa District

...... 9 Erwin GOLDADE b: 1942 Selz, Odessa District d: Bef. 1944 PG06

9 Erika GOLDADE b: Poland

...... 8 Michael FETSCH b: February 14, 1900 Selz, Odessa d: December 10, 1976 Leverkusen, District, Russia. Germany.

..... +Katharina BAUMANN b: January 28, 1903 Strasbourg, Odessa District. d: May 03, 1993 Leverkusen, Germany per (Ida) daughter. MW06 m: October 19, 1926

...... 9 Eugenia FETSCH b: 1927 d: 1932 9 Eugen FETSCH b: January 07, 1933 Selz, Odessa District.

+Sigrid HEIDER

m: 1965 Germany - Children; Stefan and Dietmar. MW06 District, Russia <> 2004 living in Leverkusen, Germany. MW06

Photo - Michael Vetsch and his wife Katharina Baumann

.....7 Peter Fetsch b: July 27, 1861 Selz, Odessa District -Pleve record, November 18, 2004.



Researching Kaspar Koehler/Keller, b: January 03, 1818 Wintzenbach, Alsace - Son of Peter & Franceska (Klein) Keller, brother to Agatha Keller Fetsch featured in this article. Help will be appreciated. Tom Keller <> alsacep@mchsi.com