

## Acknowledgements and Preface

To all persons who contributed toward drafting and crafting this opus, I want to express my sincere thanks. Above all, my wife Marie merits recognition for encouraging me to write this book as a bequest to our family and for concerned widely scattered descendants of Danube Swabians whose collective experiences as members of an arbitrarily dispersed ethnic group happen to be reflected in my life, too. Readers are familiarized with applicable events in East Central Europe and attendant consequences right up to the aftermath of WW II. As a voice against recurrent genocide, the biography should also add to the limited coverage in English regarding this exceptionally adaptable minority whose values are said to include "portable roots" (cf. Katherine Stenger Frey). In essence, efforts of group members to substantiate their contributions to society can be regarded as a common trait fittingly illustrated by my own motivation to do well.

Marie also deserves credit for identifying passages in the manuscript that needed to be rounded out or tidied up. For her valued practical review with helpful suggestions toward improvements in form and structure, I wish to express my gratitude to Shirley Meier whose own literary achievements include works about Germans from Russia in the U.S.A.

In chapter 1, an historic overview is given concerning the origin of the ethnic minority whose members came to be known as Danube Swabians. Their disconnected former locations in multi-national settings along the middle Danube had the makings of a kind of "melting-pot" also, but divisive chauvinism still prevalent in Southeastern Europe kept assimilation from ever coming to bounteous fruition. WW II and its ultimate stages resulted in the group's large-scale dispersal from Hungary, Romania, and Yugoslavia. While over a half million managed to get off to fresh starts in Germany and Austria as time went on, tens of thousands eventually emigrated to far-flung places like Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, the U.S.A., and other countries.

Quite a few Danube Swabian ancestors hailed from French as well as German-speaking areas in Lorraine, including several of my maternal forefathers as indicated in chapter 2. During the 18th Century, the proverbial "Spessartnot" (indigence) mentioned in chapter 3 had also prompted emigration to overseas destinations along with migrations to other parts of

Europe. Among others who settled in Hungary, some of my paternal ancestors were traced to Franconia as well.

Perceptions of my childhood in a Danube Swabian environment are provided in chapter 4 with due reference to my mother's premature death at age 39, which was attributable to the resolve of AVNOJ to get rid of Yugoslavia's remaining ethnic-Germans after WW II. Tito's vengeful partisans saw to it that no medicine was "wasted" on members of the country's unwanted Germans. Ways to achieve the minority's elimination resembled what became known as "ethnic cleansing" a half century later. Today, the very phrase sends shivers down the spine of considerate folks including President George W. Bush, as indicated in a personal statement reprinted by the German-American weekly *Eintracht*, Jg. 79 - Vol. 8 (Oct 21, 2000), p. 3.

Chapters 5 and 6 describe my April 1945 confinement to a Yugoslav concentration camp for members of the country's ethnic-German minority. Detained group members in over seventy camps of three types were subjected to varying degrees of maltreatment - all too often with fatal results. Fortunately, I ended up among compatriots who managed to flee to neighboring countries from where most of us eventually wound up in Austria or Germany - in many cases just for a while, until other options materialized.

It took years, before opportunities for group emigration presented themselves. As shown in chapters 7 and 8, I was one of over forty thousand who immigrated to the United States of America in the 1950's. Upon initially working and living in Chicago, Illinois, my acclimation was further enhanced through service in the U. S. Army. Chapter 9 recounts my naturalization and rapport with fellow soldiers as well as general educational achievements plus marriage and employment. Family growth and additional schooling to attain a professional status are covered in chapter 10. Chapter 11 describes extensive job searches and our family's relocation from Ohio to Minnesota where I found employment as a foreign language professor at Winona State University.

The enduring struggle for survival in academe is focused upon in chapters 12 and 13. Chapter 14 deals with the wrongful death of our only daughter Ellen and difficulties in coping with it. Chapter 15 portrays our relocation from Minnesota to Colorado for family and other reasons. In chapter 16, the impact of Americanization upon Danube Swabian thinking is reviewed. Insights gained by examining tenets held not only deepen

understanding but they also suggest how Danube Swabian attributes enriched their host countries worldwide.

Appendix A provides an overview of Danube Swabians in America. Appendix B consists of a treatise I wrote in 1986 concerning fifty-three years of foreign language instruction at Winona State University in Minnesota. Appendix C lists my personal earnings from the time of my arrival in the U. S. until retirement. The inflation rate for each of the corresponding forty-two years is also denoted.

An annotated bibliography concludes the volume to which access is facilitated by means of an Index. Subject areas dealt with or touched upon can be categorized under headings as follows:

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Jacob Steigerwald, Ph.D.