



## The Slovenian Genealogy Society International, Inc.

Founded by , Al Peterlin, Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, in 1986



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### Volume 2 Issue 1 Newsletter of the Slovenian Genealogy Society January 1988

Happy New Year! Please make note of our new mailing address. Moving is always difficult, but trying to keep a newsletter "on time" during a move may be even more difficult. Please forgive the limited content of this issue. I will try to improve, starting with the next issue. I would like to receive some useful articles from the membership for the remaining 1988 newsletter issues. We are still receiving new memberships, many because of our relationship with **Rodna Gruda**. For those of you not familiar with the publication, it is published in Ljubljana for "Slovenes abroad". There is an English Language section. They'd publish genealogical information whenever we supply it to them. To subscribe: write them at: *Slovenska izseljenska matica, 61001 Ljubljana, Cankarjeva 1/III, Slovenia*.

I recently received a completed "every name index" for **St. Stephen's Parish Book, 1898-1973, Chicago, Illinois**, from Mary Lou Davison. She is already working on another. I am also making some headway with an index for the **75th Anniversary Book, 1910-1985, SS Cyril and Metodius Church, Sheboygan, Wisconsin**. If you have time, write, and I'll send a church booklet for you to index. Remember, we still need copies of church booklets for many Slovenian parishes.

Things have been going very well with out translation of the 1912 publication **Amerika in Americkanci**, by J.M. Trunk. Half of the document is already in my hands for editing, and the other half is being worked on by volunteers. We have also started translating the 1913 church bulletin, **Spominski Album, Joliet, Illinois**. We can always use another translator. The LDS Church has contacted the society asking for the names of individuals able to translate from and to Slovenian. We urge cooperation with the LDS. They have amassed the greatest library and archive of genealogical information in the world. Their Slovenian collection is small, but with our help, it should grow.

We are now looking for individuals to start compiling obituary indexes to Slovenian publications. **The American Home**, published in Cleveland, Ohio, always carries obituary notices. If you have a current subscription, or access to back issues, contact us for indexing formats. We'll send an example for you to follow. We'd also like to keep track of the years being indexed to avoid duplication of effort. The official publication of the **American Fraternal Union, New Era**, also contains obituary listings that we should be indexing. This is an opportunity to participate for those of us who lack Slovenian language proficiency. Start a local work group.

We received a copy of the 1982 telephone book for Slovenia. Joe Balazic obtained an issue for us when he was in Yugoslavia. It is of limited usefulness because addresses are not complete, but it is a clear alphabetical listing of family names. I would be happy to search it for you. Remember, always include a self-addressed, stamped, long envelope.

On to monetary issues, 1988 dues should be mailed as quickly as possible. Please make your checks payable to Albert Peterlin, Slovenian Genealogy Society. Our local banks here do not like to cash checks made out to organizations without a separate bank account. Service fees are high and eat up too much of our income if we maintain an account. Our income is spent on photocopying and for postage.

**RETURN TO GOTTSCHEE**

*By H.T. Petsche*

I finally returned to old Gottschee again. My friend, Rose Kaufman, and I stayed at Smarjeske Toplice, a health spa and hotel. I thought it would be close to Gottschee, but, in fact, it was really over an hour's drive away. We tried to get a taxi from Kocejve (Gottschee), hoping the driver would then be familiar with the local area. No such luck, our driver was from Novo Mesto. We drove to Dvor, and then stopped for directions to Smuka (the old Langenton). The long road to Smuka was unpaved, but we did hear that a new bridge and four lane highway is to be completed in the near future. There were still a few nice houses in Smuka. In Smuka we asked for directions to the old Rottenstein. I knew it no longer existed as a town, but I wanted to take some pictures of the ruins for Frank Koenig. His father was from Rottenstein. The ruins were about 10 kilometers away and in a very desolate area. Our guide knew of the houses of Mausser and Kickel. We ended up walking quite a distance, but then found the remnants of 5 or 6 houses. Large rocks had fallen from the walls because the outer cement coverings had been destroyed. At one time, Rottenstein had 17 houses. Now, only plum trees remain, along with beautiful fall blooming orchid crocus in the nearby meadows. The soil and rocks along the road are red, hence the name, Rote meaning red, stein meaning stone.

We visited Ebental (now Polom) next, a deserted 9 kilometers from the main road. Here, as in Rottenstein, large logs were piled in some places. We visited the old St. Michael's Church, rather, what was left of it. All the birth, marriage, and death records for the surrounding towns, including Kikendorf, Tiefental, Setch, and Ebental, were destroyed during World War II. The Church was now full of weeds and trees, growing inside and out. However, on the high altar wall were still visible the paintings of four saints. The old school house is now being used as a barn. An old photo I had showed the main road lined with small twigs. They were now full sized trees. 15 houses remain. A few new buildings are going up.

We did visit with a local Slovenian woman, Mrs. Hogler. Her husband died in 1977. Her daughter was visiting from West Berlin. Mrs. Hogler is now 79 years old and getting frail. Her daughter took us to the cemetery. There were about 10 Gottschee gravestones left-- only 3 legible.

We next visited the town of Setch (now Sec). There were about 8 houses and a recently built church. I wanted to take a side trip to Tiefental, but there are no houses left and I was talked out of making the difficult trip there. I now wish I had persisted. I tried to tour all of old Gottschee in one day. Instead I had seen only 4 villages. It was still very enjoyable. After all, I had seen the place where my father was born, and the church where my mother and father were baptized.

Our last stop was in Ljubljana. We arrived about 11:55 on a Saturday. At the archives in Ljubljana, we spoke to a priest who learned English 40 years before in Italy. We got to see only one baptismal book from Gottschee, then the dinner bell rang and the priests left for lunch with the Archbishop who also resides there. Anyone can have access to the records stored in the archive by writing to: Nadskkofyski Ordinariat Arhiv, Ciril-Matodov trg 4, 61001 Ljubljana, pp 121/III, Slovenia, Yugoslavia. All replies will be in Slovenian. Do not send money until they reply. If you are not charged a fee, send a donation. Each request should include 3 international reply coupons (obtained from the post office). Send your request by airmail, and ask for the reply to be sent airmail. Do not send a self-addressed, stamped envelope instead of the reply coupons.

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### **Volume 2 Issue 1 Newsletter of the Slovenian Genealogy Society April 1, 1988**

In January, I wondered if there would be enough new information available to fill another newsletter. The worry was needless. I now have so much to share, I'm wondering if the expanded four pages this

month will be sufficient. I have allowed the newsletter to expand to four pages because of the two fine articles forwarded to me by Joe Balazic and Frank van Krevel. We will fall back to our normal two page reports next quarter. If you have some news to share with us, please do so. There is no article waiting for the July 1st issue.

Speaking of newsletters. I have had quite a bit of feedback about our recent newsletter most positive, but some were critical about spelling errors and typos. I must admit our editing process leaves much to be desired. I prepare the newsletter at the last minute, and I have time for just one cursory preprint review. Besides that, I never could spell very well. On the bright side, I just purchased a Brother Word Processor. I hope it improves the process, but I doubt if any machine will keep me from making some silly error. If you see something that really bothers you, please let us know. We wouldn't be able to issue a recall, but we will be able to correct the master copy on the Brother disc in case we ever put the newsletters together into a larger issue. If you have access to a Brother Word Processor, you will be able to prepare articles for our newsletter and submit it on disc. If we can get a few individuals to volunteer in this endeavor, it would surely improve the quality of the newsletter.

In the last newsletter, I mentioned the 1982 telephone book from Slovenia sent to us by Joe Balazic. I said that it would be of little use as a mailing aid. I was wrong. The directory lists individual names under a city heading. There are also some street numbers. Joe said that he has been able to correspond with individuals by sending mail to the address as published. It amounts to sending a letter to an address without the zip code.

We have several interesting requests in the past month. One prospective member wants to know if we had any information on Slovenian workers who went to Alexandria, Egypt, to work on the Suez Canal circa 1889. Any information would be welcome. We had other individuals wondering how to correspond with Austrian authorities. We would like to hear from anyone who has been able to obtain birth, marriage, or death certificates for Slovenian ancestors from areas now controlled by the Austrians. Were you able to write in English? Did you write to civil or Church authorities? If you have been able to obtain information from Italy, or Hungary, we would also like to hear from you.

I received the 1987 cards from our **Forest City News** obituary index from Barbara Puchnik. The index is now complete from December 1886 through December 1987. This was a massive project with Barbara doing most of the compilation herself. We also received a copy of **The Jakels from Kanjska Gora**, a family genealogy by Marilyn O'Korn-Owen. Marilyn has also completed an every name index for the booklet, so if you have a Minnesota connection, we'll be happy to search the index to this publication for you. Please remember to include a large self-addressed, stamped envelope with any request.

## **BEGINNING FAMILY RESEARCH IN SLOVENIA**

*By Joseph and Connie Balazic*

Our journey in Yugoslavia began in Zagreb on September 22, 1987. As we were waiting for our baggage, we realized, maybe we weren't so far from home, after all, for there was a young man standing next to us with a University of Washington emblem on his coat. It turned out that he and his wife were from Tacoma, Washington, about 50 miles from where we live. They were visiting their Slovenian relatives. We learned that there were many Slovenian families in Tacoma, and nearby Gig Harbor.

We rented a car, Zastava, and headed North to where my family originated close to the border where Yugoslavia, Austria, and Hungary meet. We stayed in an area bounded by Murska Sobota on the east and Lendava on the west. Driving was a special experience. They do drive on the right side of the road, but we didn't expect such a variety of traffic on the highways, which had no shoulders. There were pedestrians, bicyclists, wagons drawn by oxen, horse, and tractors, along with commercial vehicles, farm tractors, and passenger cars. Luckily everyone was courteous. Tanker trucks would wait patiently until the way was clear to pass a bicyclist. It took a little studying to use the road maps. There are no large signs with highway numbers. You look at the map for towns along the route and then observe the highway signs of the towns as you pass through. With a little practice, we did fine. Whenever we did get in trouble, our Slovenian dictionary came in handy. We would point to a word to

get our message across. We gave up speaking from the dictionary because our accent and pronunciation were so bad no could understand us.

When we arrived at my father's village of Crensovci, we had difficulty getting directions to my cousins home. It turned out that what we thought was a street number in Crensovci was a house number in an outlying village. Once we understood that, we found the house without difficulty. It turns out that Crensovci serves 5 surrounding villages, Gornja Bistrica, Dolnja Bistrica, Srednja Bistrica, Trnje, and Zizki. The mailing address would be Gornja Bistrica 113, P. 69232, Crensovic, Slovenia. My father came from Gornja Bistrica which was Felso Bistrice when Slovenia was part of Hungary prior to World War I.

The country side between Murska Sobota and Lendava is flat and primarily farmland. Corn, wheat, potatoes, pumpkins, and hay are the primary crops. The pumpkins are just grown for the seeds from which the oil is extracted and used for salad oil.

My father's church in Crensovci is Holy Cross Catholic Church. It was built 127 years ago. I was able to get information on my father's family back to 1808. There was no shortage of Balazic's in the record book. On some pages, the name was spelled the Hungarian way, Balazsicz. I found as many as 42 of them on one page in the birth register. I learned my father had a sister he hadn't known. She died at an early age. When I requested information by mail, she was overlooked. This points out the benefit of personally reviewing records.

The village of my mother is Kosarvosci, about 10 miles north of Murska Sobota. It is a small village of only 19 houses accessible by a narrow gravel road. It's a very beautiful setting of gently rolling hills, lush green grass, and an occasional wooded area. Kosarvosci was called Kosarhaza when Hungary ruled. We were not as successful getting information on my mother's family, Fras. We did find an aunt by marriage, living with her daughter's son and family, four generations in one home. We were fortunate to visit her. She was 87 years old, and she died about 2 weeks after our visit. We did find out that 2 other aunts had emigrated to the United States. Since the church records were sketchy and the family had no records in their Bible, we are hoping to get some information from the aunts' back here in the United States. We believe we may have to search Church records in Hungary.

We were not able to get any information from cemeteries. Most grave markers were wooden. Information was minimal or had rotted away. Most of the people were too poor to afford headstones. Also, gravesites were reused every 20 years, or so, and many grave locations are lost.

The Catholic churches were very helpful and open in giving information. While we had no difficulty in getting information from Civil Registrars, we had to limit requests to direct line relatives. To help in reading church records, it is a real benefit to make an alphabetical letter index of the way each recorder made his letters. We had to compare unknown letters back to known name letters to come up with correct spelling. Even first names can be a problem. My paternal grandmother's name was Barbara. It is spelled Borbalja in the records. We are still going over the records we brought compiling a list of first names which will be helpful when transcribing other names.

We felt our trip was more than a success. Everywhere we went the people were helpful. Everywhere we went we were fed well and the food was delicious. I enjoyed dishes I hadn't tasted since I was a child. Still, the flavor was the same. We're looking forward to another trip in a few years.

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**Volume 2 Issue 3 Newsletter of the Slovenian Genealogy Society July 1, 1988**

A new magazine, **Slovenija**, is being published in English and is promising a taste of Slovenian culture for the generations of descendants of Slovenian emigrants that no longer speak the Slovenian language. Annual subscription is \$15.00. Write to: *Slovenska izeljska matica, 61000 Ljubljana, Cankarjeva 1/III, Yugoslavia*. We have not seen the first issue, but I have great hopes that the magazine will not be just another periodical spotlighting politicians, actors, authors, and other media favorites. If you subscribe, let us know what you think. When you correspond, make sure you mention our organization. I would hope they would not ignore genealogy, geography, and the history of the hard working everyday person.

I am pleased to report that our translation of Trunk is complete. It will still take me several months to fully edit and retype the text, but I am already starting to look for someone to publish it for our society. I know it will be a valuable resource.

We are still looking for Church bulletins for many Slovenian Churches across the country. We remind you to forward any copy you can obtain. We are always looking for additional help translating texts from Slovenian to English. We have many books, one listing every Catholic Church in Slovenia, and a large geographic lexicon that needs working groups. If you can donate some time individually or can organize a work group please write.

The March issue of **The Gottschee Tree**, the quarterly publication dedicated to the study and the history and genealogy of Gottscheers and their descendants, was an address of an individual in Austria who is willing to help anyone obtain information from old church records there. This might be useful to Slovenians with ancestors from the Slovenian areas now under Austrian rule. The address: *Frau Maria Girll, Mitterstrasse 146, 8055 Neu-Seiersberg, Steiermark, Austria*. Any request should include the person's full name, place of birth (village), and year of birth. There will be a cost involved. This should be determined before a request is finalized.

**QUERIES:** Queries are free to members. Be brief. We will edit as space dictates.

#### **Query 1: PRIJANOVIC**

Nikolaj **PRIJANOVIC**, B 1879-1880 Bedenj 5, Adlesici. Single, to U.S. in 1900's. Father, Perto, or Anton, Mother ? Bohoric. 2 sisters, Ana and Matija in Yugo. 2 half brothers, Rudolf, and Peter in Yugo. 3 half sisters, Angela, Marija, Katarina, in Yugo. 2 half brothers in U.S. George (Yuri), Bringham, and SLC, Utah, Matija, Virginia, MN.

Contact: Mary-Ann Anderson, 1803 6th St. SE, Bemidj, MN 56601

#### **Query 2: REMOS**

Ana **REMOS (RAMOS, ROMOVS)** b 1881 Trata, near Skofija Loka, to Ivan and Marija. Immigrated to U.S. about 1905, married Janez (John) **DREMELJ** in Chicago, IL, on 12 Sept 1909. 1910 census listed 3 children: John, 6 years old, Agnes, 4 years old, Mike, 1 year old. Ana died at Pueblo, CO 18 May 1913. The 3 children disappeared at her death. there is no trace in Illinois records. They may have returned to Slovenia.

Contact: John Dremel, Jr., 3676 David Dr, N. Highlands, CA 95660

#### **Query 3: SILC**

Alojzij **SILC** b 18 Feb 1881 Sodrazcia. Father, Alojzij. Mother, Lucija **ARKO**. Parents b Lipvosica, lived Sodrazcia. 3 sisters, Krescenj, Ivanka, Angele, brother, Janez, in Yugo. In US, 2 sisters, Franciska **PRIJANOVIC**, Virginia, MN, Mary **STARK**, McKinley, MN, and brother, Frank **PRIJANOVIC**, Evelyth, MN

Contact: Mary-Ann Anderson, 1703 6th St. SE, Bemidj, MN 56601

#### **SAVING NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS**

*By: Mary Lou Davison*

Anyone who has ever saved a newspaper clipping knows that with time it yellows, becomes brittle, then it crumbles. There is a commercial solution available that prevents the embrittlement and yellowing caused by acid attack. The solution, Wei To Deacidification Solution, contains methoxyl magnesium methy carbonate and sells for about \$26.00 a quart. I was recently given the following do-it-yourself preservation solution from a librarian. They 2 ingredients are easy to buy and much less expensive than the commercial solution. A word of caution -- do not immediately work on important papers. Practice with everyday cuttings until satisfied the recipe will be safe for your important papers.

### **Recipe for Preserving Newspaper Solution**

Drop a milk of magnesia tablet in a quart bottle of club soda. Mix it up well and refrigerate for about 8 hours. Soak clippings for about an hour. Then remove and place on a towel or nylon screen to soak up any excess solution. Hang them out to dry thoroughly. The soda counteracts the process that gradually eats away at the cellulose in the newspaper. If the papers are stored away carefully, you probably won't have to re-soak them for about 50 years or so. Caution: always avoid aluminum pans. After soaking several articles, the solution starts to tinge yellow. That's the clue to make a new batch of solution. If you are interested in obtaining acid free papers and tapes, etc. You can contact: Light Impressions, 439 Monroe Ave., Rochester, NY, 14607-3717. They will send a fee catalog entitled, "Archival Supplies Catalog."

### **TRACING MY SLOVENIAN FAMILY TO BRAZIL**

*By Mary H. Turvey*

As a novice genealogist 5 years ago, I would have never dreamed how 2 letters to Slovenia have changed our families established feeling of being a very small but close unit. The first letter was written after reading Timothy Beard's book, ***How to Find Your Family Roots***, 1977, New York City, McGraw Hill. It listed Slovenska izseljenska matica, 61001 Ljubljana, Cankarjeva 1/III, Yugoslavia, as one source to trace family members in Slovenia. After waiting about 6 months without response to the first letter, which included \$5.00, I wrote a second time. When I received the birth record of my great Grandfather, Franz Cerne, of Slovenskj Gradec, the names of his parents, and their places of birth. I knew Franz had spent his middle and last years in Rio Claro, Brazil, so using Timothy Beard's book again I found the address of the Public Archives of Rio Claro: Arquivo Pulico E Historio Do Municipio De Rio Claro, Caiza Postal 284, CEP k3500, Rio Claro, Brazil. I wrote to the archives asking for information on the Cerne family, particularly the death records of Franz and his first wife (my Great Grandmother), Marija Rozenstein Cerne. About 6 months later, the director responded, sending the death records of Franz, his second wife, Isabel, and a daughter-in-law. Imagine how I felt learning that Franz had changed his Slovenian name "Franz Cerne" to Francesco Tscherne. Perhaps it was done so that his name would be better suited to the Portuguese language spoken in Rio Claro. Accompanying the certificates was a letter advising me that more information would be forthcoming. Later letters requesting the death certificate of Marija Cerne and information regarding current Rio Claro citizens with the surname Cerne have not been answered. Even the Brazilian Embassy in Washington, DC, and it's office in Chicago were unable to help.

However, the Rio Claro search was completed in a most exciting, emotional way. Aunt Hermine (Franz's granddaughter) and her husband, Bob Dicke, were able to visit Rio Claro this last November. They found Francesco's tomb (from information on the death certificate) and were most elated to meet 21 cousins, all grandchildren of Francesco and his second wife, Isabel Kutenschlaeger Cerne. Aunt Hermine will continue to correspond with her newly found cousins asking more about their ancestry.

The final project will be to trace Franz's ancestors who lived in Slovenskj Gradec. Although Timothy Beard's book has enabled me to trace other ancestors in Luxembourg to 1687, Bavaria to 1747, and northern Ireland to 1839, for this project I will use addresses suggested by the Slovenian Genealogy Society, hoping for a quicker response.

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## **Volume 2 Issue 4 Newsletter of the Slovenian Genealogy Society October 1, 1988**

I hope you enjoy this newsletter issue. I already have three top-notch pieces in waiting in the wings for our 1989 issues. John Dremel, Jr., Marilyn O'Korn-Owen, and Doris V. Cummins, have all submitted information-packed stories about their personal search. My function as editor should be quite simple for the next several newsletters.

We are looking for several typists to put our translation of Trunk in shape for a printer. If you can volunteer some time, this is a nice project that does not require an ability to translate from Slovenian. We also need someone to compile an every name index once it is fully typed.

Father David Stalzer has sent another request for church histories and anniversary bulletins to most parishes with Slovenian founding fathers. We have received histories from St Joseph's in Leadville, Colorado, and Holy Family Church in Kansas City, Kansas. I also received a copy of the **Golden Jubilee Booklet for St. Joseph's Church in Forest City, Pennsylvania**, from Josephine Terchek, one of our members.

### **MY GREAT-GREAT-GRANDFATHER**

*By: Carol Malatesta*

John Magai, (also spelled Magaj and Maggai), was born May 14, 1843 (according to a pension report) in a town now called Semic (See-Mitch). It is a Slovenian region of Yugoslavia formerly called Laibach, Austria, under Maria Theresa (Hapsburg). It is also identified as Akram (Akraim? Akran?), Croatia on John's marriage certificate. John was blond, blue-eyed, 5'6", and of fair complexion. He spoke Slovenian according to Ruth Magai Pravetz' record; it is also likely that he spoke German and perhaps Hungarian. The family name is apparently Hungarian in origin, derived from "Magyar". John originally studied to be a priest, and in fact, entered the monastery at the age of nine.

In the summer of 1987 (following a conference trip to Pecs, Hungary) I went to Semic, Yugoslavia, to check out Ruth Pravetz's notes that John had come from this region. Semic is a small, moderate-sized village nestled in the rolling hills of the Dinaric range of northern Yugoslavia. The entire region is composed of rolling grasslands and forest with tiny villages and farm out-croppings. Semic itself is provincial and dominated by the white and yellow stucco Catholic Church. Some cars were to be seen, but otherwise, it had a turn-of-the-century look to it, with houses lining the streets back-to-back with barn areas, you could see an occasional brown chicken running in an out between the narrow alley-ways. The houses were not all in good repair, but flower-boxes and gardens were in abundance and gave the village a light, sunny feeling.

In Zagreb, I met a Yugoslavian art historian, (a friend of a friend) who orientated me and got me an audience with the priest in Semic, Janko Stampar. On my arrival in Semic, I was met by the priest. He got out the old church records and took me through them. Since I did not speak Slovenian and he did not speak English, we communicated in a broken but serviceable German.

From the parish records (including a certain kind of census record) I was able to substantiate that John's father was almost certainly Joseph J. Magaj who lived at house #5 in Podreber, a hamlet of Semic. Joseph was born 1/20/1811, died 10/11/1891. He married Ana Plut, born 10/21/1820, died 11/25/1891. (Graces's records as well as John's death certificate had similarly indicated that John's parents were Joseph Maggai and Ana. There were two recorded births in the records of Semic, those of a son Jakob, born 7/18/1851, and a daughter, Katrina, born 8/1/1861.

Though there is no record of John's presence in the Maggai/Plut family as per the Semic census records, the gap in years between when the parents were probably married, around 1840, and the first recorded birth in 1851, provides ample space for an earlier birth. John was probably at the monastery when the census was taken. It might have been the custom as in some other places, to enumerate individuals only in situ; in addition, there was sometimes a "tax advantage" for families not to acknowledge all of the members of the family.

There was another Magaj family in the area, Janez (John in Slovenian) Magaj, but he was born 8/26/1884, and married Marya Hlupar; this John was possibly a nephew of Joseph of Podreber and a cousin of our John. The Semic records indicate that the Magaj name in Semic (Laibach, Austria) goes back to the 1600's.

John immigrated to the United States well before the first great wave of Slovenians came to America (1880 to 1914). Slovenia had not been an independent state during the modern era. (See Therstrom, s. [Ed.], Harvard University Press, 1980 for a history of the region.) The territory inhabited by the Slovenes came into the possession of the Hapsburgs by the 15th century where it remained until the collapse of Austria-Hungary in 1918. The Hapsburgs did not permit the formation of a single geopolitical unit known as Slovenia but distributed the Slovene regions of the monarchy among several provinces. Carniola (where Semic is situated) was the central Slovene province, and provided the large majority of Slovene immigrants to the United States. The religious background of 95 percent of the Slovenes was and is at least nominally Roman Catholic. The first coherent Slovene migration to the U.S. was that of the Catholic priests who came in the 19th century to serve as missionaries to the Indian tribes of northern Michigan, Minnesota, and the Dakotas. Up until the early 1880's the total number of Slovene immigrants probably did not exceed 1,000. Economic factors were the primary reasons behind the larger Slovene migrations. Landholding patterns in Slovenia prior to 1915 were characterized by small family farms, some with as little as two or three acres of arable land; few had more than 25 acres. Families were large, and the rural overpopulation that resulted in the 19th century could not be absorbed by the still limited industrial development of the region.

The heaviest influx of Slovenes to the U.S. began in the 1880's; Cleveland became the most significant center of Slovene settlement in the United States. One wonders why and how John Magaj left, why he left before the major migration, and why he settled on the East Coast rather than in the Midwest. In any case, he left before military service. Interestingly, even though there was a reluctance to issue exit permits to young males who had not yet fulfilled their obligations for military service, the Hapsburg authorities made no effort to prevent or limit emigration from Slovene lands. Perhaps John originally left to be a missionary, as those priests before him, but then changed his mind once he got to the U.S.

Stories remembered or recorded by his offspring and grandchildren included more romantic possibilities as to why he left Yugoslavia. Beth Magai, one of his daughters, told Grace Magai McGlew, that there were two versions. One had it that he had killed the son of a highly placed official in a duel and had to flee the country. The other had it that he had done something untoward at the monastery and was asked to leave. Ruth Magai Pravetz' record (taken down when she was a child) indicates John left Yugoslavia to avoid being conscripted in the service.

In any case, he immigrated to the United States in 1861, at the age of 21, and apparently almost immediately entered the service. He enlisted in the New York Cavalry for three years.

The New York archives show a Johannes Magai enlisting on January 23, 1864. He selected the 5th cavalry to serve in. He was "presented by" John Johnson, who also presented John Brauner and Henry Semon on the same day for the same regiment. John Magai's discharge papers show that he served in Company E fifth regiment (The Ira Harris Brigade), until the close of the war (May 4, 1865), and was discharged with his company at Winchester, Virginia. In the Civil War pension records, John indicates that he enlisted on coming to this country and that his former occupation had been that of "college student". (Monastery education in Slovenia was in fact a type of college education at the time.) Later, he married Anna Elsie Gutberlet and finally settled in New Jersey.

#### **A GENEALOGICAL SEARCH WITH A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT TWIST**

By: Frank van Krevel

My grandparents, Ivan Kenda and Alojzija Miekuz, left Slovenia in the 30's. This was a time of economic crisis and struggle for many ordinary people, especially in agricultural areas like Slovenia was in those times. They arrived in the Netherlands and established a new home. However, their children, and now their grandchildren, keep in touch with their homeland, Bovec, Slovenia, called Plezzo when the Italians dominated or Flitsch, when the Austrians ruled.

My grandfather died in 1952. Here in the Netherlands, all I could get from local authorities were dates of birth and arrival in the Netherlands. I would have to get any additional information from Slovenia, itself. I had been to Slovenia many times, but I finally began my genealogical search in Bovec in May, and then September 1987. I started then because I attended the Summer School for the Slovene Language in Kranj in 1986.

In 1987, I visited relatives and friends of my grandparents in Bovec. They told me much about my grandfather, how he had played with his friends in his youth, and which mountains he had climbed when he was an 18 year-old boy. I was especially moved as I walked along the lonely path to the birth house along the Koritnica River, the very path my unknown ancestors had traveled. I went to the local authorities for vital information. The Maticni urad in Bovec gave me the information available there, mainly dates of birth and some added information about brothers and sisters of my grandfather. I also visited the Vicar of Bovec and looked over the parish books, which dated back through 1810. I traced my ancestors on my grandfather's side through 1813.

In January 1988, I returned to Slovenia. I decided to research my grandfather's two brothers who left for Montana in the United States when he left for the Netherlands. My friend, who works for the Slovene Academy of Science and Arts, suggested I visit the Scientific Research Center of the Academy, which studies Slovene emigration. I discovered no additional information, but the center would be an excellent place for others, especially since the Center specializes in Slovene emigration to the United States. Write to:

**Znanstvenoraziskovalni Center Slovenske  
Akademije Znanosti in Umetnosti  
Institut za Slovensko Izseljenstvo  
Novi trg 3 SLO-61000 Ljubljana, Slovenia**

You can write in English. They will then answer in English. The *Slovenska izseljenska matica* also has a large collection of information on migration themes, and they would be pleased to help if they can. For me, my search must turn toward America.

#### **ANCESTOR INDEX CARD FILE**

In an effort to put you in touch with others doing research on the same family names, the Slovenian Genealogy Society is establishing an Ancestor Index Card File. Members and non-members are invited to submit cards on their ancestor with detailed information on each line being researched. Since the Index will be arranged alphabetically by surname, please prepare a separate 3 by 5 card for each ancestor. Type or print clearly the following information:

1. Last name then first name and middle initial (maiden names for females).
2. Date and place of birth. Be specific. If town name has changed with time add dates and new or current name.
3. Date and place of death.
4. Name of spouse. Also prepare a separate card for spouse.
5. List children on back of card, giving name, date, and place of birth.
6. List your name and address, including zip code.
7. Prepare separate cards for allied family groups and for variations in spelling.

If requesting a search of the index, please include a self-addressed, stamped, long envelope, with \$1.00. Limit each request to three surnames. [An example was included on the original newsletter.]

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1988 Issues

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