

This document consists of a series of articles taken from *Heufeld Eheschließungen und Sterbefälle* by Hans Gerhardt and translated by Henry Fischer. It deals with the French villages in Banat, their settlement and development, their ties with their origins, and the post World War II settlement of Banaters in France.

This article explains how Nikolaus Hess, a Banater whose ancestors came from Lorraine, established contact with his ancestral homeland and kept that connection alive through reciprocal visits and by building a museum in Banat. The author describes his own visit to Banat in 1938 and refers to Banaters transplanted to France after World War II.

Taken from Heufeld Eheschließungen und Sterbefälle by Hans Gerhardt. Translated by Henry Fischer.

Bei den Lothringer des jugoslawischen Banates 1938

(Among the People from Lorraine in the Yugoslavian Banat in 1938)

by M. René Hombourger

Towards the end of 1925 correspondence was forwarded to the Dean of the Cathedral in Metz in his capacity as General Secretary of the diocese. It was a letter addressed to the “esteemed and worthy parish church of Metz.”

This letter, written in French, was from a certain, Nikolaus Hess, a descendant of a family from Lorraine that had left its homeland in the 18th Century and had settled in the Banat which was then under the authority and jurisdiction of the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary.

These emigrants were invited to come to the Banat by the Empress Maria Theresia in 1770 and were settled in three locales which were given typical names from Lorraine. They were Charleville, St. Hubert and St. Barbe (St. Barbara). Since then, the latter of three had been renamed Seultour because of the one remaining tower that the settlers found still standing when they arrived, which was a reminder of the century long former Turkish occupation of the land.

Despite that the inhabitants chose St. Barbara as the patron defender of Seultour.

A lively correspondence between Adam, the Dean of the Cathedral of the esteemed and worthy parish church of Metz and the sender of the letter followed; leading to the day when the said, Nikolaus Hess came to visit the locale from which his forebears had emigrated approximately 150 years before.

The impressions this simple farmer had about his trip were reported in a brochure he wrote in German and had printed at his own cost in 1928.

His description and account of the first steps he took on the soil of his forebears along the Mosel is very moving. (Mosel Region). "Now I am in Lorraine. What joy it is that I experience. I feel very much at home. I made my way to the church to thank God for having reached my goal on this journey."

Nikolaus Hess next made his way to Sarraltroff to trace his ancestors back to 1670.

In Marsal he discovered the same family names in the baptismal register there that were common in the parish records of the three communities in the Banat.

Nikolaus Hess and Adam, the Dean of the Cathedral met at the railway station in Metz and happily returned each other's photographs.

Following his audience with Magister Pelt, there was a sightseeing tour of the city of Metz and then his pilgrimage to St. Hubert, Charleville and St. Barbe the places of origin of the three Lorraine villagers in the Banat. He set himself to the task of writing a brochure that was entitled, "My Journey to Lorraine." It includes a description of the land of Lorraine and its geography, topography, customs and traditions.

He undertook a similar journey to France a second time in December 1937 along with his countryman, Nikolaus Muschong. At first they remained in Nancy where they were met and welcomed by our now deceased Brother André Rosambert who had frequently visited the villages founded by settlers from Lorraine in the Banat.

After their visit in Nancy the two farmers spent time in Metz where they met Adam, the Dean of the Cathedral who on his part would return their visit in 1929.

They were graciously welcomed by the local officials in St. Hubert, Charleville and St. Barbe. They conversed about the Battle of Verdun and the wonders of the various pavilions at the International World's Exposition in Paris that the workers had built along the banks of the Seine.

They participated in a banquet in Paris that was organized by the Friends of Yugoslavia under the chairmanship of Louis Martin of Lorraine, the parliamentary deputy of the legendary Lavalliere.

Some time between his first and second trip to France, Nikolaus Hess had published a book entitled, "Heimatbuch der drei Schwestergemeinden Sveti Hubert, Charlevil und Soltur im Banat 1770-1927." (Homeland book of the Three Sister Communities of St. Hubert, Charleville and Soltur in the Banat 1770-1927). It includes a variety of reports about the events that took place in the three villages from the time of the arrival of the emigrants from Lorraine along with glowing praise for the author by Bishop H. Pelt, the parish priest in Charleville and the mayor of St. Barbe and St. Hubert.

There is also an introduction and dedication in memory of the settlers from Lorraine in the Banat written by Adam, the Dean of the Cathedral in March of 1926 and in addition there was a short history of our province.

Nikolaus Hess reminds us that the colonists from Lorraine who settled in the Banat were attracted by the "Colonization Patent" of the Habsburg Empress Maria Theresia which promised them land, wood for building, cooking and heating, exemption from military service and taxes and compensation for resettlement costs and transportation.

The first of them came into the region of Charleville, St. Hubert and Soltur in 1765 and from 1769 and 1770.

In 1772 St. Hubert had 320 inhabitants, Charleville 272 and Soltur 283. One hundred years later in 1870 there was a population of 1,426 in St. Hubert. In Charleville there were 805 inhabitants and in Soltur there were 917. Towards the end of 1925 according to the official census taken and contained in Hess' Homeland Book, St. Hubert's population consisted of 710 males and 744 females who were living in 253 houses. Charleville had a population of 737 of whom 360 were male and 377 were female residing in 162 houses. Soltur had 955 inhabitants of whom 456 were male and 499 were female living in 214 houses.

He rather compellingly praises the location and situation of the three communities in north western Yugoslavia several kilometres from the Romanian border and in close proximity to the city of Temesvár (Romanian Banat).

I personally had the privilege of being a guest in the these villages founded by settlers from Lorraine in 1938 while I was providing eye witness coverage of events in central Europe for the "*Petit Journal*" (Small Journal) and the *Revue Hebdomadaire* (Weekly News).

I found a very attentive and knowledgeable guide in the person of Nikolaus Hess who warmly welcomed me into his family and made me better aware of the customs and traditions in the three villages.

The majority of the houses and other buildings at that time were constructed out of bricks as well as aluminum, straw and chaff. There were two wings, one to the right and the other to the left; a yard enclosed with a fence with a locked broad gate. The houses were painted in lively colours, especially rose and green while others are whitewashed. One wing of the house was reserved for the residents and the other consisted of a hay loft and stable. There were usually several trees in the yard and a well with a swivel-handled pump which was also still common in the gardens of vegetable growers in Thionville back in Lorraine.

A long roof covered porch runs alongside the house leading to the yard and the kitchen with an oven installed in the wall by masons. The other rooms face the street. Not to be forgotten was the provision of a pantry called a "*Speis*" that served as a store room.

The church and cemetery belong to the three communities. The church was built in 1788 and was constructed using loam, clay and willow wattles. The crosses in the cemetery are of white stone and there is also the traditional cenotaph for the soldiers who served and fell in battle and the relief figures wear Hungarian uniforms.

It was from here in this cemetery where Nikolaus Hess had taken some earth with him on his first trip to Lorraine where he placed it in the small cemetery of the locale in the Mosel region from which his forebears had emigrated.

Adam, the Dean of the Cathedral, did the same as a reminder of his visit to the three sister communities and took some earth from the cemetery and would later place it in the graves of his parents on his return to his own home country.

During my stay in the Banat my attention was drawn to two particular characteristics of the three villages and their inhabitants. One is in the social sense, the solidarity of the inhabitants of the three sister communities and the other their veneration of their upbringing and their recollection of their memories associated with Lorraine.

According to local custom, on Sunday, following Mass the women make their way home and the men gather at the library or the local clubhouse for shopkeepers and tradesmen. There are two such establishments in St. Hubert where one can feel at ease and share and talk with others drinking coffee in a large festive hall.

They meet there to discuss life in the community and its inhabitants; the state of the agricultural economy; the bringing in of the harvest and the prices crops will fetch; reading newspapers or magazines; bowling or taking a glass of wine or beer.

A portion of the hall was reserved for the youth which also served as a library and a dance hall.

Another special feature of the three sister communities was the Lorraine Museum, the brainchild of Nikolaus Hess.

At that time the condition of the museum was hardly conducive to what it was designed to provide. The exhibits consisted mostly of photographs that had been donated by visitors from Lorraine, various objects and mementos of the local inhabitants. An example of that was a book about clocks left behind by an ancestor. Another book was entitled, "The Only True Guide for Christian Piety and Practice." Instructions for pious souls that provide a rich reward in indulgences for those who join the Order of the Brothers of the Guardian Angels. The New Literary Review Issue. Proof read and edited in the newest and best style. I noticed that old words no longer used were underlined with what appeared to have been a sharp pen. It was published in Cologne by Wilhelm in the year 1719 with permission from the distinguished "Metternich Bookshop" in Grifon.

There was also the record of a baptism in the Lorraine Museum drawn up in this way:

"An excerpt from the baptismal register of the parish of Bertrambois from the year 1762. On July 16th of the year 1762, Dominicus, the son of Jakob Halbeher de Labrehen (the father) and Maria-Magdalena Margot (the mother) was born and baptized. His Godfather is Dominicus Richi and his Godmother is Agnes Richi, a fine lad and maiden from Heille in the parish of St. Quirin. The Godfather signed the register and the Godmother verbally assented because she did not know how to write."

This baptismal "certificate" was found in the possession of the Halbherr family from Soltur who without a doubt are descendants of the Halbeher family that originated in Bertrambois.

As we can easily understand family names changed dramatically either due to an alteration of them during the emigration and the numerous registrations undertaken by various state officials who were not French speaking or the entry of the family name in the land assignment records at the time of settlement. The mangling and mistakes could often have rather comical results.

For these reasons we find distortions of the names of the settlers from Lorraine in the 18th Century such as Barmantje (*Parrmentier*), Dippong (*Dupont*), Dippold (*Thiebaut*), Wattreng (*Vautrin*), Rischar (*Richard*), Schorsch (*Georges*), Muschong (*Mougeon*), Perreng (*Perrin*), Massong (*Masson*), Hujjon (*Houillon*), Rossjer (*Rosier*) and all kinds of other names.

Nikolaus Hess resolved to find the means to add new rooms to the Lorraine Museum.

The inhabitants of the three communities were assessed portions of the costs to make his dream a reality either by giving money or providing designated hours of labour during the construction.

We notice the date of his appeal: January 1939.

Within ten months the thunderclap of the marching boots of the "brown" hordes (Translator's Note: This is an illusion to Hitler's Brown Shirts) could be heard across the map of central Europe as Austria soon no longer existed as an independent nation state and the same would apply to Czechoslovakia very shortly afterwards. Hungary began to ally itself with the Third Reich and then joined in the invasion of Yugoslavia which capitulated on April 17, 1941.

What would become of the farmers in the three Lorraine inhabited villages in the face of the perils that were unleashed with the German occupation? Partisan warfare soon engulfed all of the non-Slavic settlements in the Banat.

A novel published in 1953 written by Pierre-Henri Simon is about 1,200 deportees of German origin who had been expelled to Germany for resettlement by the Yugoslavian government authorities.

After being locked inside forty cattle cars for two weeks they finally ended up in the Trümmer Station (railway) in Stuttgart at Christmas 1945.

In their fear and anxiety, those onboard asked themselves where their American escorts would send them the next day.

"What precisely did the American say?" asked one of the others onboard.

"You mean we are being sent to France?" He responded after hearing their answer.

"Going to France is good news," one returnee said to another.

"Very good news."

France just recently freed from Hitler's troops openly and warmly welcomed the German refugees from the Banat.

"Maybe it's because we are now standing on the soil of Lorraine," said one and then because of the reception they received and another added.

"I think it was because there were so many of our ancestors who settled in the Banat originally came from here."

But another assured them that although they had emigrated from here during the reign of Louis XVI he doubted that there were many Frenchmen who remembered or were even aware of the fact.

The latter spoke on behalf of the author who probably had his own grounds for writing what he did his own reasons which he never divulged.

We are challenged by what happened and bear a burden of sorrow.

If only the inhabitants of the three far distant Lorraine villages in the Banat would have had the opportunity and could have retraced the route taken by their forebears in the far distant past as had Nikolaus Hess decades before.

Without a doubt their worries and cares during their first five years in their newly adopted land were many but they were bearable.

(In a communiqué from M. Hiegel)

"On February 6th, I wrote a blunt letter to the Ambassador of the Peoples' Republic of Yugoslavia in Paris. I declared that the vicissitudes of the war had not spared the three communities as well as its aftermath they had to endure. I asked him if it was permissible for me to question what would become of them in light of what has transpired. I told him,

"Mr. Ambassador no one is more informed and qualified than yourself to answer these questions and concerns I raise." To this day I have not received an answer to my letter. Without a doubt I never will."

From now on the family names of the settlers from Lorraine will have to rest on the shoulders of our memories like the yellowed pages in accountant's old ledger along with the names of the three villages which are so far away from us where they once settled two centuries ago.

This article discusses how cultural connections were re-established between Lorraine Banaters and their originating province in France. It briefly describes the post-war situation and how some Banaters were relocated to France.

Taken from Heufeld Eheschließungen und Sterbefälle by Hans Gerhardt. Translated by Henry Fischer.

**Ergänzung zu den Mitteilungen
des René Hombourger**

**über die Siedler aus Lothringen ins Banat im 18. Jahrhundert
von M. Charles Hiegel**

**(A Supplement to the Information
of M. René Hombourger**

**With Regard to the Settlers from Lorraine in the Banat in the 18th Century)
by M. Charles Hiegel**

Dear Mr. President, I hope you will allow me to make use of the published thoughts of Mr. Hombourger and my conclusions as a back up to the earlier conference that was held in this regard and I think it will be of interest to my fellow workers.

A rich literature exists with respect to the emigration, especially to that of the settlers from Lorraine to the Banat and the Batschka in the 18th Century particularly an article in the periodical "Historical Information" published in 1966 and written by Henri Hiegel.

In two articles that appeared in the Yearbook of the Society of History and Archaeology in Lorraine in 1970 and 1971 we ourselves elucidated about the matter of the emigration from Lorraine to the USA in the 19th Century which is still fresh in our memories and an interesting point of view that I presented to the Faculty of Literature in Metz during the third semester.

In these series of articles we have also described the kinds of conditions and stipulations associated with the emigration from Lorraine and what kind of meagre regulations that

were put into effect on the part of the local and central authorities to prevent or hinder the emigration.

The research work was done in collaboration with and under the leadership of our colleague, in his role as Archivist at the State Archives in Arlon related to the emigration from Luxembourg to the Banat in the 18th Century which invariably arrived at the same conclusion which we had come to ourselves.

100,000 emigrants are reputed to have gone to the Banat but we need to point out that this estimated number is without a doubt lower than their actual numbers because the statistics given at that time are not reliable. Not all of the emigrants registered with the authorities (in Vienna) before they went on to the new territories and settled there. We estimate that an additional 20,000 emigrants from Lorraine were involved and somewhat less than one quarter of them were French-speaking, coming mainly from the regions of Vigy, Dieuze, Château-Salins, Blâmont and Lunéville. The great majority of the Lorraine emigrants came from the German-speaking regions of their homeland.

The French-speaking colonists were settled in villages with characteristic French names such as Charleville, St. Hubert, St. Nikolaus, St. Michael, Mercydorf, Soltur (a single standing tower) and assimilated with German-speaking colonists who were from Lorraine or from other areas of Germany such as the Bishopric of Trier. For those who were French-speaking there were also cases where the placement of non-French priests by the authorities assisted in the process.

In 1878 Professor Louis Hecht of the University of Nancy made contact with the descendants of the settlers and as of 1920 our former fellow worker André Rosambert and the Dean of the Cathedral in Metz, Louis Adam, General Secretary of the bishopric of Metz also did the same.

The French government, encouraged by these contacts, established a special travel fund for that purpose by scholars and students.

The visits of Nikolaus Hess of St. Hubert in 1927 and 1937 gave birth to a study group in Saaltroff in the Saarburg region which was led by various prominent men of Lorraine like Rosambert and Louis Adam.

In an article in the periodical "Historical Information" Henri Hiegel wrote about the fate of the inhabitants of the Banat of German descent. During the advance of the Russian Army in the autumn of 1944, 300,000 of them fled to Silesia, Austria and Germany. Around 200,000 of them remained at home who were then faced with the draconian measures taken against them by the Russians as well as the Serbian and Romanian Partisans, matters which I will not address. Excesses always follow the end of every war.

I do, however, want to remember the fate of Nikolaus Hess who had been welcomed with open arms among us before the war and was shot by the Partisans.

Mr. Rosambert informed Henri Hiegel that Nikolaus Hess had raised the French flag in his yard to welcome the Russian troops, who misinterpreted the meaning assuming he was flying the royal standard of the King.

The Lorraine museum he had personally founded in St. Hubert was destroyed. In 1950 there were still 75,000 Germans living in the Banat, while 163,000 were in Germany, 150,000 in Austria and 15,000 in other countries including 3,800 in France. The latter found refuge in the region of Mühlhausen in Dordogne (The Government Department of south-western France) and especially in the Department of Vaucluse (southern France) in La Roques-sur-Pernes near Carpentras with thanks due to Robert Schumann and Gabriel Hoquard for their support.

Following the change in their situation due to the fate they had suffered after the last war there was a necessary period of adjustment that the former inhabitants of the Banat now settled in Germany and Austria went through before they began to search for and found their roots.

They did not stop researching and writing about their former homeland.

Numerous books about their former home communities in the Banat, both in Romania and Yugoslavia, began to appear in the last ten years especially at the initiative of the Danube Swabian Cultural Association in Saarland with their headquarters in Homburg, (not to praise ourselves too much on our achievements.)

In all of their monographs the families from Lorraine are identifiable even though the names of the colonists in the 18th Century are often badly mangled.

On the other hand the emigrants to the USA like the former Banat Swabians are also in search of their forebears.

In this field of research with regard to the emigrants from Lorraine I have welcomed an ongoing correspondence with many inquirers with respect to their family origins in the Archives of the District of Mosel, with always more and more questions and new information on this theme. Just this past week I received a letter from an emigrant from Lorraine whose origins were in Enchenberg in Bitche who is now living in Austria.

To end with, let me share the following. A writer from Saargemünden went to Romania in 1970 and visited the region around Temesvár where he met a family whose ancestral origins were in Lorraine.

This article gives a brief historical background to the French villages in Banat, and then tells of the efforts of Hans Lamesfeld to arrange the resettlement of post-war Banat refugees in France.

Taken from Heufeld Eheschließungen und Sterbefälle by Hans Gerhardt. Translated by Henry Fischer.

Vaucluse: Diese rumänen mit erstaunlichem Schicksal

(Vaucluse: This Romanian Has Had an Astonishing Destiny)

by Philippe Mathieu

From the Periodical "Southern France" April 9, 1990

Hans Lamesfeld was an exceptional man: With just a doll he made to present to the Prime Minister as a gift along with a simple letter he wrote, he accomplished the resettlement of 10,000 refugees from the Banat to France in 1948.

It was several weeks ago that from among the burning day-to-day international issues the news' spotlight shone on a Romanian city and Temesvár stepped out of anonymity.

There were many people in France who were well acquainted and familiar with this city and the region where it is located near the borders of Romania, Yugoslavia and Hungary.

They had good grounds for knowing this because that is where they were born and left there under painful circumstances only 45 years ago.

From the name of this melancholy region known as the Banat, they received their designation as Banat Swabians.

These descendants of French colonists returned to France a thousand kilometres away after suffering many difficulties and calamities in the Second World War and settled here.

Many of them were scattered and dispersed across the country, but because of a strong sense of community among about twenty families, they chose to settle in the small nearly-abandoned French village of La Roque-sur-Pernes in the vicinity of Carpentras in the Department of Vaucluse.

How this story drew its first breath

The history of the Banat Swabians lasted for more than two centuries. Maria Theresia of Austria wanted to colonize an extended swampy region. She issued an invitation to settle there to the people of Alsace, Lorraine and Burgundy as well as the inhabitants of the Rhineland and the Pfalz (Palatinate) and promised them fertile land. The reality was, however, somewhat different.

Those who responded went east in droves and the price they paid for doing so was very high. From among the first 40,000 colonists, 38,000 of them were either ruined in health or perished during the first years.

After that, despite their bitterness about their situation they also had to withstand the official attempts to Germanize and Magyarize them.

Located and settled in a border region they were tossed to and fro by the winds of change always at their backs, if we can believe their history.

During the Second World War many of them were recruited into the German Army and countless numbers of them remained in the snow around Stalingrad.

Close to the end of the war those who identified themselves as Germans joined the evacuation with the retreating German troops as the Russians advanced into the Banat. They later found themselves in the hands of the Russians in Austria where they had sought to find refuge. They were without hope; faced an uncertain future and were now without a homeland to which they could return.

One man, also a refugee, took his countrymen's fate into his own hands. This man was Hans Lamesfeld.

Above all a Frenchman

The former Romanian Ministry of Finance always maintained a close relationship with France.

When faced with the problem of finding another country to live in and begin a new life at the end of the 1940s Hans Lamesfeld did not seek a German alternative but rather his choice was France.

He often went to the French Zone of Occupation to meet various French officers.

To keep himself busy to avoid apathy, he had the idea of creating ten dolls and dressing them in the traditional costume of the Banat Swabians. Because a gift is not something that most people would turn down, Hans Lamesfeld climbed up the ladder of the military hierarchy until he could offer one to a colonel.

With the help of the latter he ended up presenting a doll to the French Prime Minister--it was Robert Schumann.

Because it was forbidden for refugees to correspond with officialdom, he hid a letter in the underwear of the doll to get the attention of the Prime Minister hoping to steer him in the direction towards the needs of the descendants of the French settlers in the Banat.

Robert Schumann read the letter and through his support and the good will of the French government, several thousand Banat Swabians were settled in France.

Through his efforts the ruined and abandoned village of La Roque-sur-Pernes that had suffered the same fate as countless others as a result of the war was reborn because of his risk taking in bringing about its resettlement with some Banat Swabian families.

Hans Lamesfeld is dead. He died ten years ago and rests in the cemetery in Carpentras.

Today there are names that still sound Alsatian on packages and letters from La Roque that seem foreign to the ears of most in the these parts.

In the nearby community of Beaucet where this man later moved, his daughter Anne Lyse Giry keeps the memories of her father alive.

A photograph on his writing desk bears the following words:

"Hans Lamesfeld was always clearly bound to France."

Philippe Mathieu

This article discusses the economic and cultural adjustments of Banaters who were transplanted to France after World War II.

Taken from Heufeld Eheschließungen und Sterbefälle by Hans Gerhardt. Translated by Henry Fischer.

Akkulturationsprobleme am Beispiel von La Roque (Frankreich)

(Acculturation Problems: The Example of La Roque (France))

by Annemie Schenk

In 1932, Richard Thurnwald published an article entitled, "The Psychology of Acculturation" in the *American Anthropologist*. In it, he set forth the first fundamentals of ethnological research with respect to the concept of acculturation in a modern sense that has had great importance in scientific circles ever since then. Herskovits, Linton and above all Redfield have engaged in research with regard to acculturation but were unable to take it much farther. Wolfgang Rudolph took a step back from their position and suggested that it appeared that the empirical evidence took priority over the theoretical. The definitions demonstrate that they are only useful if they "closely prop up the factual observations," and "whether the existing possibilities can carry out the practical necessary research." Rudolph demonstrates that it is necessary that the definition of acculturation concepts must be formulated in generalities and not specifics, "There are processes and phenomena associated with acculturation that must be understood either through the direct or indirect contact between cultures that lead to cultural change and mutation."

Problems around acculturation first came to the attention of ethnologists. But the process of adaptation that set in through cultural contact to a change in culture did not find a place in their field of research and study. On the other hand, the problems related to acculturation also demanded and had the attention of folklorists. The definitions of the concepts with respect to acculturation that were developed by the ethnologists were carried over without modification into the folklorist's own sphere of activity: the examination of the process of adjustment that occurs with the meeting and blending of various national groups and communities. The research with regard to minorities among folklorists has seldom considered this aspect among such groups. We refer to the presentation of Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann.

In what follows, we will attempt to do this through observations that were made of a small much overlooked group in order to exhibit several formulations of a question that is important for folklore acculturation research. The material was assembled during a study visit carried out in the village of La Roque in southern France.

La Roque-sur-Pernes, located approximately 30 kilometres north east of Avignon, belonged to those French villages that experienced a loss of population ever since the end of the 19th Century right up to the end of the Second World War. Despite difficulties towards the end of 1950 a re-settlement of the village in which very few French people were living was undertaken by a group of Danube Swabians who were overwhelmingly from the Banat. As a result of the war and events that took place in Yugoslavia and Romania they had fled or were expelled and were eventually offered the opportunity to emigrate to France. The group numbered in the neighbourhood of 150 persons.

These settlers that sought to get back on their feet in France had been independent farmers or agricultural labourers in the Banat. They had primarily been engaged in the cultivation of wheat and corn. They had fruit orchards and vineyards solely to meet their own needs. In La Roque they found a completely different agricultural situation. To a great degree the raising of grain and cereal crops was next to impossible in this region where fruit orchards and vineyards were the mainstay of agricultural production. The local economy provided a special stimulus as did the influences exerted by the outside world of southern France to act as a starting point for the acculturation process that could be easily observed. In this case in particular the Banat Swabians were instructed by both the example and guidance of French farmers in the neighbourhood. In light of this new situation, the more quickly the adjustments were made the greater was the possibility of their achieving a profitable financial return for their work. The settlers from the Banat made these insights their own so that the products the market required and demanded determined what they grew and produced. This demonstrated itself in the choice of what they planted. They turned to modern methods formerly unknown to them in combating crop damage by pests and vermin that the co-operatives which they joined made available to them. The majority of the diseases that attacked their fruit plantings were unknown to them in the Banat or were considered unimportant to them at the time. They learned to fear these diseases in Provence and made themselves familiar with and practiced the methods that they learned from their neighbours. The pruning method they employed on their trees now also shows the influence of fruit orchards in southern France. The settlers

from the Banat abandoned their own former technique and let the trees grow broader and lower. The advantage became obvious to them. It made picking the produce easier and quicker. The tendency for fruit to spoil did not allow for delay in its harvesting and getting it to market.

The mild climate of Provence brought another necessary adaptation with it for the Banat settlers. The planning and division of work was undertaken in a totally different way. The agricultural yearly cycle with a rest period in the severe winter months in the Banat was abandoned for another rhythm to the annual work cycle. The settlers adjusted to this gladly and quickly. They perceived this as a great alleviation from work in the vineyards and the time involved in planting of fruit saplings which was now spread out over the entire year while a great deal of the field work could also be done in late Fall and even in the winter months.

The farms of the Banat settlers were a family business and undertaking. Outside workers were only required during the harvesting and these seasonal workers were mostly Spaniards. In this period of adjustment several of the Banat settlers did not adapt but continued in the time honoured cultivation of the fields, orchards and vineyards, using donkeys instead of tractors. An observer might conclude that these Banat farmers were persevering in their old familiar ways of farming and had even gone so far as to replace horses with modest and tenacious donkeys. This, however, was a false conclusion. They could not get a driver's license because of their lack of knowledge of the French language. It was not possible for them to motorize their farming operation which also precluded any expansion of their landholdings or acreage that they cultivated.

This short overview of the economic activities of the Banat settlers in southern France shows us that in economic terms the group adapted well to their surroundings. But it must also be noted that the outside pressures of acculturation were very strong. The settlers from the Banat had to give in to them if they wanted to maintain and retain their agricultural vocation and calling in a new and foreign setting.

Alongside the economic situation and conditions in their new home the language factor was a major force in acculturation. The changes that appear in the area of language are particularly noticeable to the observer. The blended German dialect of the Banat which was still familiar and used by all of the original settlers was gradually abandoned by most of those who were younger in favour of the French language. The point at which only the French spoken in the Midi will be spoken solely in La Roque is only a matter of time.

Momentarily, however, the use of both languages is now limited to members of various age groups. The children and the younger population under 35 years of age converse in French while the older people only speak German to one another. But most know the language of their new homeland well enough in going about their daily and business affairs; the men at the fruit markets and the co-operatives and the women when they do their shopping. Friendly relationships with French farmers in the area have developed even though there are still great difficulties in understanding one another because of language limitations. The oldest people understand very little of the French language and

are not capable of carrying on a conversation in French. They claim they are too old to learn another language. They informed the observers that in the Banat that in addition to their German dialect they spoke Hungarian, Romanian or Serbo-Croatian. Furthermore they told them that very often French terms and expressions are difficult for them to remember and they are only comfortable speaking in their own language.

What happens to the children in all of this? Many of them understand the dialect quite well but the younger children have difficulty speaking it because it is only necessary to do so when they are around their grandparents. The school plays the leading role in the linguistic acculturation process since all instruction is in French as would be expected. The teacher also endeavours to educate the adults in providing courses with the objective of deepening their knowledge of French. Above all, he sought to reach those just beyond school age at the time of their settlement in the village and provided instruction in spelling correctly for those who had a working knowledge of the spoken language but were unable to write it. The teacher's experiment was to prove unsuccessful due to a shortage of participants in the courses.

The youth of the village have the closest ties and contacts with the French language and the outside world and conform to the lifestyle of their comrades in the nearby French town. They want to be like everyone else. The life which their parents lived in the Banat appears old fashioned and intolerable to a great degree. As a result there is no inclination to use the Banat dialect of their parents when they are at home. The fathers and mothers of these young people speak to them in German but are usually answered in French and this custom of using both languages in the inner life of families is very common. In marriages between the Banat families and the French, the French language always becomes dominant for obvious reasons. Their children in turn no longer understand the Banat dialect. This has repercussions for their grandparents who on their part have no working knowledge of French and are unable to communicate with them.

In the range of factors that assist in the linguistic acculturation are the worship services which also play an important role. They are held in the language of the country to the sorrow of the older ladies. (With the exception of one family all of the other Banat settlers are Roman Catholic.)

The linguistic acculturation process in La Roque does not entirely describe the state of the relationship between the French language and the Banat German dialect. The dialect itself has undergone some small changes from interaction with the French language. For example it has expanded its vocabulary. There are various things with which they were not familiar in the Banat and they have taken over the French designations for them. In any conversation carried on in the dialect there are always some French phrases, words or expressions thrown in. In the forms of greeting that are used and the giving of names the French influence is quite obvious.

Comparing the economic and linguistic acculturation it is clear that the latter is far less advanced at this point. It is more difficult to draw a final conclusion about it because, unlike the economic issue, it is not a question of survival. It can be concluded that the

linguistic acculturation will be much slower than the economic. It is also rather illuminating that the two courses travel in different directions: namely in one case, the takeover of the French language and in the other the alteration of the Banat dialect.

The results of acculturation have been briefly sketched out of two life situations we have observed in La Roque. It demonstrates that various factors can influence the adaptation process in which this field of research is engaged. In every specific case the process and the rhythm of the changes impact equally upon one another. Nevertheless the influence of the outside world attains less intensity when the vision and interests of the members of the group remain dominant.

This is a series of articles from one or more local newspapers in Lorraine concerning a visit in 1994 by several former Banaters, now living near Karlsfeld in Bavaria, who returned to their ancestral home villages on a homecoming pilgrimage. This translation may seem oddly formatted, but it is formatted as close to the original as possible.

Taken from Heufeld Eheschließungen und Sterbefälle by Hans Gerhardt. Translated by Henry Fischer.

19.06.1994

In Saint Hubert, Saint Barbara and Charleville

TWENTY PERSONS FROM THE BANAT VISIT THE HOMELAND OF THEIR ANCESTORS:

224 years after their ancestors had emigrated from Lorraine in 1770 and settled in the Banat the visitors will make a pilgrimage to Saint Hubert, St. Barbara and Charleville-sous- Bois on June 24, 25, 26.

METZ. The Banat, have you heard of it? Only a negligible few young people of today and perhaps some of the elderly can answer that straight away. The Banat is truly a land which no longer exists even though it existed as an entity during the 200 years when it was ruled by Austria-Hungary. The descendants of the settlers from Lorraine lived down there as well as in Hungary, the Vojvodina (Batschka) and Romania or somewhere else on all five continents after their dispersion as a result of the Second World War.

There is a group of people coming on a pilgrimage to St. Hubert, St. Barbara and Charleville on June 24, 25, 26. They made contact with the region thanks to the efforts of a group of men from the area who are retired pensioners with a passionate interest in local historical matters. There are various individuals among them who have memories of the fate of the colonists from Lorraine and others who know of the misery suffered by their descendants in their expulsion from Central Europe.

That which we call the Banat (a small region) had been divided up by Hungary, Romania and the Vojvodina of Yugoslavia. It had previously been turned into a wasteland and wilderness by the Turks which led to the Austrian Empire's plan to repopulate it under the leadership of Count Florimund von Mercy of Lorraine who recruited would-be colonists in Lorraine to make the land fertile and fruitful again and settled them there. At first the emigration was sporadic and was then spread over a fifty year time span in which a total of more than 6,000 families from Lorraine were settled in the Banat.

ON THE TRAIL OF NIKOLAUS HESS

Over the years, a small association that was attentive to historical matters gathered together as part of a broadly based movement. An eminent French group in Lorraine established connections with the three sister communities of St. Hubert, St. Barbara and Charleville in what is now in the present-day Vojvodina and are now named Charleville, St. Hubert and Seultour.

The memories of Lorraine passed on from one generation to another appear rather unreliable from some people's perspective. In 1927 an ardent historian, Nikolaus Hess who had long been engaged in the completion of an accurate account of the history and life of the three sister communities in the Banat undertook a trip to Lorraine for that purpose. Mr. Marcel Lambertrissel, the deputy mayor of St. Hubert has interpreted what this step meant for Hess in terms of the overview he gained about the various locales associated with his forebears during his visit there that he shared with the general public.

Historical circles lost sight of the unfortunate Banat Swabians who were divided up into three separate nations as a result of the Treaty of Trianon. Following their occupation by Germany in the Second World War their Banat Swabian populations were seen as citizens of the Third Reich. They now found themselves in the armed forces of Germany since, after all, they were Germans. Following the end of the war the Partisans in Yugoslavia saw no difference between them and any other Germans and the Banat Swabians were victims of mass shootings (Nikolaus Hess was part of one of them) in the three sister communities as elsewhere. The survivors hid the bell of the church in Seultour.

Today they live in 17 different countries and they organize regular gatherings in Karlsfeld in Bavaria an area where most of them settled. They have erected a monument there in memory of the three sister communities in which a portion of the bell from Seultour is incorporated.

A FINE STORY ABOUT FRIENDSHIP

This short history of the relationship between Lorraine and the Banat Swabians must be credited to the efforts and knowledge of a group of pensioners from Charleville-sous-Bois, St. Hubert and St. Barbara that includes Albert Boulanger, Andre Dicop, Jean-Louis Berthol, Marcel Lambertrissel and Louis Alfred. Not content with simply assembling old documents with regard to the experiences and lives of the settlers in the

Banat from Lorraine they attempted to establish relationships between those living in Lorraine with those who lived in the Banat for the sake of greater clarity in understanding one another and establishing a two way friendship.

Their counterparts assembled in Karlsfeld in September of last year where they were welcomed with a great deal of deep emotion. Since then the relationship has deepened greatly to the point that twenty persons who had lived in the three communities in the Banat are coming to Lorraine with the desire to follow in the footsteps of Nikolaus Hess on a pilgrimage to the home villages of their ancestors. They are coming to Charleville-sous-Bois on June 24th; St. Hubert on the 25th and St. Barbara on the 26th.

In each of these communities the community leaders will welcome them and have a dinner in their honour and all are prepared to share information about the past and present of the area.

Naturally, many of the contacts and relationships that develop will knit them together in the bonds of a beautiful friendship in their three day visit that will beg for a *Wiedersehen*.

ST. BARBARA
22.06.1994

ON SUNDAY THE COMMUNITY CONNECTS WITH ITS PAST.
THE INHABITANTS OF THE COMMUNITY WILL EXPERIENCE
A SIGNIFICANT EVENT IN ITS HISTORY ON SUNDAY JUNE 26TH

The fact is that in 1770 several of our families voluntarily emigrated and founded a community in the Austrian Banat that was given the name St. Barbara which was later changed to Seultour and lies close in vicinity to Charleville and St. Hubert.

Some descendants of these settlers, who are twenty in number, have come to celebrate a kind of pilgrimage on their part this Sunday coming here to the source of their origins. They are travelling in the footsteps of their countryman Nikolaus Hess who relived the heroic adventure of his ancestors in 1927 when he went about here with the then mayor, Joseph Aubutin. Our guests come as former farmers to inspect the new methods of agriculture practices among us, and some specialties like Cristian Perrin and his breeding of Maine-Anjou livestock and Gilbert Ecker will give a milking demonstration.

After taking a walk along the streets of our village they will attend Mass celebrated by Abbot Ott, assisted by the choirs of St. Barbara, Charleville-sous-Bois and St. Hubert. They will be accompanied by the organist Mrs. Lambertrissel. At the end of their tour they will arrive at the Basilica which was the last stage on medieval pilgrimages.

Subsequently, Mr. Conrad, the mayor, accompanied by his Council Members and the local population will honour the descendants of those ancestors who left here and developed a rich and fertile land in the wasteland in which they were settled. The pupils in the local school will sing several songs with old French melodies. Following a toast the

guests will be invited to dinner by the representatives of the community at Zennter de l'Adeppa in Vigy.

A visit to a typical old fashioned house in Oberdorff, the church in Valmunster and a house built in 1770 in Gomelange will provide them with a better idea of what Lorraine was like and increase their knowledge of the lives of their ancestors.

Mr. Sonneleitner, "President of the Danube Swabian Cultural Foundation" will recall the fate of the Banat Swabians from 1944 to 1948.

The visit will conclude with long lasting memories to cherish and good food to eat in the company of the mayor and representatives from the communities of Charleville, St. Hubert, and St. Barbara.

CHARLEVILLE-SOUS-BOIS
21.05.1994

THE DESCENDANTS FROM THE BANAT

Around 1772, poor and needy families from Charleville-Sous-Bois left their home community and made their way to the far off Banat (which at the time belonged to the Kingdom of Austria-Hungary).

In September 1993 a delegation from Lorraine was at an assembly in Karlsfeld to establish a relationship with the former Banat communities.

A group of them will make a journey here to visit the place of origin of their forebears on June 24th. They will explore the village from which their ancestors emigrated in the 18th Century.

24.06.1994

THE WELCOMING OF THE FORMER BANAT SWABIANS

This morning our community welcomed a delegation coming from Karlsfeld which is in the vicinity of Munich. These individuals have undertaken a journey to their families' place of origin walking in the footsteps of their forebears in the past that left Charleville around 1770 and undertook a long journey to the far distant Banat and founded a community with the same name as ours.

Even before they visited the birthplaces of their ancestors they explored the Archives of the Department and visited the Robert Schumann Museum in Scy-Chazelles. In the afternoon they visited the Rest Home and Convalescent Centre in Charleville and in the

evening the Vangelet Castle. The local populace was invited to participate in an event to honour the guests at the mayor's office that began at 8:30.

SAINT HUBERT
25.06.1994

THE FEAST OF SAINT JOHN AND THE VISITORS FROM THE BANAT

This Saturday was the traditional day to honour St. John with a bonfire on the lovely plain in a field between St. Hubert and Villers-Bettlach. The festival began at 15:00 with various games and activities for both young and old. Tents were set up for those who needed to rest or were in need of some shade. The bonfire was set ablaze at 22:00. As is true every year the fire lit up the heavens above St. Hubert. At this event the Community Council welcomed visitors formerly from the Banat, the descendants of those who left this area in 1770 and settled in the Austro-Hungarian Empire in a village that was named St. Hubert. Another welcome for the guests took place at the mayor's office at 18:00.

SAINT HUBERT
03.07.1994

TWENTY BANAT SWABIANS ON PILGRIMAGE

Twenty former inhabitants of the Banat visited St. Hubert one of the villages that had been visited by Nikolaus Hess in 1927. These visitors from the Banat were descendants of emigrants from Lorraine and provided contacts with the three sister communities of St. Hubert, Charleville and Seultour.

The inception of this idea came from a group of pensioners, Albert Boulanger, Andre Dicop, Jean-Louis Berthol, Marcel Lambertrissel and Louis Alfred and various other members of the Commission of History and Archaeology in Lorraine whose offices are in the Hotel de Gournay in Metz.

A visit to the Humbles Chapel in Villers-Bettlach was also included.

A welcome for the guests whose origins were in the Banat was organized by the Community Council of St. Hubert.

Following an exchange of gifts and the reading of a speech by the mayor of Karlsfeld in Bavaria, it was in turn followed by a speech given by Joel Goubaux, the mayor of this community which was interpreted by Mr. Marcel Lambertrissel the deputy mayor. He also personally greeted the delegation led by our countryman, Mr. Hess. The delegation eagerly and warmly participated in the Festival of St. John where a special place had been reserved for them.

Fanfare, artistic displays, fireworks that lit up the heavens were followed by a country ball that ended the day.

28.6.94

FROM ST. HUBERT TO CHARLEVILLE: THE ITINERARY OF THE BANAT VISITORS

A photograph of the participants with the following caption beneath it:

Drinking a toast in honour of our guests and exchanging gifts at the castle in the evening.

About twenty former residents of the Banat came on a visit to Charleville-sous-Bois, one of the three communities they wanted to see, which had been visited by Nikolaus Hess in 1937 that were the places of origin of many of the emigrants from Lorraine who left for the Banat in the vicinity of Temesvár in 1770. In their current places of residence in Germany, primarily in Karlsfeld, near Munich, these former residents of the Banat have founded an association to honour the memory of their ancestors.

They have taken advantage of the opportunity to return here as pilgrims to the home of their ancestors. During their day in Charleville-sous-Bois they were exposed to maps from the time of their ancestors, documents and correspondence from the time of the emigration (18th Century). A visit to the Museum of Robert Schuman in Scy Chazelle followed. Robert Schuman was their great benefactor after the war and intervened on their behalf with the Foreign Minister. In the afternoon, the former residents of the Banat visited the Convalescent Home, guided and accompanied by the Director: Mr. Weber. They then went to the local cemetery where they had the opportunity to decipher the family names of their ancestors.

This article begins with a brief history the Banat Swabians leading to an insightful analysis of cultural developments before and during World War II that led to their downfall. The bulk of the article concerns settlement of Banat Swabians in France after the War, including an explanation of how some of the original Banat settlers came from Lorraine and lost their French language and culture in the Banat melting pot.

Taken from Heufeld Eheschließungen und Sterbefälle by Hans Gerhardt. Translated by Henry Fischer.

As an aside, translator Henry Fischer notes an opposing view to one aspect of this article. Henry learned about Stefan Frecôt from the Triebswetter history that he translated. This author “comments that his (Frecôt’s) attempts to distinguish the French among the Danube Swabians with the Romanian government after the war were ineffectual in sparing them from the reprisals taken against the Danube Swabians. In actuality Frecot was able to spare almost all of the young able bodied people who had French names or claimed a French ancestry from deportation to slave labour in the

Soviet Union from the villages of Triebswetter, Ostern and Gottlob who would have numbered several hundred. At the dispossession of their property the French families were again not included until the time of the introduction of collectivization.” We cannot comment on the accuracy of either view here, but present both viewpoints to avoid misleading the reader in one direction or the other.

Donauschwaben und Frankreich

(Danube Swabians and France)

by Annemie Schenk

The persecution and expulsion that led to the flight of so many Danube Swabians from their south-eastern European settlement areas at the end of the Second World War has been reflected upon and their historical background has been critically analysed. The history of the loss of their homeland is inseparable from their quest for a new one. As is now well known a small number of them found refuge in France. The Danube Swabian-French relationship that was established was a result of much earlier contacts. They are a noteworthy phenomenon in the study of the development of the self-understanding of the German-speaking group living in Austria-Hungary that eventually perceived itself to be the Danube Swabians.

Following the expulsion of the Turks by the Habsburgs in 1683 the settlers who had been recruited by them to redevelop the re-conquered lands had left the various principalities in which they lived in the Holy Roman Empire to come and live among numerous other ethnic groups. Their contacts with their homelands which were chiefly in the south-western regions of the Empire were broken off completely in the 19th Century. Their integration into the environment of the Austro-Hungarian multi-national state had become complete. The tensions among the various minorities resulting from the Magyar nationalism that arose and became heightened ever since the Revolution of 1848 did not leave the Danube Swabian population untouched or immune. The Hungarian lower nobility and emerging middle class formed a new national and civic partnership in which the Hungarian middle class of "German tongue" assumed the role of ecumenical, political and social partners with them and allied themselves with their interests. In this process of transformation the exclusive use of the Magyar language became the norm and played a major role in the development of the Hungarian national character. By the turn of the century the German population had lost its upper social class. There was no educated class that could assist the chiefly agriculturally engaged Danube Swabians to develop their own self-understanding of their ethnicity which would come later.

As a result of the First World War the Dual Monarchy was dismembered. Out of the one former state in which no one nationality prevailed but rather an ancient dynasty held sway, new nation states emerged each with its own unique nationalities problem. Depending upon their area of settlement the various Danube Swabian populations were divided among Hungary, Yugoslavia and Romania. Their Peace Treaties all guaranteed the rights of their minority populations, e.g. language rights, which were unevenly

adhered to by the government authorities of these successor states of the Dual Monarchy. Their new status as a minority forced the Danube Swabians to think beyond the narrow parameters of their village society and sought to organize themselves on a larger basis to ensure their rights and promote their self-conscious identity.

Uncertain about what approach to take to preserve their identity in a modern nation state they allowed themselves to be influenced by the leading concepts and ideology of their identity that were current in Germany at the time. Ever since the end of the First World War various institutions like the Union of Germans Abroad and youth associations sought to strengthen the identity of the German-speaking populations who lived in foreign parts. Newspapers and periodicals busied themselves with this theme. In intellectual circles there was a narrowing of the focus on racial and national identity on all sides which found rich fertile soil and expression in various regions. Swabian Turkey (the counties of Tolna, Baranya and Somogy in Hungary) is one case in point. There in the future all kinds of publications appeared, in a range from leaflets for the housewife to a booklet on health issues with regard to children. They were produced for Germans outside of Germany under the motto: "Loyalty to the German race and its preservation." As a result some of the leading Danube Swabians began to understand themselves to be outposts of the best of German culture in an otherwise foreign, racial and somehow inferior setting. But they would discover this self-portrait was drawn badly and distorted.

Those in contact with the other ethnic groups in their various settlement areas could not disavow their own unalterable "south-eastern identity" that had become uniquely their own. This ostentatious turning to their "original homeland" would lead to the isolation of the Danube Swabians from the beloved homeland in which they actually lived. As their leadership provoked a struggle for supremacy over the other nationalities they set in motion a course that led to irreconcilable polarization. It was for this reason that at the end of the Second World War the Danube Swabians in their entirety were made to pay all of the unpaid bills of the Hitler regime. Their so-called *collective guilt* that led to their persecution, expulsion, internment and deportation.

The Danube Swabian refugees and expellees sought to find refuge in Germany and Austria. The virtual flood of Danube Swabians coming to Austria lasted well into 1948 as the last of the existing camps in Yugoslavia were closed down. At that time it was not possible for them to gain entry into the Western Zones of Germany because the Allied Powers had issued a prohibition in 1946 against allowing so-called ethnic Germans into their territory. Economically shattered Austria was unable to handle the refugee and expellee problem on its own and was anxious to be free of them. The vast majority of them were without a roof over their heads and had not been fortunate enough to find shelter with a farming family and were living in barracks in camps in less than humane conditions. The ethnic Germans were counted as "homeless foreigners."

With no prospect of becoming integrated into the economy and society of Austria in the near future many of the Danube Swabians decided to emigrate to the United States, Canada, Australia and South America if and when the possibility presented itself. In their attempts to find ways to leave the barracks and camps emigration overseas was not the

only option these homeless people considered. One group of Danube Swabians from the Banat who had found refuge in Rastatt in Baden located in the French Zone of occupation had the idea of seeing about the possibility of the French government accepting a sizeable number of their Danube Swabian countrymen for resettlement in France. Their apparent optimism was based on two facts. France lacked sufficient manpower for the quick reconstruction necessary after the war damages it had suffered. In addition, the forebears of many of the Danube Swabians who had come to the settlements in the south-east had come from Alsace and Lorraine and why would their old homeland now suffering from a loss of population not welcome back their children to their ancestral home? This turning to France as an answer to their plight had a pre-history as mentioned previously.

The colonists from Alsace and Lorraine who emigrated in the 18th Century were also joined by settlers from the border areas of France, both from Luxembourg and southern Belgium. Even though the policy at the time of settlement was to place colonist families from the same region or area in the same village no exclusively French-speaking communities would emerge in the Banat. From the very beginning German-speaking families joined them so that in these mixed language settlements the priests that were assigned to them had to have a command on both languages and teaching in the schools had to be done in both languages. It is noteworthy to mention that the Habsburg administrators did not sponsor nor support the operation of a French school in all of the villages. It needs to be acknowledged that there were serious difficulties involved in finding qualified teachers. The inhabitants of the "*Welsch*" villages (a term used to describe a language badly corrupted with words from various other language), as these communities were designated long after the settlement period was over, still hung on to their language for a considerable length of time with a great deal of determination and gave expression to that by campaigning for the use of French in church services. Despite that by 1830 French had virtually disappeared in the day to day life in the community.

The number of German-speaking inhabitants increased greatly in these villages through ongoing migration from other communities and the French minority gradually gave up their language in favour of German spoken in their daily life and intercourse with their neighbours and began to intermarry with German families. There were six villages that were customarily known as French villages by the Danube Swabians right up to contemporary times. They were St. Hubert, Charleville and Seultour whose names were given at the time of the settlement by the settlers providing a clue to their origins unlike Triebswetter, Ostern and Gottlob whose names were given by the Habsburg authorities. All six villages were located in the Banat.

The descendants of the French-speaking colonists soon lost contact with their families' places of origin. They were no different in that regard from those settler families who originated in the *Pfalz* (Rhine Palatinate) or Württemberg. Friedrich Lotz believed it was possible to prove that "the former French villages in the Banat...had not been completely written off by France." The question is: who kept the memory of the French in the far off Banat alive when even their descendants living there had forgotten after only a few generations? To support his thesis Lotz referred to the French travellers who wrote about their journeys in the Orient, "Who made their way through the Banat and remained there

for short or longer stays to look around the area in their roles as scholars or publicists." Baron d'Haussez was the first French traveller to visit the French villages and to have reported on them. His journey which took him as far as Transylvania was typical of those traditionally taken by the nobility. At the time when the Baron travelled in the south-east it was the early beginnings of the development of modern tourism.

Beginning in 1815 in Paris, the newspaper publisher and travel book writer, Giovanni Galignani organized group travel tours primarily for English travellers. Thomas Cook opened an office and travel bureau in 1841 and organized the first all inclusive tour package deal. The rise of tourism ran parallel with the interest expressed by the reading public for reports and publications of travellers. For example, the best loved travel book written in Germany at that time was by Hermann Prince Pückler-Muskau. In France, Alexander Dumas, the famous author also wrote travel guides for the *Revue des Deux Mondes* and his description of his trips to Russia and the Caucasus in 1861 were published in *Le Constitutionnel* published by Feuilleton. The broad spectrum of readership asked for reports about the primitive nature of the regions that were visited that were virtually undisturbed by civilization and the kinds of paradoxes that had raised for the traveller and his contemplations about what he had experienced. Alongside the travel books the first tour guidebooks appeared on the scene. Marianna Starke was the author of the first travel guide for Italy that she wrote at the suggestion of her publisher that first appeared in 1820 under the title, "Travels on the Continent." John Murray a tour guide made public and advertised a trip through Holland along the Rhine to Switzerland with the result that he conducted a whole series of such tours.

It is easy to see how the Banat was seen as a foreign and unknown region with a lifestyle that would be of interest to the French reading public. The same factors would also apply to Germany. The explanation that Lotz gives for the connection and relationship of France with the Banat is correct to the extent that the previously mentioned enthusiasm for travel is related to a rediscovery of that relationship which had not been known for some time. This only became known to a wider public through the medium of travel literature without delving into any political intentions the writer and traveller might have had. There were other reports about the Banat that appeared in later years that furnish evidence of the ongoing attention given to this region. In 1876, Louis Hecht, a professor from the University of Nancy came to visit the French villages. With a great deal of disappointment he reported the French language was no longer familiar or known by any of the villagers. His contribution was that he awakened the interests of French historians with regard to the emigration to south-eastern Europe in the 18th Century. As a result of Hecht's publications, more than 30 years later, Pierre Paulin, aroused great interest in the subject in an article in the *Lorraine Household Friend* that once again stimulated researchers to undertake further study on the subject.

Following the First World War various institutions in Germany undertook to make every effort to contact the Danube Swabians. In France that occurred somewhat later when similar efforts were undertaken with regard to the French villages but the scope of their activities cannot be compared with those of Germany. Racial and nationalistic conceptions were at the forefront. In Nancy a study circle came into existence to renew

contact with the former French villages. The jurist, André Rosambert appears to have been especially engaged in this. He travelled to the Banat and, like Hecht years before, complained about the disappearance of the French language: "Lorsqu'en 1929 je fis le premier de mes dix voyages au Banat, je ne trouvai plus un seul paysan capable de s'entretenir avec moi dans la langue de nos ancêtres communs, et ce, malgré le nombre incroyable de mots français dont la langue de ces paysans, devenus germanophones par suite de notre longue inertie, restait émaillée."

Rosambert sought to end the long inactivity in connecting with the French in the Banat and through an arrangement he made in 1935 with the French Alliance and Union For the Spread of the French Language in Foreign Parts sponsored a French language course for the children of St. Hubert, Charleville and Seultour. As of 1936 they would also support a student from the Banat who would be given the opportunity to take a summer course at the University of Nancy. Rosambert assumed the major responsibility for the French language instruction of the children and wrote: "...dés 1936. je me préoccupai de l'enseignement du français á lá masse des enfants des écoles primaires de ces villages. Leur ayant remis la France dans le coeur, j'estimai, avec tous mes collègues du Comité nancéien de l'Alliance français qu'il fallait maintenant aussi la leur remettre sur les lèvres." The hours of French instruction had the participation of 60 pupils and were received favourably by them. In fact, it was their own desire to come to class even on holidays when school was out.

The original contact between the committee of the French Alliance in Nancy and St. Hubert, Charleville and Seultour was initiated by Nikolaus Hess, a farmer from St. Hubert. He had travelled to Lorraine to request assistance in finding archival material with regard to the emigration to the Banat to enable him to write a monograph about the three sister communities. The connection with the French Alliance in Nancy developed as a result of that and in 1933 as a symbol of the re-establishment of contact with the Banat and their French Motherland the Alliance established the Homeland Museum in St. Hubert for their distant children in the Banat. Nikolaus Hess had received an invitation to go to France. He returned home with a small packet of earth from Lorraine that was to symbolize the close and indissoluble bonds with the homeland of their forebears.

The interests and attitude of Nikolaus Hess can be seen as a paradigm of the emerging educated class among the Swabians. As was happening in many communities at that time he too wanted to write a history of his home community. The question of the places of origin of the original settlers was immediately raised as a central research issue and the recovery of their ancestry was also combined with their descendants' search for their own identity. The sentiments that beset these educated Danube Swabians were because of the backlog of intellectual-cultural issues unknown to them that required the support and backing of scholars and researchers in France as had been the case with Hess or others had to be to find it through the assistance of German cultural circles to help account for their situation as a unique ethnic group.

It is interesting to note that after the war years the issue of the ancestry of that portion of the Danube Swabian population that had had their origins in Alsace, Lorraine and France

came to the forefront in the Romanian Banat. The attorney, Stefan Frecôt, a member of the German Swabian Peoples' Party, who was sent to speak on their behalf at the Peace Conference in Paris in 1919 and was later a representative of the Party in the Romanian parliament, founded the *Association des descendants d'anciens solons français du Banat* (Association of the Descendants of the French Settlers in the Banat) in 1945. Apparently he attempted to protect the Banat Swabians against possible encroachments on their rights by the Romanian government recognizing its traditional sympathetic relationship with France, now one of the victorious Allied Powers. Frecôt succeeded in having an article published in which he outlined his position: "Loin d'Elle (France) mais en la gardant toujours dans nos coeurs, nous voulons rester Français et de bons citoyens roumains." In his presentation, Frecôt made it appear that the greater majority of the Swabians in the Banat were French but had been suppressed in terms of their language and culture as a result of the imperialist policies of the ruling Hungarians and Germans. He portrayed them as French offspring in sharp contrast to the other large German-speaking minority in Romania, the Transylvania Saxons to whom he attributed evil nationalistic tendencies that had held the Danube Swabians hostage as a result of their political manoeuvring during the war. Frecôt's submission addressed to the Romanian government and his declaration assuring them of the loyalty of the Swabians had no results. They were not excluded from dispossession of their property and the deportation of the able bodied to the Soviet Union.

Despite their pre-war relationships with France through the efforts of the French Alliance with the Swabians in the French villages and the petition of the previously mentioned Rastatt Group of July 5, 1945 to the French Foreign Ministry entitled, "Mémoire au sujet de la récolonisation des Lorrains et Alsaciens au Banat (Roumanie, Hongrie et Yougoslavie)" (The History of the Re-colonization of the Banat(Romania, Hungary, Yugoslavia) from Lorraine and Alsace) it did not have its hoped for results. Nonetheless at the instigation of the French authorities in Munich a block of barracks at the camp in Mittenwald were set aside for Swabians from the Banat, Rastatt and the *Pfalz* (Rhine Palatinate).

The news of efforts being made to arrange for an emigration to France spread quickly among the Swabians in Austria. Because the outlook for their future in Austria appeared gloomy, Jean Lamesfeld, a Swabian from the Banat whose forebears came from the vicinity of Diedenhofen (Thionville) in Lorraine undertook to stimulate the interest of the group in Rastatt and decided to form a committee that would work towards arranging for the transfer of the Swabians in Austria to France. With the sanction of a group of his countrymen he made representations to various departments of the French Occupation Administration in Vienna and was able to take his request farther up the chain of command buttressed by his historical arguments but to no avail.

It was only when he met with two Alsatian military officials that he received significant support for his plan and in December 1945 he was able to establish the *Comité des Français du Banat* (Committee of the French from the Banat) as a legally constituted association with the support of other Swabians. Even though the French military authorities researched the archives that contained the information on the emigration to the

Banat in the Vienna Habsburg State Archives it appeared that the whole operation would be suspended. Lamesfeld reported on this later in writing. According to him the officials in Alsace and Lorraine eased off in their support of the project until Robert Schumann, who himself came from Lorraine, became the French Prime Minister in 1947. He had connections with the study circle in Nancy that had maintained relations with the Banat prior to the war and was well informed of their activities. Robert Schumann supported and set in motion the resettlement of the Banat Swabians in France and on November 1, 1948 the first convoy left Austria with about 500 Swabians. It was followed by 40 other train convoys and brought around 10,000 persons to France and along with those from the Banat, both those with and without ancestors from Alsace and Lorraine, there were also other Danube Swabians from the Batschka, Srem and Slavonia indicating that their so-called French origins were being rather broadly interpreted.

During the time of his involvement in what became known as the French Operation, Lamesfeld got to know a journalist from Colmar who went to great lengths to advocate and promote the Banat immigration. In his newspaper he informed his readers about the Swabians from the Banat and their French ancestors and attempted to prepare the ground for their settlement in Alsace. He organized an official welcome for the first convoy to reach Colmar in which young girls and women wearing the local traditional attire participated, bringing greetings and bouquets of flowers. The mothers and fathers of the present generation warmly welcomed their returning children of those from the past.

The City Council of Colmar resolved to hold a homecoming festival for the Banat returnees' arrival in their ancestral homeland. They planned a costume festival. Since the Banat returnees no longer possessed their traditional folk costume the city took over the costs involved in buying materials so that they could participate. The merchants of Colmar also made donations so that 100 young couples in their traditional attire worn at their village *Kirchweih* (anniversary of their church consecration) festivals in the Banat were able to take part. In photographs of these young costumed couples there are also groups of older men wearing the flower and ribbon bedecked hats like those of the young men which was a total break with village tradition in which only the unmarried young men wore them. The new arrivals were presented to the local population in their abandoned traditional costume as a symbol of their past. The city of Colmar had invited the Prefect, Sub-Prefect, Parliamentary Deputies, Senators, General Officers and mayors from the vicinity to the Homecoming Festival held on July 10, 1949 and many of them appeared for the occasion. After the festival rally and parade in the morning a noon meal was provided by the city for the 1,000 Swabian participants. There was a folklore presentation in the afternoon, the highlight of which was their Swabian *Kirchweih* customs, the auctioning of the *Kirchweih* wreath, the raffle for the hat and banner.

The integration of the Swabians into the economic and social life of Alsace and Lorraine was quick and with little difficulty. But in the end not all of them found accommodation in these two regions. It was much more difficult for those who had to earn their bread in other parts of the country where they were isolated because of language. As soon as they had the opportunity the majority of them left for Germany or returned to Austria.

Estimates suggest only about 3,000 of those who emigrated to France would remain permanently. Accurate figures are difficult to come by because records were not kept.

Lamesfeld kept in touch with his countrymen and he developed a plan to assemble all of the scattered Swabians living in central France and settle them in a single village of their own and chose one that had been abandoned by almost all of its French inhabitants who had found employment in the nearby city. He was supported in his plan by a man from Lorraine and through his intervention the resettlement of the nearly abandoned small village of La Roque-sur-Pernes in the province and vicinity of Carpentras came about. The group of Swabians who came to La Roque was quite small. They did not even total 200 persons. The resettlement of La Roque received a lot of publicity, above all due to the good will shown to the settlement by Robert Schumann and the number of his own personal and official visits that he made there in the first years. There was always a great deal of interest shown in the village on the part of German and French newspapers and magazines as well as television programmes. Under titles like, "They brought forth greenery amidst the stones," which appeared regularly with similar clichés there were also negative reports and revues. In the last few years it is now seldom mentioned but La Roque is still newsworthy in its own right.

Lamesfeld's "French Operation" remains controversial in Danube Swabian circles. It is vigorously attacked by the "racially" disposed Swabians who still speak about it in the terminology of the past and lament the loss of "precious German blood" and the "racial treason" that has been committed. In the new homeland, the weekly Danube Swabian newspapers continue to mirror and discuss these controversies resulting from the emigration to France of the Swabians from the Banat.

Interestingly enough, the displaced Transylvania Saxons from Romania in Austria after the war, found themselves in the same bad situation as the Danube Swabians. Various emigration projects were attempted. They considered the possibility of a collective move and settlement in Canada and thought of emigration to Ireland and South America. One of the Transylvania Saxons wrote to the French embassy in Vienna addressed to the Division of Social Affairs on May 24, 1947 seeking the admission of Transylvania Saxons to settle in France. This request was followed by another on August 17, 1947 sent to the *Commissariat de la République Française en Autriche*. (Consulate of the Republic of France in Austria). The Transylvania Saxons were presented with an offer from the Protestant Churches of France to resettle in France in the sparsely populated and poor soil of the region between the Pyrenees and the Girond.

A "gathering of the nation" was called to deal with the matter but it was categorically turned down. During the meeting a participant stood up and spontaneously sang the national hymn of the Transylvania Saxons, "Transylvania land of blessings." It was his way of giving testimony to his desire to only consider settling in a German-speaking region. All attempts at the integration of the Transylvania Saxons into Austria were met with stubborn resistance because the Transylvania Saxons wanted to remain loyal to their language, customs, heritage, traditions and "their dead." They registered the hope for the resettlement of their entire group living in Austria in the Federal Republic of Germany if

that would ever be possible. It was only in 1951 when strides could be made in that direction. Of course it did not lead to the resettlement of the entire group. Unlike the Danube Swabians, the Transylvania Saxons had a strong, well defined ethnic identity and self-understanding that had been developed over their one thousand year history in south-eastern Europe predating even the coming of the Magyars tribes out of the east.

Above all their identity was closely related to their Protestant (Lutheran) Church and its ties to Germany where their clergy received their theological education.

Lamesfeld and a major portion of those who at the time sought to find a new home in Alsace and La Roque are no longer living. The younger generation have assimilated with the French world around them and it is only a matter of time before the dialect and traditions they brought with them will disappear. The Danube Swabian community of La Roque was also too small to survive and the outside pressures in terms of language were so strong that no long term extension of their identity was possible. The integration is now complete and the connection of the Danube Swabians to France will soon be only a quaint historical memory.