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# *Klein-Nassau*

Flight and Expulsion  
Recollections

edited and published by  
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**Page 20:** Pomerania and surroundings...

Flight routes of the Klein-Nossin inhabitants

Both routes can be reconstructed from the accounts. Further detours over unmarked roads follow. Because the routes from 7th to 10th of March 1945 were often in darkness and, for the most part, in covered wagons and those who took part often have no idea of which villages they passed through. Anyway, the goal of escaping from the oncoming Soviet forces was of more importance to the participants than their routes.

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### *Introduction*

**Klein-Nossin belonged to the County of Stolp in Pomerania. Karl-Heinz Pagel described it in 1989**

**as follows:**

“Outlying village parts (1)	Malenz
Area in hektars	1083
Number of inhabitants on the 17th of May 1939	244
Number of households	57
Number of residential houses in 1925	34
Administrative district	Wundichow
Official records	Groß Nossin
Police administration	Groß Nossin
Court district	Bütow
Village mayor in 1931	Grunst
Mayor in 1937	Farmer Artur Grunst
Nearest rail station	Budow
Distance	5 kilometers
Rail line	Stolp-Budow
Post Office	Klein Nossin
Last mailing address	Klein Nossin über Bütow (. . .)

In the year 1938 the Knightly Estate (von der Marwitz) was 800 hektars in area. There were 300 hektars of cultivated land, 40 hektars of meadow, 30 hektars of pasture, 10 hektars of roads, paths and barnyard and 20 hektars of ponds and streams. The livestock on the estate included 24 horses, 90 head of cattle and 260 swine. Besides the estate there were in Klein Nossin 18 agricultural endeavors as follows:

3 with 0.5 but less than 5 hektars	2 with 5 but less than 10 hektars
7 with 10 but less than 20 hektars	6 with 20 but less than 100 hektars

In the last directory the following owners of farmsteads were named:

Reinhold Bremer	24 hektars	Leo Keschull	24 hektars
Artur Grunst	30 hektars	Meta Neumann	41 hektars
Hermann Keschull	24 hektars		

The farmwife Neumann had the largest number of livestock: three horses, eight head of cattle and twenty swine. The average tax evaluation for a hektar was 6.22 marks and the county average was 5.95 marks. All village residents were Lutheran. Klein Nossin belonged to the parish of Groß Nossin and to the church district of Bütow.”

The number of inhabitants of Klein-Nossin varied between 1846, an extreme whose grounds are unclear, until the census of the 1st of September 1939 at 250. In 1931 of the 282 residents, included 96 Keschulls. In 1939 there were 244 residents, of whom 80 bore this name. A document<sup>3</sup> from the year 1817 indicates that most of the Bauern and Kossäten who belonged to the estate were named Keschull. This name also existed in neighboring villages and counties. Many of the records and archives in the von der Marwitz estate in Klein-Nossin were destroyed by fire in March 1945.

## Introduction

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*Picture: Village Map of Klein-Nossin; by Ernst Blaurock 1951*

*Section of the Census Map, 1670*

The name and spelling of the name of the village varied from the 14th century until 1945: from Noßinke, Noßinko, to Klein Nössinke in the Blankenseeschen Hufenklassifikation of 1717, Klein-Nossin or Kleinnossin, Kl. Nossin, Klein Nossin. A treaty<sup>2</sup> in 1874 expanded the spelling to Klein=Nohsin and it remained until 1910. In the Klein-Nossin cemetery there was until 1945 on old tombstones the village name Noßlinke in black lettering on small white enamel placards on castiron crosses. There was no single spelling in either in the records or on maps. The Klein- Nossin teacher, Ernst Blaurock, wrote the village name in his texts as one word with a double s. A poetry album that has only recently surfaced and dated 1943 and 1944 contains several variations of the village name. In all my records I write the name thus: Klein-Nossin.

On the 7th of March 1945 the village was vacated ahead of the oncoming soviet troops. Pagel writes: “At this time German infantry and an armored troop were in the area. The route of the evacuees led by way of Schwarzdammerkow, Klein Rakitt, Wutzkow and Massow. From there it was supposed to go on to Llaenburg. But the caravan was detoured to Labuhn and Linde ...“

Survivors who took part agree that the von der Marwitz family, with the families of the estate laborers and the French prisoners-of-war, left the village at about noon, followed after an interval by the wagons of the farm families. Single wagons of both formations threaded their way onto the old emperial route 158 before Groß Nossin and were later mixed with other wagon trains. In that way wagons from both groups, by various routes, made their ways toward Danzig/Gotenhafen and from there across the Baltic Sea.

Barely 50 kilometers away from Klein-Nossin the flights ended on the 10th of March near the village of Klutschau and before the bridge over the Leba. Several families and single persons managed to get over the bridge before it was blown up and to make their ways further toward Gotenhafen, Danzig, the Hela Peninsula and from there over the Baltic to Denmark. The village inhabitants who were overtaken and robbed by Soviet troops made their ways, beginning on the 11th and 12th of March and over snow-covered side roads, back to Klein-Nossin. Here they lived under Russian occupation and later under Polish control until their expulsion in the year 1947.

The bridge over the Leba in Klutschau, which was destroyed on the 10th of March 1945, in this photo 1999 Forest about 1.5 kilometers before Klutschau where the Klein-Nossin residents, who were not able to cross the bridge, spent the night of the 10th to the 11th of March 1945.

When my work on my own recollections led to contact with other village inhabitants, my former neighbors and fellow students offered me their recollections of the flight from the approaching Soviet troops in the year 1945 and the time they lived through until their expulsion in the year 1947, something I did not experience. I also requested recollections from the time before 1945 and worked in the conversations that resulted. So, as time passed, this collection of remembrances was assembled. I was encouraged in the beginning when after 43 years Gerhard Keschull first spoke to me saying that on the long winter evenings in the year 1947 he had written in his diary about the flight and he promised to send me the text.

The first entries are the letters of the von der Marwitz family written in January and February 1945. They describe the conditions and sorrows of the people in the weeks before the arrival of the Soviet troops. Alexandra von der Marwitz, who lives in Miami, offered these letters from her parents to me.

## Introduction

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The village census of 1939 and the map of the village and surrounding area by Ernst Blaurock in 1951 are included, along with selected photos of the area. Since some of these are only copies of the originals, the quality is not as good as might be wished.

Today Klein-Nossin belongs to Poland and is named Nozynko. It, along with more than forty other villages and places of the German counties of Bütow, Lauenburg and Stolp, belongs to the Polish municipality of Schwarzdamerkow, the Polish Carna Dabrowka. Kashubians, White Russians and Poles make up the present population of the area. The Kashubian part of the population the most numerous, in Rakitt it is the highest where it makes up 60% of the total.

It has been my intention with this brochure to document the extinction German Klein-Nossin with authentic reports of the German inhabitants. Concerning the contacts with the present Polish inhabitants that have been made since 1999, it has been my hope to describe their post-war settlement in Nozynko, but that is something that is not yet possible.

In preparing the text and dialog I have allowed for individual styles of speech and writing. The Low German sentences are in italics.

I am heartily grateful for help I have received.

Wennigsen, the 23rd of December 2001

Heino Keschull

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*The End of the War, 1945**Letters from the von der Marwitz family to their daughter, Alexandra*

Klein-Nossin, the 31/1/1945

My Dearest Child,

We are permitted to write letters. We have packed everything; the wagon stands before the house with a cover, with which we and our few possessions must leave. It has so stormed and snowed that one can hardly think it would be possible to travel. Caravans that have come from East Prussia remain here in our area rather than to risk going further in ice and snow. Three days ago my old friend Anitschka Sicard and her daughter from Posen arrived here in flight and with the little they still have will ride in our wagon, which René will drive; with him Anitschka and daughter, Anna Werra and odds and ends. Our beautiful Klein-Nossin! Aunt O. M. left yesterday with a caravan for Potsdam, all the Gafferters are also gone. It was with great sorrow that we left Grandmother, she would have died on the road and by rail she would be suffocated. The Ukrainians are supposed to come, too. In Wundichow there was a staff where we found no quarters. Yesterday Mr. Christa von Gottberg called from Lauenburg. She had come by car with a district commissioner and several wounded from East Prussia and wanted to remain here for the night. We waited until 12 O'Clock, but no one came, they must have been held up somewhere. Aunt Annchen sent me the police registration for Hartmut today and I was supposed to report for him, but it makes no sense because we must be on the way ourselves and do not know what will become of us. Whether she cannot register him as a refugee - this is what I wrote to her. I loyally reported your last letter to your friend in the village, all are in good health and are relieved that you are in Bavaria. I am fortunate that Hartmut is with Aunt Annchen. God grant that he may remain there for the present. God protect you, my child, do not lose courage, God, who thus far has been so merciful, will not desert us.

With sincere Love, Your Mother

Klein-Nossin, 10/2/45

My Alix!

I wonder if any of my letters have come into your hands? I have received no news of you or Hartmut, but also not from others who live on the other side of the Oder. What is to become of us? I am so unspeakably grateful that you both, my dearest children, are in the Allgäu. Five days ago a caravan arrived here with 180 people and 50 horses from an estate near Konitz (Countess Brockdoff), yesterday they went on. There were terrible scenes, frozen children, lost families with this entire caravan that slowly and painfully made its way across Pomerania. Now it appears that we are to have soldiers quartered here. There are already soldiers on other estates. Day before yesterday an uncle of Aunt Christa (von Puttkammer Plauf.) arrived in Nippoglense; he was much relieved to lie down in bed. In the room below soldiers were cleaning their weapons. One had not emptied his weapon, a shot went off and killed Plaufer, who lay in bed. Your room is also prepared for soldiers. Your letter is burning on the writing table, why should strangers put their nose into it? I have also taken your postcards down from the wall. No news from our Uncle Fritz. At the beginning of the offensive he sent a telegram from Guben that we should go to Koldekow. Since then we know nothing. God protect us! Do not concern yourself about us, my

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child, we are in God's hand and whatever He wishes for us is good. Our people are all very certain that the Russians will not come. Two Frenchmen from Brockdorff's caravan remained here, one with us - Emil Poiree, a blacksmith - and one with Ernst Kebschull. Ida and Neumann are not publicly engaged. Bahr and Neumann do not get along. Bahr will not go and Ida is also reluctant to leave Klein-Nossin; who knows how it will end. I am to send you a thousand sincere greetings. In the afternoons we do not have any light. Can you not imagine how unhappy papa is? I have already told you that we have two bombing refugees here, mother and daughter. Very nice . . . . yes, my child, for today I do not know anything more. One cannot express how deeply, deeply, my heart feels, but I can assure you again that I am calm and that I always gain new strength when I go to bed in the evening and ask God for help and things are always clear again then that I can only thank God for my entire life. Give Aunt Annchen my heartiest greetings. I have already written to her separately. I hope she received it, I am unspeakably grateful.

Sincere Greetings Your Mother

Klein-Nossin, 15/2/45

Dear Alix!

One does not know whether our letters reach you. Today one from 30/12 was returned, which I will include, because some of the contents will be of interest to you. Here things are developing slowly but in a direct line. It is still bearable in the house. We have Mrs. von Sicard and her daughter as refugees in the house. There is no longer any electricity, only evenings from 11 until 5 O'Clock, but if you stay up until 12 there is nothing more on the radio. Chopping fodder and sawing wood must all be done by night. Daily the barnyard is full of caravans that pass through. Poor, miserable people in sad conditions and with tired horses. They eat up our hay and oats. Our horses are alright, I feed them well. If only we do not have to leave, that is our greatest concern. The suitcases and trunks are packed and the wagon with its covering stands before the door. I already wrote to you that Paula died of glanders. Camilla went to the army. I bought two usable Ermelländer (two and four year old) from a caravan as replacements.

We have heard nothing from Fritz. May God protect him. How happy we are that you and Hartmut are safe. Get into contact with Mr. von Bockelberg of Mooshof, Post Office Massenhausen near Munich, a good old friend of mine, who owns a fishing estate. He will certainly be glad to see you and perhaps can be of help, since I cannot. My money is running out since we can no longer sell anything.

Mother is as fresh and healthy as never before, she is doing quite well. Evenings we sit by the flickering light of a kerosene lamp, which is filled with fuel from the caravans.

Yes, my little Alix, be and remain an honorable person and some way you will make it through the hardest of times. And do not give up, my child, that is my greatest wish and plea. You have great gifts that no one can take from you.

I think of you and our Hartmut with great fatherly love. And if there is no longer any money for Hartmut, you must think of something else. Perhaps Bockelberg, whose only son has fallen, will take him. Mother greets you dearly Your Father

(From Grandmother: thousands of greetings, daily the same question: Any news?)

von der Marwitz Estate House

Stork Nest on the Estate Courtyard

Klein-Nossin, 22/2/1945

Dear Alix!

These are remarkable times, but we are still more or less untouched here. We had not believed that we would remain here so long. The evacuation order has been postponed since for the moment the Russian advance has been halted. Where should we go? The misery of the caravans is unbearable. The misery we have seen among the refugees is sad. Our barnyard is always full. So many sick horses that could be purchased for a slice of bread. Day before yesterday Bütow was bombed for the first time, but it was not so bad, perhaps ten houses destroyed and several dead and wounded, but great consternation, naturally, among the population. I would like so much to send your mother away in a wagon, but, first, it is not possible without permission (and that we cannot get from Rusch), and second, there is the danger that she would lose her baggage underway.

Yesterday a troubling incident. Gottberg robbed our barn in Malenz, the one with the hay. I do not know what I should do about him, it is unbelievable. I talked to him, it was very painful - we have now hitched Onex up, he does well - I am feeding the others well.

It is terrible that we no longer have light or power. We sit evenings with a kerosene lamp, one can read by it, and if need be, write. We are in good health, especially Mother. Naturally, we talk about all sorts of ideas, but there is always a problem. From Fritz nothing, unfortunately, that is hard. Heinrich has already been lightly wounded again.

Sincere Greetings Vati

## *Flight 1945*

### *Our Flight via Gotenhafen to Denmark*

*By Gerhard Kebschull 1947*

It was the middle of January 1945. Refugees came into our village in a caravan. They came from the direction of Schneidemühl and wanted to go to Stolpmünde. The next day they went on. That brought us to the idea that it was time for us to prepare for our flight. In the night one could hear the roar of motors from the highway. Heavy tanks were going toward Lauenburg. Our neighboring village already had soldiers quartered in it. Our village lay somewhat removed from the main road. That was the reason we had not so many military people. On the 20th of February there was an air attack against Bütow. We could observe the airplanes. The weather was clear and during the day it was pleasantly warm. At the end of the month of February Russian airplanes flew over our village. In the neighboring village they fired weapons: immediately afterwards our village received a large number of military and refugees. Our residence was taken over by a radio transmitter. The refugees were from Meddersin and Gustkow in Kreis (county) Bütow. In the evening artillery fire increased. Over Rummelsburg was the glare from fires and in between flashes of light. We had already packed what was necessary, even though no evacuation order had been given. Some things, such as dishes, were buried in a wooden box under a stack of wood.

By the beginning of March there were ever greater troop movements on the highway going toward Groß-Nossin. On the 6th of March we still went to school. There our teacher, Mr. Grosch, told us that our marching orders had been received. On the morning of the 7th of March we loaded the last things onto our wagon and then the great journey began. That night there had been some snow again. It was cold. The younger people had to walk to leave place on the wagon for children and the aged.

At about 3:30 PM we passed Groß-Nossin. The roads were clogged. Our caravan soon left the main road toward Lauenburg and turned on a side road toward Jerskiwitz. This road was completely snow-packed. But first of all went the tow tractor from the estate. It was driven by a French prisoner-of-war and cleared a way for the other vehicles. That evening at 9:00 PM we arrived in Jerskiwitz and found quarters in the castle. The teams were taken into stalls.

*Pictures: Pomerania and Surrounding Areas*

*Flight Route of the Klein-Nossin Residents*

On this first day of our flight, the 7th of March, we traveled 10 kilometers. On the next morning we left early. It was rather cold. The wagons were sometimes stuck in the snow. Again and again we were told: "To the right!" Military vehicles had the right-of-way. By noon we reached the communities of Groß-Rakitt and Klein-Rakitt and immediately afterwards the village of Bochow. The residents were already gone; we spent the night in the castle. This was 8/3, the second day of our flight.

No one could think of sleeping. The thunder of cannon fire was ever stronger. We followed small side roads

parallel to the main road toward Lauenburg. By 3:00 PM we reached Buckowin in West Prussia. This village was completely clogged with military and refugee traffic. Most of the refugees from our village spent the night in their wagons. The local village inhabitants were not hospitable to refugees. This was the third day of our flight.

Early on the 10th of March we were standing beside our wagons, ready to go. The front drew nearer or else we were approaching it ourselves. Then our caravan leader, Mr. von der Marwitz, told us: Each must decide whether to turn around or to continue! It seemed impossible to get through. But we decided to go ahead anyway. Here I would like to make the remark: Had we gone by way of Lauenburg the Russians would have most certainly caught us, as we later learned from others who went this way.

Now we came to a totally overloaded road to Lauenburg. Here it was difficult to make any progress. The left side of the road had to be kept free for the military. Rapid moving military units passed us constantly. Were they retreating? We were barely out of the village when suddenly we heard shots. We looked back: Several farmsteads were on fire, several shots whistled overhead. The word went from mouth to mouth: The Russians are there.

We crept under and behind our wagon. People scattered in all directions. Many ran to the left or right from the road into the forest. From the village reservists ran toward us. A soldier shouted: Follow us! We ran up the road and away from the wagon. Now we were on our own. All our possessions remained behind. Mother still held tightly to her handbag. My sister, Martha, only noticed much later that her daughter, Waltraud, had lost a shoe. But there was no going back.

We soon came to the Leba to the northeast of Linde. The bridge had been destroyed. But there were still a few planks that were passable. A soldier on

the other side waved and shouted to us. We pressed forward and then the rest of the bridge went up. Not far from this place where there was a mill a truck waited. We were allowed on board but the motor would not start. We jumped down and ran on. Toward evening another truck picked us up. It had no top so that the night was bitter cold. I had worn an overcoat from my brother, Fritz. This helped to keep me warm.

It was a restless night. There were numerous explosions to the left and to the right of the road. So many vehicles had to be destroyed because there was no fuel for them. Our driver said: We will keep going until we run out of Diesel. This must have been the 10th of March. On this military vehicle we came quickly toward Neustadt. Where to? I doubt if we knew ourselves. The thunder of cannon came ever nearer. Now one could clearly hear machinegun fire, single shots and again and again the Ratsch-Bum of mortars.

What did we have to eat? Nothing. But a soldier passed a mess tin of soup to us from the truck. We could drink the soup easily; we had no spoons! It was toward noon when shots whistled overhead. Everyone lay on the ground. No one dared to raise his head. Suddenly, there was a buzzing, the truck started and a soldier called: Climb aboard! Now for the first time we considered our situation. A crowd of people and vehicles were gathered together. All were crowded together. The Russians had seized a street corner. This was really war. Nearby there were wounded, grenades continued to strike all over. Now the word came: Run! Dead animals lay everywhere, overturned wagons, burning military vehicles.

As we crossed a pasture I spotted a carton of dried plums. My coat pockets were filled to overflowing. The last sticky remainder was still with me when I reached Denmark. Then the search for an empty vehicle began. At this time I was almost separated from my family, but after a half-hour we were again together and what good

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fortune that was! We finally found places in a covered vehicle that was already overloaded! Russian aircraft continually strafed the caravan. A machine gun opened up from a corner in the road. Now it was time to get away from this dangerous place. We soon passed through another village. There was a terrible thunder and beside us a house collapsed and burst into flame. Our truck was hit, broke down and collapsed in two. We got off.

This truck was towing a trailer. A woman was jumping off and broke several ribs. We continued on foot, always looking for a ride. A soldier was hit and fell beside us: always continuing, such a disaster!

We must have reached Neustadt by 8:30 PM. The city was burning brightly. We arrived in a small truck. At least twenty people in it. All were crowded together. There was also a number of soldier backpacks and machine gun boxes. Little by little the machine gun boxes were unloaded. Soldiers took them. Because I stood near the door I always got out at every stop to quench my thirst with snow. Once a soldier passed a container of marmalade into the truck. It was soon emptied. Eaten with bare hands.

On the next day, on the 12th of March, we moved faster, almost alone on the road. At about 6:00 PM we were near Klein-Katz. There we heard the chatter of machine guns. We immediately looked for a place to stay. There were plenty of houses. The population had all been evacuated. In the cellar we found a few dried-up potatoes in a corner. We ate them the best we could.

On the 13th of March we went on. Where to? We came to a road sign to Danzig and to Zoppot. We headed for Zoppot. After a hike of 2½ hours a military truck picked us up and took us to Zoppot. Here we were welcomed by an air raid alarm and soon anti-aircraft fire was active, even before we could find a bunker. After a time the all clear was sounded and people came out again. Many entered one building and we followed them. It was a motion picture theater and many refugees were quartered there. After two days in the theater seats we had to leave and were settled into private quarters. There were plenty of empty apartments here.

The organization from "above" still functioned and we were issued food ration cards, but it was difficult to find anything edible. Constant air raid alarms. On the 19th of March the order to evacuate was issued. We attached ourselves to the many refugees who headed for the train station. When we arrived a train was waiting, but it was already full. It is hard to believe how many people were still able to find a place under these conditions. Suddenly at 6:00 PM the train left. A great crowd still stood on the platform looking wistfully at the departing train. It moved slowly. To the left and right of the tracks were troops in their trenches. Ivan (the Russian) was not far away, then there would be shooting. But we arrived safely in Gotenhafen. We later learned that this was the last train. Quickly we left the train to look for an air raid shelter. Russian artillery shelled Gotenhafen constantly. The following days, until the 24th of March, there were real air raid shelter days. In order to survive each had to take care of himself. As soon as a field kitchen was opened there would be a dangerous expedition to get there. I know that my sisters, Anny and Liesbeth, sometimes returned with empty mess kits, because it was often impossible to reach the field kitchen. During the day there were constant air attacks and at night artillery bombardments.

At first we were told in the bunker that we would need tickets to be taken away on one of the ships. We were discouraged to hear this because we had almost no money left. Then came the good news: We could go on board even without tickets. We were told that we should be at the Hafengeb Pier 3 by midnight. This was because at this time the artillery fire let up somewhat. So that night we marched out and arrived safely. We spent the night in a large storage room directly on the wharf. It was impossible to sleep. There was too much noise.

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Some searched for children or brothers and sisters. Many had become separated. Nearby was an anti-aircraft battery which roared all night.

In the harbor small ships came regularly to the wharf. We literally jumped onto one boat. It did not even tie up. Now the word was: Get away as quickly as possible. Airplanes were constantly overhead. Those who did not make it onto one of these small boats crept under rail cars to wait for the next opportunity. We steered toward the open sea where larger ships would wait. These did not come into port because of the artillery fire. Our boat pulled alongside one of these ships. We were waved off so we steered toward another. This was the "Antonio Delfino". This all happened on the 25th of March. The seamen then directed us immediately into the lowest hold. For us it was like a giant hall. The sea water gurgled threateningly. My mother said: "If we sink we will be the first."

Here on the ship there was again what one could call "good food". There was enough bread, but this caused problems for many. Afterward came the famous "rise and fall" of the ship. We young people were constantly on the move. There was so much to tell as long as one could survive. Here one could almost believe that the war was far away, but the wounded on board always reminded us of the war. I do not know when our ship sailed.

But one could tell by the loud diesel motors. Our ship was escorted by Navy boats. Sometimes we heard anti-aircraft fire. We arrived suddenly on the 19th of March in Copenhagen harbor.

During the night of 30/31 March we were loaded into rail cars. Now we went across Denmark from the Baltic Sea to Isbjerg on the North Sea. Here we were received by German soldiers. The next day, on the 1st of April, it was Easter. For breakfast there were cookies and cocoa and for the children also candy. This was the life!

From here we were assigned to beach houses on the North Sea. The beach was lined with barbed wire and defended by bunkers and trenches. We young people soon found gaps and at low tide fished for, or collected, flounder. There were soldiers on duty on the beach. At night there was a curfew. War had caught up with us again. Rations came from a field kitchen. Also, we were issued money. We could even make small purchases in the village of Hjerting.

In the camp in Denmark

It was the beginning of May and the most beautiful spring weather. I was busy with something outside the door when a young refugee from the neighboring barracks came to me and said: "It just came over the radio that the Führer is dead." We had no radio in our house. We learned more details from the German soldiers. Soon the troops withdrew to Germany.

From the day of the capitulation the Danes would not sell anything more. But good Danish neighbors still brought us things like clothing and food. We refugees did not dare to go out on the street anymore. The young Danish people were hateful to us and even threw stones at us (which were sometimes returned). At the beginning of May a school was even begun, which was mostly held out of doors. I had to walk a long ways to school. On the way I met many "Freedom Fighters". As a uniform they wore a large armband. They were always armed. Even the 14 year olds had pistols and rifles.

On the 24th of May we had to leave our beach houses and were put into the barracks the German troops had used. The installation was at the Isbjerg Air Base. This installation was divided into several camps. There was an Air Base "Mölders", "Üdet", "Bölke" and "Richthofen". We were in "Mölders". There were simply two large barracks with twenty rooms each and several

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stone houses. Here we still lived quite well. We could even go from one camp to another. The camps lay about ¼ hour walk apart, some as much as twenty minutes. These were our Sunday walks. Every Friday there was a movie for refugees. That was a scramble. And there were theater presentations in the camps. Also, for example, there was the manger scene directed by Pastor Hoffmeister. The first presentation was on 16/12/1946. Hoffmeister was also my confirmation instructor. For confirmation instructions I and other boys and one girl had to go to "Udet". My fellow confirmants were Erwin Krusinnen, now of Sigmaringen, Horst Holland and Christel Solowski. The pastor was very strict. He had been a corporal in the military. When he left for Germany we then had a Danish pastor for March/April. I and the others were confirmed on the 17th of April. In the camps there were sport activities. One camp would play against another. Here in "Mölders" I took my first English class. Glider training was offered on the air base. Occasionally a small airplane would land there.

Our camp received still more refugees, the number of camp residents climbed to 400. Often there were inoculations against infectious diseases. Besides the German camp leaders there was also a Dane. At harvest time refugees went to work for the farmers. For that they were paid with a meal. Gradually the smaller camps were closed and the people were placed in the larger ones. The air base at Esbjerg was also cleared of refugees. So on the 7th of August we moved to Bronderslev. The camp was near to the city. It was a large camp with about 1200 inhabitants. Danish soldiers stood at the gate with fixed bayonets and some of them circled the double barbed wire fence that surrounded the camp. The fence was secure, but still the Danish apple trees were plundered. I will describe the camp on another day. The time is almost 9:30 and I want to go to bed because tomorrow morning the night will be over.

The 30th of September:

Life in the camp at Bronderslev is not as good as it was before in "Mölders". But there are things to do. The sport field was seldom unoccupied. Mostly football and handball were played. And so it happened sometimes that a barracks window would be broken. For that the camp police would forbid any playing for a few days. The police were old men who tried to maintain order in the camp. Seldom was there an evening without a dance. I had already learned to dance in Esbjerg. Our band was not the best, but they could hold a rhythm most of the time. Concerts were also offered by a group

of refugees from Esbjerg. We went to the movies once a week. Of more importance to me was the library here in Bronderslev. In the fall of the same year there was a sport fest. The winners were honored with prizes that were furnished by the Danish camp commander. Going out here was difficult. Usually we made a tour around the barracks. Once there was a carnival for the Danes not far from the camp. There one could see something of how they lived. Most of the Danes passed us by with a scornful expression. Once in a while an apple or a bonbon flew over the fence, that was something for the children to scramble for.

One time our school received permission to leave the camp so we could see something of the surrounding area. I found it pleasing. It was like home. All too soon we had to return to the camp because our pass was only good for a limited time.

The food left much to be desired, mornings and evenings there was tea and 150 grams of bread per person, sometimes some sausage and butter. In this way the summer passed and Christmas came near. Now we young people had to build something for Christmas. The Danes gave a couple of apples for the children. I had not seen any fruit for over a year, much less had any to eat. In our room in the Neisse barracks there were 13 persons. Fir boughs crowned the Christmas festival. For the New Year there was a masked ball. In February 1947 all refu-

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gees who had no possibility of going immediately to Germany could register. We requested to go to the French Zone of Occupation. Now and then a refugee could leave for Germany. Now, once more, the smaller camps, those in which we lived, were to be closed. At the beginning of March we moved to Aalborg-West. Aalborg was one of the largest camps in Denmark. There were also large camps at Skagen, Skallerup, Hjørring, Oksbøl. In these camps there were about 100 persons. Our camp was again on an air base. Also Swedish airplanes came over. We were here in Aalborg for about a month: We packed up and on the 28th of March at one o'clock in the morning we went by train to the transit camp in Koldingen. Here our luggage was inspected and for the first time we were registered. On the 1st of April we left for Germany. At about 3:30 AM our train reached Flensburg. Here we were registered and were given something warm to eat. At about 6:00 PM our train left for Biberach. Our route was to Flensburg, Rendsburg, Hamburg, Hamm, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Esslingen, Ulm and Biberach.

Supplement dated 27/11/98:

After a couple of days layover in the transit camp at Biberach at the beginning of April we went on to the resort hotel in Bad Niedenau. Here I was astonished to see two cows pulling a plow. We were assigned to various towns, for instance, Bad Saulgau, Reutlingen, Urach and near Urach. At the stop in Bad Niedenau we were advised concerning work and eventual career possibilities. I chose training to be a gardner. So we passed through fruit blossoms in the Ermstal to Urach. I could begin my training in Reutlingen on the 1st of May. Martha found work in a textile firm in Urach. Liesbeth in the Urach hospital. Anni remained another couple of weeks in Denmark with a teacher who had three small children. She stayed in this household in Traisa until her retirement. So the years passed.

In May 1961 I became a gardner at the Urach hospital and remained there for 35 years.

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*The Flight via Danzig and the Baltic Sea to Schleswig-Holstein*

By Käte Schlüter née Kebschull, 1998

On the 27th of March at 12:30 PM, we left Klein-Nossin. The decorated table with my confirmation presents remained behind; but we hoped to return soon!

I do not know whether it was the second or third day of our flight on which we suddenly found ourselves in a witch's cauldron in which German and Russian shells met each other. My parents, sister Else, Forester Gutz and I were near Linde at the bridge over the Leba River before it was blown up. Then we were taken by a military vehicle in which we found shelter from the cold under a tarpaulin. We rode on this vehicle from noon until evening for perhaps a kilometer. Suddenly we hear the order: "Blow up all vehicles!" "But there are still people inside!" called a soldier. Hurriedly we tried to unfasten the tarpaulin. But in the darkness we could not do it and quickly had to force ourselves through a small opening and leave our belongings behind. Now we had only a wallet with money, papers and a few photos remaining. I no longer remember how long we were underway before we came into Danzig.

There was always snow and slush and our shoes were soon soaked. Many women walked in men's work shoes. They were so large that linings and thick stockings would provide protection from the cold. I had my brother's boots on, they were naturally much too large. Our heels were totally ruined. In all those days we did not remove our shoes/boots because we never would have gotten them on again.

We remained for a long time in Danzig. Many were still being conscripted. Our father slipped by at that time. We stayed in a movie theater, in our "UFA Palace". Then we went into an air raid shelter, day and night. We were there on the 25th, 26th or 27th of March when Danzig was reduced by English bombers to a sea of flame. The house above us burned and the air raid cellar had also to be emptied. Those who had been in the rooms before us made it through the exit into the street. There was an area of about one square meter that was sealed off with a brick wall. A soldier covered his head with a steel helmet and jumped against the wall until it broke down. Then we came into a merchant's cellar in which barrels of kersone were stored. We dared not open the door because the flames would immediately have found their way into the cellar. Then we tried to find a way out. Down under the cellar we found an area without any fire and we crept through on our knees. Our mother had her hair and clothing singed. But that way we managed to get out.

The streets of Danzig were narrow and the houses on both sides were burning. We stood there, not knowing whether we should go to the left or to the right. We attached ourselves to a column of wounded who were carried on open wagons towed by exhausted horses. In Danzig we literally stepped over corpses. Dead lay on the street and we stepped over them and over burning timbers and ran for our lives. We made it out of the inferno and into a forest. There we lay down exhausted on boughs gathered so we would not have to lie down on the frozen earth. At that time I promised myself to be satisfied and grateful if I ever again had a roof over my head and a bed and I have kept that promise. But there must be peace and that must be our ultimate goal.

For the remainder of our flight our mother was very sick, so that we had to carry her. The people around us said: "Let her lie, she is almost dead!" But she lived another thirty years.

We were on the Frische Nehrung for a few days. On about the 10th of April we sailed by darkness in a boat onto the Baltic Sea and near Hela were freighted by lighter onto a large ship. Unfortunately I do not know its name. After several bomber attacks, which were opposed by anti-aircraft fire from our ship, we arrived in

Peenemünde or Swinemünde. From here we went quickly by small boat up the Peene to Anklam. We stayed in the small town of Thurow for two weeks until everyone had to flee again. In Triebsees the white flag went up; the people of Thurow would not go any further. Here we caught a train to Rostock and from there by military vehicle to Flensburg. We certainly would not have come so far if my sister had not taken the initiative to find ways out of difficult situations.

The only major air raid on Flensburg came on the 3rd of May and we were in it. The next morning we were advised to leave the city. Flensburg was to be surrendered to the English. One could not be certain that this would be without resistance. We were hardly out of the city when low flying aircraft came, shooting wildly. We have often seen that the later victors had fired at the civilian population and at wagons of wounded bearing the red cross. We now sought refuge at a farm house, hidden under large trees. A wagon rolled out of the barnyard; we asked if we could ride along. "Where do you want to go?" asked the coachman. "Into the next village," replied my sister. The man happened to be going to the next village to get bread for several farmers in the area. And so it was that we ended up in front of the bakery.

Somewhere our mother had picked up a cookpot and someone had given us a bag of groats. As soon as mother thought she was near a cookstove, she would ask if she could cook a pot of groats for us. And so it was here, too. Naturally, she could. We sat in the warm room and the master baker poured an apron full of hard rolls onto the table. For once we had enough to eat and then onward, he had perhaps thought - and we as well. But where? We went to the mayor to register and to ask about a room. The entire village was full to bursting with refugees, people from Kiel who had been bombed out and soldiers. The people in the bakery could offer us a place between the sacks of flour and even had a small carpet to spare. We slept well and on the next day everything smelled, not only like fresh baked bread, but even like peacetime. The sun was shining and blossoms were everywhere. It was really a beautiful village in which we had landed. Above all, the farmsteads were all well cared for. The war had, so it seemed, missed this place. I felt as though I were in the Garden of Eden. Later one saw the many women dressed in black, so that even here there was evidence of the war. But now that was over and one by one the soldiers left. Many of them also did not know where they should go. Room was made for us in a hayloft. It was summer and there one could live well.

We had gotten lice from a straw bed on the Nehrung, head and body lice. We had to get rid of them so that we did not cause problems for our host in his business. But next my sister and I came down with typhus. Probably from the lice. A bed in the house was provided for my sister. The doctor had not properly diagnosed the problem, otherwise she would not have been allowed to remain in the bakery. I was sent to quarantine in the barracks hospital in Flensburg for eight weeks.

We were rid of the body lice, but not the head lice. It was fortunate that I was sent to the hospital by night, otherwise they would have shaved my head as they did with so many others. So that no one would know this I had gone, with a high fever, to the toilet and used a thick comb to comb the lice down the toilet. When I returned the bedbugs crawled out of the pillow. They were throughout the entire barracks because they took refuge in the insulation between the walls.

But by this time the mail was moving again and my parents had written to my sister Anni in Berlin. Would the house still be standing and would the mail reach her? Would she even still be alive? We typhus patients had recovered somewhat and my parents now had a room with access to a kitchen.

On the day before the First Advent the mailman brought us a letter - a letter for us! We had not dared to hope,

but it came from our Anni in Berlin. She was still alive! She had been wounded in the knee by a shell fragment, but had recovered. Not only this good news was contained in the letter, but she could tell us about the entire family. She had written to all of them and all had answered! A brother-in-law was still in Russia. He had lost an eye but returned home at Christmas 1946. The wife of my brother had remained at the Gafferter Mill in Hinterpommern. In September 1945 she had her second child. She was badly abused by the Russians. I do not know when she was allowed to join her husband in Stralsund.

It was Christmas 1945, Christmas in peace! I walked through the village and enjoyed looking at all the brightly lit windows. No blackouts anymore!

From our baker we received kale and smoked meat, which since then has been our custom for Christmas Eve. And there were presents. One shared the little that still remained after six years of war.

We met wonderful people here in Schleswig-Holstein. I can only say: thank you. Sister Else went to work in the household of a livestock dealer, also she had room and board. I began in the bakery and remained there for five years. At that time for weeks there was no flour and no salt. From the USA came cornmeal, really more like seminola. To make bread from it was like trying to form gravel. Later, on weekends, there was even cake. I made marzipan dough in the evenings from mashed potatoes, sugar and almond essence. I still do not like the smell of almonds.

Father helped in the garden and cut all the wood for the bakery. At that time the oven was heated almost entirely with wood. Our mother, naturally, was not inactive. She helped everywhere and she formed a close friendship with the baker's wife and we still remain in contact with her grandchildren. Our "somewhere" is now Schleswig-Holstein. Our four children were born here and also my parents are buried here. I once read a beautiful saying: A person's home can be found on no map, only in the heart of those he loves."

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*Our Flight via Gotenhafen and the Baltic Sea to Ostfriesland*

By Anni Demboski née Kramp, 1999

On the fourth day of our flight we had to leave our wagon. It was everyone for himself. We children all ran after the others. Then Papa called us back because Mama was still on the wagon. She could not walk as fast because she was pregnant. We children did not know this at that time. Many others had already reached the nearby forest. Between tanks and soldiers we were able to cross a bridge before it was blown up. Around us we could hear the thunder of gunfire and tanks. At twilight we stopped under the protection of fir trees whose tops reached out of the snow like sitting people. On the edge of the road we found a bag with bread crumbs. We ate these carefully. Then we reached the road and could climb aboard a truck loaded with soldiers. We heard bullets whistle overhead. When the soldier told us that the next round would be ours and we would be killed, we began to say the Lord's prayer. Thank God it did not hit us. Days later we reached Gotenhafen, just as an air raid was underway. We were taken into a cellar in which there were many refugees and wounded. On the next morning we children went upstairs. There on a balcony we found bucketfuls of mouldy bread crusts that had been thrown out. We collected them, scraped off the mould the best we could and ate them. Then the word was passed that families with many children, sick and old people should go to a house at the harbor. Whether we were taken there or whether we walked there I no longer remember. This house was light and had a spiral staircase, something that was of interest to us children. We had to go all the way upstairs. That was very tiring for Mama. The next day Papa went out to try to get some milk for the baby. Our ship was to arrive at 1:00 PM. But Papa did not come back. He was stopped on the street and conscripted into the Army. We learned this from a woman from our house whom Papa recognized on the street and asked to tell my mother. So mother had to board the ship alone with us. We had no luggage. My brother Kurt carried our 11 month old Margaret in a blanket on his back. A little foot hung out when she managed to get it free. She was cold, but did not cry. Also we other children did not cry. We lacked the strength for that. I can still see that little foot hanging out of the blanket.

First we went onto a small ship. This one brought us to a larger one on the sea. The sailors passed us from one arm to another. The boys had to climb up a rope ladder. On the ship Mama was given two bunks and a life jacket. Mother did not put the life jacket on. She said: "Who should I take with me? Then we will all go down." Kurt and Egon had to go into the engine room.

I do not know how many days we were at sea. Many were seasick and dysentery was everywhere. We arrived in Warnemünde. From here we continued by train. Very slowly. We lay in a locked car. Without our knowledge my brother Egon got out at one stop. Mama saw him lying in the sun on the steps of a red house. He was very weak from dysentery. In one night many babies died.

The train brought us to Leer in Ostfriesland. From here we were taken on a truck without a covering with other refugees to Nordgeorgsfehn. We had to get off at the sluice by the village entrance. Now we were assigned quarters. A basket was still on the truck and we were asked to whom it belonged. At that Kurt shouted: "To us". Mama was shocked. Feedbag handkerchiefs were sewn together and served as carrying straps. The people wondered how we had managed to bring such a heavy basket. Inside was flour, sugar and oatmeal in tins. For us these were all valuable. We kept the empty tins and the basket and used them for a long time.

Mama was given a room in a house that belonged to two sisters. Here she could keep the baby with her. We

other children were freighted on a passing milk wagon to different families. On the way we sat on the milk cans. My sister Irene and I slept in a house neighboring where mother was and also ate breakfast there. Egon and Kurt came separately to one family.

Later we were told that when we arrived we were not hungry, but mother first asked for water to wash us. Our Margaret died at the end of March we were in Nordgeorgsfehn for seven years.

In the meantime mother found Papa through the locator service. He was a prisoner-of-war in Schleswig-Holstein. Now we only missed our Horst, who at the time of our flight was in Gaffert with Grandpa.

Later Mama wrote from Geratewohl to Gaffert, because she suspected that Grandpa, Horst and Mama's sisters would be at home. And that is how it was; somehow we received the news in a letter. They had fled, but had been overtaken by the Russians and were again in Gaffert. When they were finally expelled Horst came to Nordgeorgsfehn.

Papa hoped to work again as a milker. So he searched for Fritz von der Marwitz and received from him an offer to care for his cows in the Alps for the summer. But he did not accept the offer. Instead he took a position in Delmenhorst. From there we later moved to Nethen near Rastede in Oldenburg. Kurt went to milking school. He later found work as a milker in Steinhagen and brought us there.

At every place we lived after our flight one of us has found a place. Irene remained in Ostfriesland. She came to nice people who had no children. Egon found work in Jade, where he wanted to stay. I also remained for a long time on the estate in Nethen; Egon and Irene were not far from me.

People have always been surprised that we all remained together and were not separated on the flight.

## *Flight, Return and Expulsion*

### *We Only Got as Far as Danzig*

*By Elfriede Gölz née Radde*

By this time we were in Danzig. At first we were quartered in a school and then assigned to private residences. We were assigned to a doctor's family, who were not happy to have us. We young people occupied ourselves in the search for something to eat. And there was a very pregnant woman who went with us on our search for something edible. We had only gone a few meters when a grenade exploded nearby. It hit the young woman and she and even the baby lay dead. I ran away in panic into a street in which soldiers had been hanged on trees and other soldiers marched past, singing as they went.

The house in which we stayed was bombed out. Then we lived in an air raid bunker upon which an anti-aircraft battery was posted. The bunker was hit by an aerial bomb and the explosion and convulsion caused a terrible panic among the occupants. The soldiers maintained calm. When we left the bunker after the air raid was over, there was already street fighting. Phosphorus burned and charred bodies of men, women and children and soldiers lay in the street. I was shaken by the explosion of a grenade. Soldiers brought me back into the bunker. I had lost my hearing. A corpsman looked after me and helped me to improve significantly. To this day I still cannot hear with my left ear.

Early the next morning Russians entered the bunker, demanding: "Watches, watches!" We left the bunker and each looked as well as we could for a place to stay. So it was that mother and I came into a barracks in which there were countless sick men, women and children. Many died of starvation because there was no organized distribution of food and because no one dared to go out into the street to search for something to eat. We women and girls were also afraid of being raped, because the Russians did this whenever they had an opportunity. So it was that they came into our barracks by night. My mother and I leaped out a window and ran to a small hill, behind which we could hide. Here we came to defensive trenches and we jumped in. It was so dark that we could not see what we were stepping on. When the moon came out from behind a cloud we could see that we were walking on the bodies of soldiers. In fear that we might be discovered, we remained there quietly until morning. When we returned to the barracks we were met by weeping women.

One day a man came into our barracks with the news that there were trains at the railway station to transport refugees. We immediately started out, but when we reached the station there were soldiers closing the rail cars. I simply shoved my mother into a car and tried to jump aboard myself. The train was already moving and soldiers tried to hold me back, but the people inside held onto me and pulled me into the car. There were many sick in the car, sick children lay on the floor. But it was very dark so that one could not see everything. I do not know whether dead were there also, where the transport came from or how long it had been underway.

We rode for a day and a night until the train stopped at an open place and we had to get off. My mother and I were directly at the door and so were the first ones out. We two then ran across the fields until we came to a farm house. The daughter of the house told us that we should either hide or go on because there were Russians in the house who intended to shoot her father because they found a picture of Adolf Hitler. We were hungry and thirsty and we hid ourselves in a pile of potatoes. The Russians shot the man and raped the woman. When

we were certain they were gone we left our hiding place. The young woman gave us something to eat and to drink and something to take with us. We helped her bury her father.

As darkness fell we went further across meadows and fields until we could go no further and then hid ourselves during the day. As we came back to our home village we were almost starved. My mother weighed less than 90 pounds. Now we wanted to recover what we had buried in the cellar. But in our house there now lived a family from East Prussia. They had moved in because the village inhabitants who returned in the middle of March thought we had not lived through the end of the war.

*Our Route: Stolp, Lauenburg, Stolp, Graudenz, Klein-Nossin*

*By Elli Miladowski née Pallas, 1999*

When the many bombing raids against Berlin took place, the couple by whom I was employed did not want to be responsible for my safety. I understood this, but immediately took another position with an elderly couple in the South End. But we were not protected from the many heavy bomb attacks. Our house was totally destroyed. In the cellar, where the inhabitants sat, we were all safe. My parents wrote to me that I should come back home. After I had been at home for a half-year I had to register at the Labor Office in Stolp. I was immediately employed on Lange Straße. But I was not here long because Stolp was evacuated. At this time my sister Lieselotte also worked in Stolp. We went to the train station but could only board a train loaded with seriously wounded. A few kilometers before Lauenburg our train could go no further. We, those who could still walk, found temporary shelter in an empty one-family house.

After remaining there a few weeks we walked back to Stolp. There were two women with us who took their dead children with them, covered in a baby carriage. They wanted to bury them in Stolp. We were held up for three days in Stolp. At the train station there stood many Jewish men. Someone told us that they were to be shot. I do not know what really happened to them because my sister and I again boarded a train. It took us to Graudenz. It stopped many times on the way. It took us four days until we were imprisoned. It was days before we received anything to eat. We were hungry and hungry again. We camped with many thousands of people in a large barracks. In every corner there stood a bucket for emergencies. We all lay and slept on the hard floor. There were no covers.

Finally we each received a thick slice of bread, naturally dry. My stomach could not take it and I was sick. But I lived through my sickness. By day a privy was our toilet. It was terrible.

One day Russians stood there in our room and took women to work. They called my name, too. To my surprise another girl stood up, one whose name was the same as mine. Today I would like to know what happened to her. We were here in Graudenz for six weeks. Supposedly, we were all to go to Siberia, but fortunately, it did not come to that. Our way led us back to the train station and again back home.

We were on the way for several days. Toward evening we came into Pottangow. We looked for a certain family who made us a big pot of boiled potatoes and gravy. For us it was a banquet. We were allowed to spend the night in the hayloft. On the next morning we walked through the forest to our home village of Klein-Nossin. As we two walked past the old mill we looked at the hill where our potato patch was and saw a man standing. It was Tractor Paul. That is what we called him. He took us in his arms and said: "Girls, it is good that you are still alive." As we walked he told us what had happened in the village. There was room for us with the Bahr family for a few days. Then our Mama said that we should all go to our house where prisoners-of-war were now housed; there were bars on the windows. No sooner said than done; we all moved in together. Here it was safer for us girls.

Each of us went home to cook our meals. Black coffee was needed to make such meals edible. After our assigned work we brought skimmed milk, often burned, from Wundichow, where the estate was still functioning.

Now it was quieter where we were. Gradually we began to enjoy life. Often we sat together and sang folksongs. Then the time came when the land was to be divided. To our surprise Kaschubians and Poles came into our vil-

lage. Fortunately, some of them could speak our German language. So it was that I fell in love with one of them. Later he became my husband. It was unfortunate that in all the years until his death he never heard from any of his relatives. We always regretted this. We married in 1947 and for 48½ years we had a good marriage. We managed the place that belonged to the Bartsch family. At first we had neither livestock nor implements. It was not always easy to cope with farm problems, but we always helped each other.

All the Polish families were good to me. We shared joys and sorrows. I was invited fifteen times to be a godparent and my husband ten times. We were never left out of any celebration.

On the 17th of July my mother and my brothers and sisters, together with all our remaining friends and neighbors, were expelled. With tearful eyes I remained behind. It took a long time for me to get over this heartbreak. But life had to go on. We had very little money. We lived from our own produce.

We seldom needed a doctor. In the year 1951 there was not a good harvest. We and the others could not fulfill our quotas. As a penalty my husband had to go to work in a coalmine. I decided to close the farmstead and sold the entire inventory. That is how upset I was. The Polish men helped me to sell at the market in Bütow. After three months my husband returned and our daughter was born the next day. We remained for several months in Klein-Nossin, but then moved to Wundichow. My husband worked for a collective farm and I was only a housewife. Then we requested permission to emigrate. Our request was approved and on the 16th of March 1959 we met in Königstein. Here we stayed with my sister and brother-in-law Rudi for a couple of weeks.

### *Flight and Return*

*By Sibylle Kuch née Bauske, 1998*

Aunt Meta and her children, Ursula and Joachim Grunst, Mr. and Mrs. Bartsch, my mother and I fled toward Lauenburg with the horse and wagon of my Uncle Artur Grunst. At a stop Uncle Artur was shot by the Russians. He was wearing a motorcycle cap and that made the Russians suspicious. From there we went by foot back to Klein-Nossin. Along the way Mr. Bartsch hanged himself. When we arrived at our house we could not go in. It had been occupied by Russians. They sent us away. Then we went into the forest to the sheep pens and stayed there for awhile. Later we went back to our house where a Pole now lived with his sister.

The sister of the Pole cooked at our house. I was supposed to help, but I always hid. Mother had to work there, too. Mother and I ate potatoes and turnips in the kitchen. The Pole and his sister lived in our best room and ate bacon there as well.

Mother also had to do farm work for the Poles.

### *Over the Baltic Sea to Celle, Berlin and again to Klein-Nossin*

*By Irmgard Eissner née Bartsch, 1999*

On the 10th of March 1945 my sister Elisabeth and I became separated from our caravan and family. The next days we were taken in a military vehicle and cared for by the Army. I do not know the names of the places we passed through or where we remained overnight, because only houses that stood alone were chosen and mostly we continued through the night. On our way to the Baltic Sea we came near the front line. But in spite of heavy fire, we were spared and made our way to the Hela Peninsula. There we were taken by a German ship across the Baltic Sea to Swinemünde and then with a small boat brought to Ückeründe. Many ships were torpedoed, we were lucky.

From Ückeründe we went by rail (with many air attacks) and landed in Celle and from there to our aunt in Berlin-Reinickendorf. Here we experienced heavy air attacks from the end of March into April and went to Elsa Bloch in Schildow, which was occupied by Russians on the 21st of April. We lived at this time in a hiding place and at the end of May moved to our aunt in Berlin. In order to receive food ration books Elisabeth and I broke stones in Wedding. We were the first *Trümmerfrauen*.

My aunt started out for Klein-Nossin in August 1945. She arrived there and returned safely. That is how we learned that our mama and my sister Gerda had returned without father. In order to be with mama I started on the way home with Marie Maschke. We hitched rides from Berlin to Stettin, from Stettin to Stolp by rail without tickets, and then by foot along the *Stolpetalbahn* to Budow and late in the evening to Klein-Nossin. Mama was cooking syrup from sugar beets and we were all happy to be together again. In July 1947 we were expelled and landed in Saxony. I still live here. Pomerania remains my home, but I now live here. Also mama, Gerda and my husband lie here.

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### *About the Time from Flight to Expulsion in 1947*

*By Lore Donnerstag née Pallas, 1999 and 2001*

When we returned from our flight to Klein-Nossin in 1945, none dared to enter our village. We remained altogether and went to Schwichtenberg's house, later to the house of estate inspector Bahr. Even teacher Grosch with his housekeeper, Grete, lived here with us, Mrs. von der Marwitz for only a brief time.

The Russians had already left our village before we returned.

Some of the village inhabitants, among them our mother with my brother Heino, dared then to go into the village to see how it looked in the house, barn and all around. They then reported that along the side our house facing the barnyard there were long tables, upon which meat from slaughtered animals lay.

In our living quarters there were several couches, gathered from various houses. On the walls clocks were hung.

The cows had gathered at, or had been driven to, in the place where in the winter we had skated on the ice. We called this place Bartkow. Our mother said that when she could not find our cow she would call "*Mutsche, Mutsche!*" and she would come at a gallop, bellowing endlessly.

Unfortunately, the Russians then took all the cows away to the estate in Wundichow. From there on every second evening we could get skim milk. We had to make the way on foot and the containers we brought with us were heavy.

Behind our house under the pantry window the Russians had left an old ruined automobile standing. It caused problems for us when we again lived in our house. The Russians, who came into the village again and again, thought that we had hidden the missing parts. They were usually very angry and made terrible threats. My brother Heino, with the help of the villagers, brought the automobile away.

Our mother helped with the burials. My brother Heino also helped. After our return he, with several others, brought the bodies of our teacher Häcker and his family from the forest, where they had taken their own lives. Later the father of Lieselotte Schwichtenberg died. It was also tragic that the mother of Helmut and Karl-Heinz Below died of typhus. Aunt Anna, Anna Maurer, took the children home with her.

Heino helped to build coffins for all of them. For that the men and boys found boards and nails in our father's carpenter shop.

The Russians, also women came with them, took with them what they wished. One time they wanted two hundred chickens and eggs, which could not be found in the entire village. My mother and I were at the house of uncle Heinrich and aunt Mathilde when a Russian entered the house. He was very angry because of the missing eggs. We all had to gather in the living room, also Aunt Lene, Uncle Willi and Edwin were brought in. I stood at the front. He put his weapon to my head. We thought he would shoot us all. But he was polite and stroked my hair with his hand. One never in one's life forgets the fear experienced as a child.

I still remember it well: we all still lived at Bahr's, my sisters Elli and Lieselotte had in the meantime made it to Klein-Nossin from their journey that began in Stolp. My mother, with Elli, Lieselotte and Ilse, made her way to the lake. There she intended to end her life, because the Russians always pursued her. An agreement had been made with Mrs. Looock to look after me. How difficult must this decision have been for my mother. Fortunately, she returned, she did not have the heart to do it. I was only told of this later.

As long as we lived at Bahn's we had enough to eat. Our cooking was done together.

For Easter 1945 the women made a sort of *Pfefferkuchen* in our oven using flour and syrup made from sugar beets. At noon there was often lung hash, but also fried eel. The boys caught them in the traps that were set in the lake. The women always found something to cook. Perhaps there was also something to eat in other houses. The bins were still full of potatoes, turnips, sugar beets and so on.

Hofmeisters, we called them Uncle Heinrich and Aunt Mathilde, lived immediately after their return from the flight again in their own house. I do not remember exactly whether at the end of April or in May every family dared to live alone in their own house...

We still had all our own furniture. The wall clock was often in danger of being stolen. On a later visit my mother sent me with it wrapped in her apron to the potato patch behind our garden. I sat there for a long time, even after the danger was over, because no one remembered to call me.

We still planted potatoes ourselves in 1945. We found enough in the bin to use as seed potatoes.

In our village there lived a Lithuanian family Güz up to 1945 in Kramp's house. The village women did not like Mrs. Güz. They said that she always told the Russians in which houses women and young girls lived. She spoke perfect Russian. For a time our family and others allowed Mr. Güz to lock us into the house of Knack and Below, which had once been a jail. The windows and outside door were barred. We took our beds and after dark went there to sleep. Mr. Güz then locked the door with a padlock. We lived almost like prisoners.

The man locked the door early. I often thought about it because somehow it did not make sense that the woman sent the Russians to the girls and he locked us up to keep us away from the Russians.

The Lithuanian, who during the war lived in Ida Kaiser's house, had watched us when we buried the chests in the forest at night, things we could not take with us on our flight. The chests were all broken open and many things like linen, towels and so on lay scattered in the forest. It was the same with the chests hidden in our own shed buried under a stack of peat.

We still had five chickens left. When we again lived alone we took them into the house every evening. Heino built roosts for them under the attic stairs where we kept our shoes before.

In the winter of 1945/45 Heino caught a wild boar in an empty potato bin. It was there where Ethe Richards had his potato patch. How he killed the animal, I do not know. It certainly was not easy for him. At that time he was fifteen years old. Lieselotte must have helped him. They brought it home in a sack on a sled.

When we again slept in our own house the Russians appeared again and again to plunder. In winter they came late in the evening or at night with a horse-drawn sleigh, at a gallop, up the way from the field shed. They almost always stopped at our house. We immediately turned off the barn lantern, stopped the wall clock and hardly dared to breathe. Everything in the barn and barnyard was searched thoroughly and anything of use was taken. Then they would go further into the village. We never knew if they had left or were still there. The sleigh never came back. Then they would depart by way of the *Tannenweg* to Wundichow or Groß Nossin to commit further crimes there.

Later the women and girls would sit together on winter evenings as we had done before, knitting socks or gloves from unraveled wool. When the transformer house was put back in order, we again had lights.

After the flight the following houses were empty: Ida Kaiser, Richard Kepschull, Paul Kepschull III, Hermann Kepschull, Ernst Kepschull, Emma Kepschull, Franz Neumann, Friedrich Kepschull, Emil Kepschull, Max Döring, the school, Hermann Radde, Paul Lull, Maria Kepschull, Emil Körlin, Otto Kramp, Herta Kepschull, Paul Wepee (the Lulls moved in here in the year 1945).

After our failed flight we were nourished primarily by potatoes, turnips, sugar beets and so on from our own bins. In the morning there would be boiled potatoes, at noon something with fried potatoes and in the evening fried potatoes with milk soup. Often we ate boiled potatoes with a kind of sauce. Grated potatoes with a little salt, thickened groats or clover were cooked on a hot stove plate. We called them *Plazig*. Grated potatoes with salt, that was poured into a closed flat pan, baked in the oven, that was our *Riewelskuchen*.

We had no shortening, sugar or many other things. Mostly we drank water from the pump, imitation coffee or thickened milk from the Malchow skim milk. We women also made cottage cheese from it. Syrup was boiled in the washtub from sugar beets. We went for blueberries and mushrooms when things became a little more normal.

We village children stuck together as we had before. But I cannot recall any summer games because we usually had to help out at home. Hauling water and wood, going for blueberries and mushrooms.

In the winter of 1946/47 we went sledding to the *Koppel am Lindenberg* as we had before. But our shoes were in poor condition. The old ones were too small and there were no new ones. We searched everywhere for larger shoes.

Vera and Christa Pallas wore shoes from their mother with thick liners to make them fit. That is how we went sledding. My old jogging suit from our flight had to go into the laundry for a long time.

One by one the farm houses were taken over by Poles and their families. From that time on there was no rest in the village. Part of the fields were planted, the hay was mown. A few of the Germans worked for the Poles. That was a way to get something to eat.

It was clear to us that sooner or later we would be expelled, but in which year or which month was uncertain. My older sisters Lieselotte and Ilse and our mother sewed for each of us a backpack with pockets made of home woven linen hand towels, still with the embroidered monograms from mother's youth. We had found these hand towels in March 1945 strewn in mud and snow in the forest. They were in the chests we had buried before our flight. In each of our backpacks we packed those things that we still found in our house after we returned from our flight.

When the Poles came we worked for them for something to eat. My older sister Lieselotte worked for the Pole Stachow, who lived on the farmstead of Artur Gunst together with his elderly mother, two brothers and a sister. Lieselotte took care of the housework and cooked.

By this time we were living in 1947 and I was thirteen years old. During the growing season I sometime herded the cows that belonged to this Stachow even though I greatly feared cows and horses. At this time hunger was stronger than fear. Here I received good food from breakfast to supper.

I remember well the time Stachow brought a small bag of candy with him from shopping in Groß Nossin. That was something special for me because we had no money and could not buy anything. I saved a few pieces for the time when we would have to leave. One day it was that time, it was the 17th of July 1947.

Like every morning I left with the cows. Stachow accompanied me along the *Tannenweg*. The pasture was at the end on the right side.

Sometimes it happened that Rudi Keschull (Mische Rudi) was also at this pasture. I would share my sandwich with him because he did not get anything to eat. On this 17th of June I was there alone. Then Stachow came all exited on a bicycle: "Come home quickly, today you have to leave!" Together we drove the cows back to the barnyard.

Lieselotte Schwichtenberg still remembers how I passed her house with the cows. She was already prepared to go and wondered why I had been called so late. When the news of our expulsion came at 5:00 PM my sister Lieselotte immediately ran home to help with the packing. She said that in the excitement she had almost forgotten me because our departure was set for 7 o'clock or 7:30.

Besides my backpack I carried my two celluloid dolls, Erika and Inge, in a net bag, both in their crocheted dresses, red and pink.

First we had to go to the command post in Groß Nossin and then by way of Wundichow, Rathsdamnitz and on to Stolp, where we spent one night.

Before we were loaded into freight cars during the next day, we had to go through an inspection, something I still think back on with pain, because it was there that my net bag with the dolls was taken from me. I neither cried nor objected to give them up because I was afraid I would not be allowed to leave with the others.

I can still remember that the train stopped from time to time. Many people then ran to the locomotive to get water. Others stood in a long line at a toilet. When the shrill whistle of the train signaled that everyone should climb aboard many had not yet been able to use the toilet.

How long the journey to our destination in Pima lasted I no longer remember, nor how when we were there we were transported to the "Gray Barracks", which today look exactly as they did in 1947.

Once or twice we were deloused. We had to hang our clothing on hooks, which took them to be disinfected. We ourselves were powdered in our hair. The date of our delousing was entered on our passes. After several days the families were parceled out to various counties, cities and villages. Those families who were allowed to continue to the western zones were considered lucky. As with a strong wind we were all scattered in various directions.

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*Of the Flight, Return and Expulsion*

*From Katharina Palischkis née Keschull, by Heino Keschull*

After our caravan was overtaken by the soviet troops on the 10th of March our wagons stood in a forest near Linde, some 1.5 kilometers before Klutschau. In the night we stooped in the snow beside our wagon and ate from the food we had brought with us, ham, lard, butter, sausage and the bread we had baked shortly before the 7th of March. On the morning of the 11th of March we left the forest again and as our caravan left the forest path to enter the main road from Linde to Klutschau we were stopped by the Russians. They took all the horses, plundered the wagons, took the shoes and boots from the men and separated many from their families. Father was in deep snow, finally dressed with one wooden shoe and one felt slipper and was taken away without a chance to say good-bye. Grandmother was 85 years old and we had taken her with us when she should have been in bed. Now we did not know what to do, what we should do. Grandfather was one year older. Even though he was still in robust health, he could no longer bear a backpack and declared that he would remain with his sickly wife and beg the Russians to shoot them both as an act of mercy. We could no longer see it when the first soldier he asked refused to do it and he then took his request to another. Later we were told by one of the men from the village who were released, Fritz Schwichtenberg, that on the 12th of March he was with father in a caravan of civilian prisoners that passed the place where our flight ended and where grandfather and grandmother finally lay. Father had said: "There under the straw is where my parents-in-law lie."

On our return to Klein-Nossin we were stopped by the Russians at Schimmerwitz and put into a small room with some 50 persons. There we found a glass bowl which one of the men who were imprisoned, Willi Keschull, filled with snow from outside. We ate it hungrily because on our day-long march we had been given nothing to eat and the Russians and Poles prevented us from drinking water from pumps or hydrants. In the morning the door was opened and we had to pass many soldiers on our way to stand against a fence. We thought they would shoot us all, but at this time we no longer cared. But they only were looking for a few men who would be able to work, taking our neighbor Artur Pallas and they let the rest of us go.

As we entered our village on the 12th of March 1945, coming through deep snow from the direction of Groß Nossin, our way was blocked at the cemetery by a bull from the estate which had been shot. On the small sand-box at the school there lay the shattered inscription tablet from the war memorial. This first impression upon our return was a great shock for all of us. We did not dare at first to go into any of the single houses and we all stayed at Schichtenberg's in a single residence across from the school. We slept altogether on the floor.

On the next day the snow began to melt. Carefully we looked around us and went with mother to our house. There we saw a burning candle on a table in the room nearest the street and beside it a machine pistol, so we left immediately. After two days we repeated the attempt and stepped on a calf in the pantry, which was so hungry that it was chewing on an apron that hung on the door. In the open house cellar a young pig had fallen and was eating the potatoes and vegetables that were stored there.

On the second day after our return Mrs. von der Marwitz returned to Klein-Nossin, completely exhausted and disheveled, and slept the first night on the floor at Schwichtenberg's with Else Pallas, Else Keschull, mother and me. She begged us not to address her as "*Gnädige Frau*" anymore. She only remained one night and left quietly in the morning without saying good-bye. A little later the estate house burned, starting in 6 to 8 places

at the same time. We ran to the fire, but could on only watch helplessly as everything burned to the ground. Since the fire was not extinguished, it burned for several days.

More Russians kept coming. When one of them found himself in a room at Schwichtenberg's that was full of people, an alarm clock suddenly went off. He fired at the ceiling like a wild man.

Otto Häcker, who had in 1945 been the teacher in Klein-Nossin and was now in Wundichow, poisoned himself, his wife and grandchild in the Klein-Nossin forest between Schottow and the lake. In the days after the 12th of March their bodies were found and they were buried to the left of the cemetery entrance without coffins.

After a time we all left Schwichtenberg's and went to the house of the estate inspector. From here we had a wide view of the way to Groß Nossin and to behind the houses of the Raddes and Reddels. We stayed there for long weeks at the window or in front of the house, hoping to see father on his way from the village. Mother was already sick in bed. Because I and all the other women in the house had fled the house, due to the fear that the Russians would attack again from the direction of Bartkow, to the meadow between the village and the chestnut-lined way from the estate to the field shed, and my brothers, Rudi and Fritz, remained with mother. When a noisy Red Army soldier entered the room our mother screamed and he threw a money chest at her. Rudi was able to intercept it before it hit her head. The soldier set off a hand grenade outside the house.

When we were back in our own house we often fled from marauding Russians as they came from the direction of Wundichow by way of the field way. One time we ran to a Lithuanian family, who at that time lived across the street, when the Russians approached in a pony wagon toward Klein-Nossin. Mother remained at home and locked herself in. When the Red Army soldiers found the door and windows locked, they fired at the house-door. Then mother leaped out the window on the barnyard side of our house and remained there quietly, lying under the linden tree. The soldiers stepped on her and kicked her before they left and we, together with the neighbors, hurried to her to offer aidp in her helplessness, laying wet, cool cloths on her heart. This happened in the first weeks after our return and there was snow on the ground.

Otto Pett was the only one in the village who still had a watch. At four o'clock he woke me to work in the cow stall of the Russians, because he had to guard it at night. We then worked straight through until about 11:00 PM. Since for a long time there was no electricity, I left the house in darkness and returned again in darkness. One time I said to my mother and brother: "Light a stump of a candle or a torch or else I will forget what you look like."

In 1946 the cow barn on the estate was rebuilt into a central barn. There, at the order of the Russians, the cows were washed regularly, every manure pile immediately disposed of. Most of the manure was carried in buckets to a ditch in the barnyard to save.

I worked with my brother Rudi and our Aunt Herta and finally for the former Polish civilian laborer, Johann Gluchowsky. We received something to eat as payment, but it was often leftovers like the skin from smoked eels, which the Pole caught in large numbers from the Schottow at the upper mill. Aunt Herta, when she was not being watched, would throw Rudi some of the boiled potatoes that were intended for the hogs.

In the first year there were enough potatoes and turnips in the bins for us to eat. We still planted onions and potatoes in 1945. And we could sow vegetables from the seed we still had. But everything we planted and sowed was pulled up by the Russians and ruined.

My brothers Rudi and Fritz often could not sleep because of our hunger and cried out loud.

The winter grain was harvested by German prisoners. The German villagers were pressed into service for the

threshing. The threshing machine was powered by a bulldog. Since six people were loading grain into the machine, the tractor had to run at full blast. That caused sparks that set the estate barns that stood in the fields on fire and then spread to other barns. This happened at about noon. At this time food for the threshing crew was being brought from Wundichow. At the sight of the two burning buildings the vehicle with the hot soup returned to Wundichow.

The blacksmith Seils in Groß Nossin had gathered all the instruments from the Prochel dental clinic. With them he now began practice dentistry. But he could only extract teeth without any way of blocking the pain. After almost unbearable toothache in my desperation I went to him and had a tooth pulled.

A relative of the Bartsch family from Berlin brought a list of Klein-Nossin residents who were there with relatives or had registered.

The French prisoner of war who worked for Lorenz Kebschull drowned while swimming in the lake in 1944. He was buried in the cemetery. We cared for his grave until our expulsion. I learned that his remains were taken home in a truck shortly after the Germans were expelled.

On the 17th of July 1947 we were expelled from Klein-Nossin. Within two and a half hours we had to be ready to go with our baggage. In this short time I had to get my brother Rudi from the lake, where he was herding cows, even before I could bundle the few possessions for mother, Rudi, Fritz and myself. The Pole, Johann Gluchowsky, already knew of this because he had taken Mrs. von der Marwitz, who since the end of the war had lived in his house, to Stolp ahead of time where she joined us. It is obvious that all the other Poles knew of this. But they kept all the Germans under their supervision working up until the last minute. Aunt Herta and I still had to do the dirtiest work for Johann Gluchowsky.

Old people and children were allowed to ride on a horse-drawn wagon on top of our baggage. All others had to walk more than 40 kilometers from Klein-Nossin by way of Groß Nossin and Wundichow to Stolp. In Rathsdamnitz and in streaming rain, I lost my shoe soles. I had to go barefoot the rest of the way, but took the uppers with me. We spent the night in Stolp in our wet clothes and the next day were loaded onto a train, 32 people to a freight car. We sat and lay on straw. The only water we had came from the locomotive. This journey lasted three days until we finally reached Pima. From there we were sent to Dresden-Zschieren. I was given work in a greenhouse, still walking barefoot, even when the nights were very cold. Then someone repaired my shoes.

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*Our Childhood 1945 - 1947 in Klein-Nossin*

*From Karl-Heinz Below, Rudi and Fritz Keschull by Heino Keschull, 1999*

After the end of the war there was no more school for us. Teacher Grosch, who also fled and returned again to Klein-Nossin, taught Russian to those children who were interested. At first we played with war equipment that lay around everywhere. Small farmer Karl Keschull IV (Ethe Paul), who was nearly blind, showed us from his experience in World War I how at his work bench he could retrieve explosive material from the spent shells that were everywhere.

We fired off all the munitions we could gather. From the milk platform in front of the Grunst house in the center of the village we fired toward Lindenberg. We fastened hand grenades to fences, detonated them with a cord and, without knowing it, risked our lives. We set off a large amount of powder in the stove at Ida Kaiser's empty house. Frightened by the massive flames and blackened by the smoke, we ran down the *Hohlweg* into the nearby forest, where we spent the next hours in terror, dreading the reckoning the next hours would bring.

We found a machine pistol in Körlin's house and fired it through tables and doors. We threw anything that was not nailed down through the opening on the gable. But the adults in the village did exact any punishment at this time because they were in constant panic of a Russian attack. We started a fire in the baking oven, loaded the munitions in with a paddle and listened to the explosions. We caught crayfish in the Schottow and shot at pigeons and sparrows with slingshots.

At the main estate barnyard we found next to the cow shed many rolls of twine. We clamped these rolls under our arms and tied together trees, machines and buildings. Later we took the shingles from the roof of the cow shed, made them into a net and threw them around. When the village inhabitants ran out of table salt, we gave them salt licks from the stable.

One night the Poles and Germans who lived in the village brought back their stolen transformer from Daber. In order to make no sound we wrapped the hooves of the horses and the wagon wheels with rags. Then there was electricity again.

Later we had to work for Poles, too. That is how we lived in Klein-Nossin at the ages of seven to ten.

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*My Experience in and around Klein-Nossin, 1947-1949*

By Horst Kramp, 2000

I was born in Budow-Mill and grew up with my grandparents Tuschy in Gaffert. But I am the only one in our family that saw Klein-Nossin after our flight. I lived with my grand- parents from 1942 with Paul Kroll near Grünheide. Then our flight came one day at the beginning of March. I believe we fled one day after the people of Klein-Nossin, also toward Gotenhafen-Danzig. After a couple of days one morning we heard: "Stoy!" The Russians had caught up with us. They tipped over our wagon and took our horses, watches and anything else that was worthwhile. We then remained for several days in a village whose name I no longer remember. There we caught a pair of lame horses and prepared our wagon to return home. Also we buried several men, women and young people whom the Russians had murdered. Along the way we saw more dead, including soldiers. The dead in Gaffert were buried by the men when they returned.

We returned by way of Malenz. There we saw dead cattle still tied in their stalls. It was a sad picture. When we arrived at home there was another shock. The barn had been burned, there was not a single window pane left in the house and it was impossible to live there. Then farmer Maronn took us in.

One day the Russians came and took the farmers and me to Klein-Nossin. There we, along with other men, had to care for the horses on the estate. Riding the horses to water them in the brook near the school is still a pleasant memory. We slept and took our meals in a house near the Lindenhof estate. One day we had to bring the horses to Lupow. That was a ride. We went along the forest path with three, four horses tied side by side. Along the way there were telephone poles and the outer horse was often caught on a pole. In Lupow I was astonished to see so many horses which had been driven together into the same pasture.

After that Gaffert and Budow worked in the grain harvest. Four horses towed the mowing machine. An old man was allowed to sit on the machine, I had to run ahead and guide the lead horses. My legs were scratched by the stubble. This went on from sunrise to sunset. Then at noon there was an alarm. The field barn in Klein-Nossin was burning. The horses were attached to the honeywagon, which already stood filled with water. And they hurried to Klein-Nossin at a gallop. The burning roof material was already in the air in Gaffert. In Klein-Nossin we had to haul water from the brook. The tank was filled with buckets. These are my memories of Klein-Nossin.

Oh yes, when the farmers and I had to go to Klein-Nossin, a helpless old man sat under a tree. We helped him but he died in a few days. He was said to have been a relative of the coachman from Gaffert.

And then the Russian collected the livestock. One herd of cattle was supposed to be driven from Budow to Stolpmünde. I still remember with sympathy the women who had to run behind the herd so that the animals could not escape. We spent the night after Stolp, milked the cows and then drove them on to Stolpmünde. Finally on the Baltic Sea. But I still wonder how the Russians managed to get the cows aboard a ship in order to take them to Russia. There was no real harbor, only a beach.

By this time the Poles were in charge. So my last days were spent working for the Polish miller. For payment I received a couple of pounds of flour. In this way we could bake bread from time to time.

In September 1947 we were expelled. Until January 1948 we were in a camp in Löbau in Communist East Germany. Then we finally made it to the west, to Ostfriesland, where my Klein-Nossin parents and siblings were.

*Flight, Return and the Time until 1947*

*From Helene Kepschull née Kepschull, by Heino Kepschull, 1999*

This account is based on a handwritten text by Helene Kepschull from the 1997 and on talks with her daughter Erika at the beginning of the year 1999.

In March 1945 soldiers came into the village and we had to leave, because the Russians were coming. While I searched for documents and money one said to me: "Hurry up and get out of here!" I was pregnant.

Then we took a horse and wagon and left. Our way led us to near Lauenburg.

We slept only in the wagon, once in a cowshed. Then we fell into the hands of the Russians. Grandpa was already upon a wagon, headed for Danzig. Then we returned on foot. The first large group met in Schimmerwitz.

We went to Klein-Nossin together. Grandpa came later.

Hermann Nieske had not fled. Upon our return we found him, shot in a pigsty.

At first we all stayed at Schwichtenberg's. The Russians occupied the village. And how it all appeared! Furniture and beds lay in the street, animals were dead and the bee hives ruined. They had laid a cabinet on its side and a carpet laid over it as a tablecloth. Since I was pregnant I could not lay on the floor with the others, so I went home. They allowed that.

When we cooked something the Russians would come and take it away from us.

The young girls were raped repeatedly. We had to work for the Russians in the fields and in the barn. On the 17th of April Erika was born. There was no midwife and no doctor, so I had to do everything alone. After two days I had to go into the kitchen to cook for the Russians.

In these days the girls hid themselves from the commander under my bed covers. I had to bake bread, work in the barn and so on.

We had to wash the cows with disinfectant. Our hands were in terrible shape. A Russian doctor in Wundichow ordered that we should not do that anymore. The Russian girls had to work. Grandpa and Paul had to watch Erika or else the commander would have stolen her.

Willi, my husband, was taken, even though he was sick. At first they brought him to Schwarzdamerkow, then to Stolp. From there he fled to Germany.

Before I gave birth Willi, Edwin and I were to be shot because we had no eggs to give up. First they shot the chickens, then they wanted eggs.

*From March 1945 until July 1947 in Klein-Nossin*

*By Liesbeth Logies née Kebschull, 2001*

After our return from our flight we worked for the Russians in agriculture. Our noon meal was from the Russian kitchen. The meat was often bad. I was very sick with jaundice, which I cured myself without a doctor and without any medicine.

Thank God, that the Russians then withdrew to Wundichow. They lived there in the castle. After that the Poles came to the farmsteads and for us that was the beginning of a time of hunger. My sister Ruth and I searched through the Polish garbage cans for something we could eat such as potato peelings, leftovers from vegetables. Now and again we stole turnips. Our mother cooked everything until it was done, mashed it until it was fine, flavored it with Kali (chemical fertilizer) which Uncle Heinrich found at the estate. This banquet took place two or three times a week. Besides, there was rhubarb without sugar, which still gives me goose bumps down my back when I think about it.

After a time we Germans managed to get along with the Poles. They needed laborers. I worked for Stegelniak, across the street at the Grunst farmstead. Often I was allowed to bring leftovers for mother and my sisters: bread crusts, boiled potatoes and sometimes a liter of milk or buttermilk.

Gradually, more and more Poles came to Klein-Nossin with their families. What happened had to happen. One day two militiamen came with lists under their arms and told us: If we wanted to remain we must become Polish, if not, we would be expelled. Our answer was that our father already lived in the west in County Uelzen. There he had work and a place to live. They told us that he could come to Klein-Nossin and then we would live together here. When we declined we were told that we should prepare to be expelled. This came very quickly on the 17th of June 1947.

The Poles took us by horse and wagon to the train station in Stolp. We could take with us what we could fit into a backpack and what we had on. Before we climbed onto the wagon we still sang: "*Nun ade, Du mein lieb Heimatland, lieb Heimatland, ade.*" This irritated the Polish militiamen. "Get on the wagon and get out of here!" they shouted.

When we arrived in Stolp we were loaded into cattle cars. There we sat or lay on the floor. We went to Pima. We stayed in a large barracks for two weeks.

One day there came the news that we could go into the west, whoever had no relatives there would remain in Saxony. Now, with many tears,

we had to say good-bye to the people from Klein-Nossin. We three then went by train to Friedland and after a week there on to our father in Lintzel in County Uelzen. On the 1st of April 1948 we moved to Arensdorf and on the 1st of October 1957 to Wriedel where I still live with my family.

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## *In Klein-Nossin before 1945*

### *Ernst Blaurock Remembers*

The Klein-Nossin teacher from the years 1928 until 1940 wrote in 1951 in material made available to me by his daughter Elisabeth: The occupant of the Kleinnosin school in County Stolp, Mr. Emil Wegner, was transferred on the 1st of August 1928 to Borntuchen, County Bütow. My contract for Kleinnossin was approved and we moved to Kleinnosin. Now we finally had what could satisfy us. Kleinnossin was an estate farm village. The number of inhabitants was 250, the number of children in the school 59.

Our living quarters had three ample rooms and a kitchen and upstairs another large room. We moved our parents-in-law Reinke in here. And never again have I had such polite, ambitious and gifted children in school. To the school belonged, besides a large garden, two meadows and ten morgen of cultivated land. The cultivated land and the meadows were leased out to the miller, Willibald Jagnow.

Already in Flackenheide I had been interested in pre-history. Also Gr.-Gustkow was in this respect a fertile place. But most successful of all was the opportunity for research in Kleinnossin. In the thirteen years of my tenure in Kleinnossin I have searched various hills, slopes and valleys for pre-historical material and organized an extensive collection in the school:

From the stone age: 1 stone axe from Schmiedeberg

From the bronze age: Graves and pottery shards from the Lindenberg

Grave sites (about 30) on the Schmiedeberg with urns and containers

Settlement remains from the hill before the mill

From the Wenden period: Remains of a settlement on a slope of the Schmiedeberg to the Kritschschen Moor  
1 flour trough from Vanseblin

1 flour trough from the Dauerweide near the Seerschenow

1 flour trough from Malenz

1 singletree from the Willosch

Klein-Nossin and surrounding area; by Ernst Blaurock, 1951

At the school with Ernst Blaurock, 1936

At the entrance to the school with Otto Häcker, about 1942

Game at recess in front of the house across from the school with a view of the estate barns and the lindens on the Klapperberg.

Elsbeth and Katharina Kebschull at the Fritz Kebschull at the bell tower signpost across from the school, 1944.  
across from the school and cemetery.

## *Harvest Festival in Klein-Nossin*

*From Luise Muttschall nee Keschull, by Heino Keschull, 1999*

The description of the harvest festival is based on a conversation with Luise Muttschall in October 1998. I took the two harvest poems from a small notebook into which Luise Muttschall had copied them from dictation by her mother Johanna in 1936/37. After their flight and return this notebook was found in their house and when they were expelled in 1947 they took it with them and have preserved ever since. I have copied it as a document of folk poetry without shortening it.

Concerning the two poems I was told by Elsbeth Glowacki, a sister of Luise Muttschall, that they were to her a reminder Klein-Nossin. She said that all the relatives listened attentively when, after being asked repeatedly, Luise recited the harvest poems.

I retained the structure of the verses and sentences, only adding punctuation marks when they were needed.

According to Luise Muttschall, at the beginning of the harvest festival a cord was tied around the arm of the estate administrator and the estate owner and the following speech was made:

Today is a day of great honor,  
on which I may bind *Herrn Inspektor/Rittmeister*.  
I tie not too loose nor too tight,  
I tie best of all  
I tie not for beer or wine  
but alone to honor our *Herrn Inspektors/Gutsbesitzers*.

Each of these honorees was then required to donate twenty Marks. This binding took place in the years 1934-36 and Luise Keschull recited it in the colloquial village dialect as “*Schneider’s Lissa*” (Tailor’s Lissa). At the tailor’s, the house Paul Keschull I, the harvest crown was fabricated in this period. At the beginning of the harvest festival she would be escorted by the Bütow Patzlaff band. Accompanied by music Tailor’s Lissa would bear the harvest crown through the village to the estate house, following the band. Here, before the assembled von der Marwitz family, the house employees, the master of the farmstead, the administrator and the forester, along with all the village inhabitants who followed the music, the harvest poems and good wishes would be recited. As her thanks she accepted another donation for the harvest festival, which would be celebrated in the estate granary.

On the tractor, Paul Keschull V, on the binder, Emil Keschull, standing in front,  
Paul Keschull II.

Grain harvest on the way to Windichow; below left Paul Keschull II, in front,  
Fritz Schwichtenberg.

### **Harvest Poem I**

Today we bring the harvest crown  
with joy, gratitude and singing,  
as God the Lord in sunshine

allowed the harvest.  
In the spring it was joyful  
to see the fields,  
but God allowed us no time

to stand in sorrow.

By the flood of His blessing,  
by sunshine and rain  
thus we band freely  
content in all ways.

God has blessed our fields  
with the well being of His hand;  
mild good has rained,  
His gift covers the land.

On the hills, in the valleys  
His blessings are strewn;  
our waiting is crowned,  
God has made our hearts glad.

All eyes are lifted  
to the Lord at this hour,  
the food comes from above  
and satisfies every mouth.

His goodness has no end,  
His wealth will never diminish,  
His help and contributions  
makes all happy and full.

It is true that such goods,  
we have not earned, God gives -  
our happiness and contentment  
reminds us at every hour.

It is true there are many fine blessings  
that are spoiled by our evil deeds,  
which perhaps with better behavior  
we might have also inherited.

Our God full of love and truth  
grant from Your mercy and goodness  
to us the harvest of blessings  
in the beautiful summer time

which we today with great joy  
celebrate a real thanksgiving festival.

There I say from the bottom of my heart  
to You, oh God, praise and credit  
to this hour and day  
and beg you fervently,  
that you would hear graciously  
our plea and prayer  
and further, that you reveal to us  
through Your great mercy.

Oh God, You willed the blessings,  
that were laid in our hands  
let us truly deserve.  
Have thanks for this harvest;  
that each of us has learned,  
to dedicate his entire life to You.

Oh God, hear my plea  
for the owner and this house.  
Let all publicly  
and those who enter and leave  
give health, blessings,  
lead them on the way to heaven.

With this I will now end  
and now go to the wishes:

I wish for our Herr Rittmeister a black-brown horse,  
which he can ride through fire and sword.

And a blade in his hand,  
which he can fight for the Fatherland.

Then I wish him a black silken cloak,  
a silver crook for his staff,  
and a gold watch on his chest;  
may he gain pleasure and profit from his business.

I wish for our gracious lady a sofa of green plush,  
because her life is surrounded by many hopes.

To that a nice cover embroidered with silk.  
In addition to little roses that bloom for her.

Where help is needed she is gladly there,  
may our Heavenly Father reward for this.

I wish for the young Mr. Fritz  
a green bench in the garden  
entwined with white roses and vines.  
Here may he sit with much joy  
and pass the time with his little sister  
- and a pin with a golden starlet;  
and later may he inherit the estate.

I wish Miss Alex a white silken dress,  
strewn from top to bottom with roses.  
And to that a blue silken shawl  
that will be loved above all by her teacher  
and a silver ball  
that she can play with  
and take pleasure then.

I wish Miss Trude a white pigeon  
and in the garden a green arbor  
covered with wild grapes,  
in which she can sit alone with her beloved.  
I wish Miss Wiese a black silken band  
and a fiance on her hand.  
May this come soon,  
so that we can see the engaged couple.  
And to that I wish a joyous wedding feast  
and many clean-scrubbed guests,  
bright music and sunshine,  
so that she can be happy with her guests.

I wish Mr. Mousentin a castle in a valley,  
that shines as brightly as a ray of sunlight.  
Within his bride will be prepared,  
so that Mr. Mousentin can see her every day.  
She will gladly laugh with him,

and make Mr. Mousentin happy.  
I wish for Mrs. Feuker an embroidered cravat,  
that will make her sweetheart nice and sweet.  
A green wreath I wish for her dark hair,  
may she and her lover soon stand before the altar.

I wish for Mrs. Hansen a dress as green as grass,  
many shining coins in her purse.  
To that I wish her blessings from above,  
that she may soon be engaged  
to a rich officer,  
who within the next year  
will lead her to the altar.

I wish Mr. Reuter a castle in a valley,  
that shines as brightly as a ray of sunlight.  
Within I wish him a young wife,  
who will look at him with loving eyes.  
She will gladly laugh with him,  
and make Mr. Reuter the greatest joy of all.

### **Harvest Poem II**

Harvest Festival, you feast of joy,  
should make our hearts happy today.  
When the sun laughs from heaven  
today every pain disappears.  
Often have we celebrated  
in joyous union at the Harvest Festival  
and renewed the harvest crown,  
which is made so beautifully.

From heaven come the blessings,  
wind and rain, sunshine.  
The hands of men can care,  
but only God gives success.

With us in a wider circle  
celebrate with us in proud air  
thousands at this hour

celebrating loudly for joy.  
See the bountiful harvest,  
God has made everything well.

What from the dark womb of the earth  
hopefully, longingly we trust -  
sees Heaven, speaks, it is,  
He blessed us with dew.

Let us continue to trust Him  
carefully tend our field;  
always looking upward  
which holds the entire world.  
He, the Almighty in the light,  
He does not leave His own.

I wish Herr Fritz a garden with greens,  
may he be a brave soldier;  
then, as the flowers soon fade,  
so also the years of childhood flee.  
The parent's heart,  
which now hopes, watches and teaches,  
may he never forget this in later life.

I wish for Miss Alex  
a dress like the morning star.  
May she find happiness far away,  
and also a golden book,  
from which she may become  
wise and clever.

I wish for little Hartmut  
many toys of gold.  
May he grow up to bring joy to his parents  
also a basket of vines -  
may the good Lord always give him health.

I wish for Erna a gold watch,  
and for her sweetheart a major.  
A major, dashing and bold,  
who will soon give her a gold ring.  
Also, I wish her a basket of carnations,  
that the love of her family will never fade.

I wish the dear old lady a rose bush,  
so that she will sparkle like a sunbeam  
then the true and mild hand  
goes almost through the entire land.  
because she has the heart for mercy  
for so many sick and poor.  
May the good Lord watch over and protect her  
from all danger,  
that her days remain sweet  
and she finds heaven on earth.

I wish for our Herr Rittmeister  
a castle so pretty and fine,  
with a roof of marble stones,  
and in every corner a golden seal;  
and may Herr Rittmeister live long and in peace.

I wish for the gracious lady  
a castle of ivory,  
from which she can go in and out  
all hung with golden drapes.  
May everything be in velvet and silk;  
and also as many joyous hours  
as fish in the sea.

I wish our Herr Hofmeister a white vest,  
so that he can govern truly and firmly.  
Also I wish him a silken coat,  
and that he may long hold his position.

Every member of the family of estate laborers who walked on stage in the storehouse was given a bouquet flowers and green bound to a staff. The other celebrants or onlooking farmers had each to pay 50 Pfennigs. The estate owner paid for beer and the favorite sweets from the bakery.

At first there would be music for dancing to loud music. Later when the stars shone down on the roof of the storehouse and some of the benches were used for lying, then the band played quieter music, followed again by band music that was heavy on the tuba, often a polka to wake everyone up:

You see, there he comes,

long steps he takes,

You see, there he comes already,

the drunken son-in-law!

## *My Klein-Nossin*

*By Alexandra von der Marwitz-Selden, 1999*

Even though there are many pleasant memories, the thoughts of the lost homeland and bound with that the loss of my beloved father and many relatives is all very painful. I am glad to have found a beautiful new home in far away America.

I would not like to live near our Pomeranian land. Born in 1925, I fell in love with Klein-Nossin in my childhood. A part of our estate house was still lived in by my grandmother (mother of my father). In the house there was a steady stream of visitors by relatives and friends. Many rides with horse and wagon and also many walks were made. The paths, the giant trees, the beautiful lake, the many ponds, the unforgettable Schottow, the cemetery, the Lindenberg, the old mill, the new mill, the many paddocks with horses and cows and I could count many more that I think of every day. This beautiful landscape is still there, but it is no longer ours and no one is there who looks after it like the people who lived there in our time.

And now I want to tell of us and the people who lived there: My parents loved and cared for their Klein-Nossin. My mother was an industrious housewife and loved everything that had to do with her garden. Unfortunately, she suffered from asthma and often had to go to a sanatorium in the mountains. My father was an excellent agriculturist and an outstanding businessman. He took care of all of us and I can still see him making countless telephone calls in order to get the best prices for his produce (potatoes, grain and so on). My father was an avid hunter. The forest, with all its game, was for him a special responsibility. Constantly old and sickly trees were removed and replaced. There were great hunts, not only in Klein-Nossin, but on all the estates in the area. My father was always invited and almost always was crowned king of the hunt. My father loved horses, and I did as well. I would rather be in the stables than in the house.

When I was six years old I went to the village school. After a short time my parents decided to engage a private teacher for me and for my brother, who was a year older. She was Miss Dieckmann. She was said to have been very capable but in 1933/34 my parents had to let her go because she had offended the Nazis in some way. Following her were several tutors, but for the most part we learned very little. In 1937 my brother and I were sent away to school so that we only could go to Klein-Nossin during vacation. I lived from vacation to vacation, hated the boarding school and cried when the vacations were over. I was very much involved with the people in Klein-Nossin. Every day I would wander through the village to visit someone. Erich and Fritz Muttschall and Wedig Below were my special friends in the stables. From there every way led to the workshop of Arthur Pallas and Paeth's smithy. I did not like to go into the pig sties because of the rats there and not into the cow barns, either, because there were usually vicious dogs there. One of them bit me in the bend of my knee and I still have the scar. At the end of the cow barns were the coach horses and there an especially beautiful riding horse that belonged to my father was housed, a stallion named RADIO. Toward the end it had an especially badly swollen leg. Who knows what the Russians did with this horse that I loved so dearly.

Even today many people from Klein-Nossin remain in my memory through experiences and events.

In 1939 military personnel were quartered with us and shortly afterward the war with Poland broke out. The war years followed with many terrible memories of the Hitler regime. As I said, I returned to Klein-Nossin for my vacations until August 1943 when my father decided that I should finish in Stolp because in Magdeburg, where I attended the Lyceum, there were constant air raids. In March 1944 I received what was called a provi-

sional diploma and after a brief stop in Klein-Nossin I had to report for Labor Service somewhere near Soldin. And that, also, was a terrible time.

On the 20th of July of 1944 there was the failed attempt to assassinate Hitler. My father knew of it because he had been informed by other relatives from Muttrin and Nippoglense (who finally were imprisoned). It was a hard blow when we learned that the attempt had failed. I will never forget it. I was at home on vacation from the Labor Service and stood in the hall of our estate house when the news came over the radio. My father planned at that time to send me and my brother to the southwest of Germany under the pretense that I would be learning about agriculture from a farmer on a dairy in Bavaria and would work there. My older brother Fritz was fighting on the Russian front. After my Labor Service I left Klein-Nossin in December 1944 with Hartmut. My father said that his children should be in the part of Germany where the Americans would march in and not where the Russians would come. In that way our father protected us until the last moment. On the 4th of December at 5 o'clock in the morning our father, in his bathrobe, accompanied us to the door of the house, where Hartmut and

I then boarded the coach that was driven by a French prisoner of war and were taken to the train at Budow.

The war ended while we were in Bavaria. At the end of May or beginning of June 1945 I attempted to return to Klein-Nossin, but only got as far as Bamberg, where I was warned against proceeding into the Russian Zone. In late summer of 1947 I went to the refugee camp in Pirna to meet again with refugees from Klein-Nossin. That reunion was brief because within a few hours my mother and I fled from the camp by night and, after a dangerous flight, arrived in the American Zone. There has been no trace of my father since the flight from Klein-Nossin at the beginning of March 1945.

**Weddings and guest lists**

Wedding of Fritz and Herta Looock nee Keschull, 1933

The wedding guests in front of the house of Max Bartsch. Among others: in the first row from left to right, Heino, Katharina and Karl-Otto Keschull, in the third row second from left Emma Keschull nee Mischke, Paul Keschull II, Berta Mischke nee Baaske, Eduard Mischke, Mathilde Keschull nee Biastoch; in the last row from the right Willi Keschull, Erich Muttschall, Anna Keschull

Wedding of Willi and Helene Keschull née Keschull, 1937

The wedding guests in front of the residence of Paul Keschull II, Artur Pallas and others: in the first row left are standing Liesbeth Keschull and to the right stands her sister Ruth Keschull, in the second row from left sits Marta Pallas nee Keschull, Paul Pallas, Anna Keschull nee Quetschke, Fritz Keschull, parents and parents-in-law Heinrich and Mathilde Keschull nee Biastoch, “Kaiser’s Grandma”, Johanna Keschull nee Muttschall, Paul Keschull I; August Quetschke; in the last row from left Heinz Keschull, Erwin Keschull, Ida Kaiser, Edit Keschull nee Below, Fritz Keschull, Elsbeth Keschull, Heinz Kaiser, Luise Keschull, Erich Muttschall, ?, Fritz Keschull, ?, Emil Keschull, Else Keschull nee Keschull, Paul Keschull III; in front of the accordion player in the second row standing Gerhard Below, to the right on the outside between the second and third rows standing Johanna Keschull née Baaske.

Wedding of Fritz and Else Keschull née Bremer

The wedding guests in the inner courtyard of Reinhold Bremer and others: in the first row second from left Rudi Reddel, Else Reddel, Waltraut Reddel; second row left of the bridal pair Emma Keschull née Pallas, Maria Radde née Pallas, right of the bridal pair Ida Bremer née Radde, Reinhold Bremer, in the row behind Ida Bremer Meta Reddel; second to last row third from right Magdalene Keschull, Max Keschull, Hedwig Bremer, eighth from right Willi Radde, Frieda Radde née Wittke, second from left Gerhard Bremer, Trude Quetschke; last row fifth from left, Paul Bremer, second from right Erwin Pallas, ?, Else Keschull.

### *Some Recollections from my Childhood*

*By Gerhard Below, 1999*

My grandfather was August Quetschke. By trade he was a mason and later worked as the estate mason in Klein-Nossin. During his bachelor days he was often on the road. He naturally had many stories to tell of this period. He was a jovial man and always ready for a joke. He was an imp by nature. His assistants knew all about this and anyone who did not know him well would be set up for a trick. He would be sent to the blacksmith or to the wagonmaker to get a stone plane. When he arrived he would be given a sack that was already on hand to bring back. It was said that the sack was filled with scrap iron and weight a hundred pounds.

Behind our house there was a pear tree. Under this tree was a bench with an anvil. Here, during harvest time, the scythes would be sharpened at noontime and in the evening. My grandfather stationed himself by this bench to measure which was taller of two boys.

They had to stand back to back. Then he pulled each by his hair.

They cried out in pain and ran away.

His comment: "How can I measure them if they won't hold still. Now we will never know which of them is taller."

August was in Wundichow with his friend Albert (Stuwes) and they had more than enough to drink in the tavern. As they left for home it was already dark. At a place in the Bütow swamp Albert had to take off his trousers. He took the suspenders off the trousers and hung them around his neck. Then he took care of his business. It took a while, August became impatient and the following exchange took place:

August: *How much longer are you going to be?*

Albert: *I am finished but I have lost my suspenders.*

August: *Then look for them.*

Albert: *That's what I am doing.*

August: *Then how long is that going to take?*

Albert: *I must be in luck because I have my hands in poop.*

The brother of my grandfather was named Franz. He had a small farmstead on the other side of the Weißen Moor. The following story was told about him in the village:

It was harvest time, Franz was in the field and put his pitchfork into a shock. Suddenly there was a storm and a hard rain came down. Franz crept inside the shock. There was a stroke of lightning which struck the shock next to him. He said: "Dear God, be careful, Franz Quetschke is sitting in the next shock." True?

When in fall and winter the evenings were longer we children would sit with grandfather, who always had many stories to tell. He sat on the bench by the stove and we sat on the small bench facing him.

It was fall and I was about five years old. We were sitting together once again and I had to go to the toilet. The plums from the neighbor's garden made themselves known.

The outdoor toilet was behind the stable toward the field shed. My grandfather accompanied me because I was afraid of the dark. When I was finished we saw a moving light over the Lindenberg toward the village. Grandpa said it was the *Zobel*. Naturally, I wanted to know what that was. For him that was not a problem: "We will capture it and then you will know what it is." On a shelf were used potato sacks. He brought one and I had to hold it against the wind so that it was inflated. I had to hold on tight because the wind was strong and it filled

the home-made completely. "Now I will chase the *Zobel*", he said, "and when it is in the sack you must close it immediately."

By that time the bicyclist with his carbide lamp was already gone from the Lindenberg. I stood in the darkness, was afraid and was freezing.

After a long time my grandmother asked: "Does the boy have diarrhea that he stays outside so long?" My grandfather was shocked because he had forgotten that I was still waiting for the *Zobel*. He then brought me in. I had not caught the *Zobel* but I did catch a very bad cold.

I often asked my grandfather: "Why are you bald?" Here is what he told me: during his travels he had worked for a master mason at the Jassener Lake. Besides his masonry work his duties also included caring for the master mason's bees. Every morning he would count the bees as they left the hive and every evening he would count them as they returned. One evening one bee was missing, so he began to search for it. He came to a lake and saw that the missing bee was on the other side wrestling with a bear. Immediate assistance was needed. It would have taken too long to walk around the lake. There was no boat available. Then he remembered the sandwich in his pouch. The wife of the master mason had not done well with her bread this time. She had not used enough yeast and it was only a crust.

He sat on this crust and paddled with his arms. In the center of the lake the crust softened and he was in real danger. In his panic he grabbed himself by the hair and flung himself across the lake. The bear must have thought: "There comes a sea monster!" He released the bee and disappeared into the forest. My grandfather now had an entire head of hair in his hand, but the bee was rescued. He was greatly praised by the master mason for this deed. And the master's wife could be proud of her bread crust. The master believed that anyone who could perform such a deed could certainly perform more. His next duty was to peak into heaven to see how the master's deceased mother fared. This was no easy task, but he found a solution.

He caught a flea and made a rope from the hairs and eyebrows of it. He constantly added knots to the upper end and finally came to the gate of heaven. When he attempted to open the door a storm broke out. The rope began to swing. He managed to open the door to heaven just a crack but that was enough to see that the master's mother had to herd pigs. Then suddenly the rope broke and he fell to earth ending up nine feet deep. What to do next? He left the body there, took his legs under his arms and went home. Later he came back with spade and dug himself out.

## *Memories of my Childhood and Youth*

*By Heinz Kepschull, 2000*

I was born on the 26th of March 1926 in the county hospital in Stolp. The family always called me the "Stolper". My mother told me many years later that after my birth she was sick with childbed fever and had already been transferred to the death room.

I cannot remember anything before I started school. When I began school my mother had to take me to school with tender force for several days. Later I liked going to school. As children at this age we had minor chores to do. In summer we tended the geese. There were often quarrels between us because none of us wanted this duty on a Sunday. While tending geese along the Schottow I sometimes waded in and caught trout, something that displeased the forester. But we children had our revenge against him. In the old shed on the way to the forest a nest of hornets had built their nest. When we saw that the forester came from the forest on his bicycle we quickly threw stones against the wooden wall to arouse the hornets. The forester could not pass and had to make a detour.

I still remember: Ethe Paul had a dog, a real barker. I could not pass by there without making him bark. Then when the farmer would come out I would run away. I could not sit still in school and always turned around to talk to my neighbor. Then I would have to come to the front and the teacher simply turned the first seat around so that those who sat behind me could see me from the front. And I still remember that one time Mr. Blaurock re-organized the class by years. I was supposed to sit beside Waltraud Reddel, something I did not want to do because whoever sat next to a girl was always teased. I no longer remember how it all ended. Once during our lessons a young man came into the school and reported that while plowing on the Schmiedeberg he came upon a graveyard. We all ran to the site and helped Teacher Blaurock uncover several graves. Two of these stone graves were later rebuilt at the entrance to the school. I remember exactly how excited I was, when as a twelve year old I was allowed to ride the narrow gauge railroad to Stolp.

During my last school year my brother-in-law Erich Muttschall and I helped out in the stalls on the estate. When war broke out and practice air raid drills were held, we children were excited when we were allowed to try on gas masks. Later I hated them when I was in the Army and had to march wearing one. When school was out in 1940 I wanted to become a merchant. For that reason I went to Stolp with my father for counseling. I begged my father for once to at least say: "Heil Hitler". But he refused. The official noticed the omission and asked if I were in the Hitler Youth. Because I was not, I was denied entry into an apprenticeship. I believe I would have been a good tradesman. As long as I can remember I was always excited when I went shopping. Even today I still have not lost my interest in shopping.

After school was out I was still a teenager. I was no longer a child, but still not yet a man. In March 1943 I had to go to military training for three weeks. By the time I returned home I was cured. For the first time I realized how well off I was at home.

French prisoners-of-war were assigned to us to dig peat. In those days my picture was taken while sharing lunch, without knowing that someday these photos would some day be of help to me. When the Americans turned us prisoners-of-war over to the French in 1946 we were thoroughly searched and required to show all our possessions, even our wallets. At this time I showed these pictures. I was then allowed to reclaim all my belongings and to keep them.

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*Now to Klein-Nossin*

*From a letter by Paul Kebschull 1999*

*(Paul Kebschull is the son of Richard and Ida Kebschull. He married in Gaffert and for that reason is not included in the Census of 1939.)*

I fondly recall the times in the village. Even if the times were hard, it was always good when fellowship was the center of our lives. In those days there were clubs to which one could belong. First, there was the Glee Club, led by Teacher Wegner, later the soccer club. In each there were pleasant festivities, usually out of doors. The Christmas festival, held on Christmas Eve by Wegner, always impressed me. During the holidays the school room was changed into a theater. On the north side strong boards were laid over the desks. We boys went into the forest to bring back large juniper branches for the decorations. A couple of sheets were hung for curtains and the theater was ready.

The Glee Club took part with beautiful Christmas carols, Teacher Wegner gave a talk and directed us through a piece. He stood behind a large juniper branch as director.

There is little to report concerning politics in the village. My greatest concern in those days was to learn a trade. It was hard to get away from the country, flight from agriculture was discouraged.

The Nazi time\*. No one by us was especially involved, except for the forester Mousenthin, who was prominent. He was a founding member of the S.A., but he did not talk to anyone about it. Four men entered into the S.A. I was one of them, because as a forest laborer performed first aid. I had to practice bandaging for an S.A. man from Wundichow because I was a medic. In 1938 I went to work for the railroad in Stolpmünde and that was the end of that.

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\*The Federal Archive in Koblenz, Document Center Berlin, informed me on the 10th of January 2000 that the records indicate there were ten members of the Nazi party in Klein-Nossin. There is no information on membership in the S.A. other Nazi organizations in the village.