A TRIP TO TIREAM

By Frank L. Juszli

INTRODUCTION

On July 4, 1975, while Jane and I were celebrating our 25th wedding anniversary a few days early at Joe and Mary Belan's home in Salem, a large segment of the family was assembled. Don Smeller looked at the assembly and started the notion of a Family Tree with the humorous question:"Who's who in the zoo?" This led to my work on a Family Tree project, focusing first on descendents of Rose and Anton Juszli. With excellent cooperation from family members, that portion of the Tree was made easily.

Three offspring of Rose and Anton (Rose, Charles, and William) died in infancy. Data on Baby Rose was elusive and provided surprises when it was found. Family tradition held that she died at sea, suggesting that Rose and Anton were married before arrival in the USA. However, church records in Trenton, NJ, showed that Rose and Anton were married June 2, 1907, in Trenton where Baby Rose was born July 27, 1908. Search of immigration records in Washington, DC, by Rosanne found that Rose and Anton entered the US twice, in 1906 and 1909. It is now known that Rose, Anton, and Baby Rose went to Hungary after Feb 1909 and returned later that year. Baby Rose died in Trenton about a week after the re-arrival.

Where most of the verbal information that I received was true in substance, the details were often wrong; death of Baby Rose was a case in point. These "legends" were sufficiently interesting to cause inquiries among contemporaries of Rose and Anton. This led to cousins in Ohio and NJ (all on Rose's side of the family) and to bits of information about Rose's grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, and siblings. This new information revealed that branches of Rose's family did not migrate to the US; interest in these branches grew quite naturally.

Aided by Frances Berdi, I entered into correspondence with her sister's son who, I soon discovered, is the current occupant of the home in which Rose Mök Juszli was born in the "Old Country". My interest in both the people and their life styles grew to the point that Jane and I decided to visit there. Eight months of planning and correspondence resulted in a visit with two sets of relatives in the Old Country July 15-17, 1977. Following is a report of some of that visit and some of the information which it revealed.

HISTORICAL

The area in which Rose and Anton were born is now within the boundaries of Romania, near the Hungarian border. Over the years, Hungary has expanded and contracted it's territory; at one time it stretched from the port of Fiume on the Adriatic to Transylvania near the center of the current Romania. Political districts of Hungary are known by the name "megye" which is like a US county or English shire. Our travel objective was the former Szatmar Megye whose capitol city was Szatmarnemeti, which is now called Satu Mare by Romania which took control there after World War II.

Two centuries ago the area was a principality; it seems that every small area had it's own prince. To the southwest of Satu Mare, some 25 miles distant, was the town Nagykaroly which goes by the Romanian name Carei.

Nagykaroly was the town which our forebears regarded as the "local big town". In the year 1900 it's population was probably 2500-3000. Two centuries ago the Prince of Nagykaroly looked around and realized that he ruled an under-populated area...plague and the Turks had taken their tolls of the population. He sent out word inviting settlers to farm the rich plain and was the recipient of a mixture of ethnic groups, primarily Hungarians, Germans, and Romanians. These groups became

competitive and still are, to a large degree. The languages of all three groups are spoken there. Our forebears were among those Germans who settled there and are readily traceable back to Janos Mök and Marton Juszel, whose dates of birth were around the 1830's. It is likely that additional research would show that our forebears were among the Germans responding to the Prince's original invitation in the late 1700's. A suggestion of the whereabouts of their German origin lies in the fact that our ancestors (and their version of the German language) carried the unwelcome nickname "Schwab", possibly after the Schwaben region of Southern Germany embracing possibly Ulm, Augsburg, and Munich.

HOMES

Towns remained in the area through a period of several centuries and throughout the under-population period. They were built to enable farming to proceed at the same time that mutual protection from hostile forces was available. Houses were (and still are) located very close to each other. There were no houses existing in isolation from each other...there are still no houses or barns or structures between the towns. However, each family is able to provide it's own basics.

A typical house is built on a plot of ground with perhaps 50 feet of street frontage and several hundred feet of depth. The house occupies about half of that frontage with the other half devoted to a yard of sorts. This yard provides entry and exit for livestock and vehicles. Behind the house, for the full width of the property, is what we might call a barnyard. In this barnyard are kept sources of food like chickens, ducks, pigs, the family cow, pigeons, etc. Beyond the barnyard are the family gardens. Buildings at the edges of the barnyard provide shelter and food storage for animals; these buildings are irregular, usually have thatched roofs, and in no way resemble barns as we know them. Since wood is relatively scarce in this Great Plain, the homes are built of an irregular mud brick and covered with a stucco surface. Similarity of the houses has a monotonous consistency. The roof of the residence is usually made of tile. Fences, usually made of iron, separate the yard from the street and outline the barnyard. Individual homeowners attempt to break up the monotony of stucco exteriors and fences by providing geometric tile overlays or surface painting of the stucco and doing ornamental iron work on the fences and gates.

The Mök house, which has been in the family for at least five generations, is typical of others in structure and layout of the grounds. It is larger than most since it has seven rooms. No room is totally devoted to a singular purpose, but one might say that it has three bedrooms, two kitchens, a dining room which doubles as a living room, and an entry room. The living room stove has an exterior of brown ceramic tile. There is no central heat, water system, or sewage system in the house. It is two rooms wide at the front and one room wide at the rear, with the other half-width at the rear being a porch under the main roof. This porch has a grape arbor attached. Under the second (Summer) kitchen there is a cellar, accessed by a trap door in the floor, which doubles as a wine and root cellar. There are three large barrels in the cellar.

MEZÖTEREM

We were able to get a good look at the town formerly known as Mezöterem where Rosa Mök was born and raised. It's current population is some 600-700 families. Townspeople say that the town dates back to 1300 AD. A two-lane black-topped road passes through the town (now called Tiream) connecting Carei (5 miles to the morth) with Tasnad (10 miles to the south). All other streets in the town are either fully dirt roads or have a brich-cobble surface of about 9-foot width with dirt shoulders of similar width. Deep drainage ditches on each side of the road are bridged by culverts to provide access to the house and yard. The general topography around Tiream is surprisingly flat. It is at the Eastern end of the Great Hungarian Plain and is as flat as Kansas. The only things which break up the

monotonous skyline are Lombardy poplars rising 50-60 feet above the plain, probably planted as windbreaks.

A traveller seeing this flatness would automatically look for stand-pipes which might provide pressure for local water systems. Very few towns in the entire plain have stand-pipes, meaning that there is no indoor plumbing. Tiream is no exception. With over 600 years of the lack of sanitary facilities, the water table has soaked up masses of waste; each town has a system of manually operated street-side pumps for the water supply, but even the residents will not drink this without prior boiling. A common substitute for drinking water is home-made wine.

A feature of self-provision of food is the family cow. Each morning the town drover collects the family cows and drives them to the edge of town for pasture. In the evening he reverses the process, driving the herd back into town for the evening milking. Each cow seems to know it's own home and leaves the herd at the right place. This practice is common throughout the Great Plain. A motorist, even on a national black-top highway, faces an encounter with dozens of cows in the process. The only thing that the motorist can do is stop his vehicle and allow the procession to go by since right-of-way is obviously granted to this life process.

Tiream's Catholic Church is located at the place where the main road forks with Garu Street on which the Mök residence is located. Across Garu from the church is the former catholic school which is now the State school. Behind the school is the rectory and an empty convent. The rectory is occupied by the pastor, one Feher Istvan (Steve White) who is about 30 years old. The Tiream Church was built about 1825; before that date the residents attended services in Nagykaroly, five miles away. The church has a yellow stucco exterior typical of churches on the Plain, a sheet metal roof, and a square bell tower with clocks on the four faces.

We attended the second Mass and were pleasantly surprised to see worshippers of all ages filling the church. The choir and congregation sang with vigor in a structure which had excellent acoustics. Pews are narrow, seats and kneelers unpadded, pegs are provided for hats, and pew backs are surmounted by a narrow horizontal board which is used as a table for prayer books. Across the main street from the church is a building supporting a red star and a large sign filled with the slogan "Long Live the Romanian Socialist Republic".

Directly in front of the church, at what may be called curb-side, is a cement and stone column laying on it's side. If erect, it would be 10-12 feet high. An inquiry revealed that it was a marker of the former Imperial Crown and is left there in a deteriorating condition as a reminder. Inside the church yard is a granite tomb which contains the remains of a Mezöterem military sergeant who was killed on that spot by the Nazis as they were being driven from the town in 1944...townspeople are quick to recall that the Russians bombed their village, killing some 70 civilians, and destroying a number of homes.

OUR RELATIVES

Our host for the visit to Tiream was the Kiraly family. Kiraly Karoly is related on our maternal side. He is in his mid-forties, is a metal-worker (welder) by trade, and is heir apparent to the homestead where he lives with his mother, Gertrude, wife Elona, daughters Erzsebet 21 and Maria 16, and son Karoly 14. Gertrude is 71 years old and is a daughter of Elizabeth Mök Racz, sister of Rose. They are all physically small people. Gertrude and her sister, Frances Berdi, are about the same stature. They are handsome people and the daughters are most attractive. Erzsie is dark-haired with dark eyes. Maria is blonde with blue eyes. Erzsie is a weaver by trade. She commutes to Satu Mare daily, riding a bus to Carei and a train from Carei to Satu Mare. Young Karoly is sandy-haired and brown-eyed. Both of the younger children are students.

Karoly and Elona were perfect hosts in the Hungarian manner... eat, drink, eat, drink, etc. Paprikas csirke (chicken paprikash), szekelygulyas (pork with sauer kraut), galamb (squab), sör (beer), bor (wine), and plumb brandy...whiskey at every meal, including breakfast. Gertrude was the only family member to sit and eat with us; the others served. She was very open in her discussions and courteously showed us the room where Rose was born, the brook she laundered in, the room where she learned to cook.

We also had the opportunity to visit with Joe Mokk through arrangements made by Karoly. Joe is 69 years old and was an excellent carpenter by trade. Testimonial of his trade is the fact that he has one of the few wooden fences in town! His father was another Joe Mokk, favorite brother of Rosa Mök. (Note the difference in spelling...more on that later.) The older Joe Mokk lived in Akron, Ohio, from 1914 to 1920 where he worked at the Firestone Rubber Company. He did not bring his wife and two children to the USA. He helped Rose and Anton build the homestead in Northampton Township, apparently just before he returned forever to Hungary where he died in 1965. The younger Joe is a settled guy who is sort of a village sage. He lives well, appearing to be more German than Hungarian. Joe introduced us to Margit, his wife of 43 years, and to two children and two grandchildren. He provided names of 17 additional blood kin for the Family Tree, 8 spouses, and numerous dates of birth and death. His most pleasant offerings, however, were a wedding photograph of Rose and Anton which had been beautifully preserved over 70 years, and a school text which Rose had used and into which she had inserted her name some 75 years before.

Another relative whom we met without advance plans was Lajos (Louis) Juszli who is 67 years old. His wife, the late Emma Mokk, was the daughter of John, half-brother of Rose. It is interesting to note that more than one Mokk-Juszli wedding took place. We could not establish a relationship of Louis with Anton Juszli. Louis and Albert Juszli, son of Rose, bear strong physical resemblences.

The oldest member of the household appears to rule it. Right of the first-born appears to be in practice even now in Tiream. The husband does the hard work and takes employment. The woman launders, does the light chores, cooks, gardens, and cleans. An interesting observation was that of the town oven...Elona mixes and kneads her bread dough, carries to the town oven, and bakes it there.

Some people, particularly other-than-first-born sons, plus the daughters, have chosen alternate life styles away from the family scene. Two granddaughters of Rose's half-brother John live on collective farms and have borne children without marriage and without identification of the fathers. Being on collectives and practicing alternate life styles, they are completely out of touch with other members of the family, probably by mutual choice.

CEMETERIES AND RECORDS

Gertrude, responding to our request, toured the Tiream Catholic cemetery with us. She showed us the marked graves of several relatives and the unmarked graves of our maternal grandparents Janos Mök and Teresa Srepler Mök. A visit to the rectory in Tiream in search of recorded information proved futile. The young pastor explained that a government decree required surrender of all church records preceding the year 1900; these records are now in government archives in Baia Mare, some 60 miles distant. Timidity of the pastor was established when he returned to us the American money which we had placed in the collection plate with the statement:"Problema". I took the American and gave him Romanian paper money in exchange. The visit to the Tiream cemetery revealed several markers bearing the name Juszli. I recorded two: Istvan Juszli 1872-1918 and Maria Juszli 1913-1915. No family relationship could be established.

Upon leaving Tiream we stopped at Petresti, just two miles southwest of Carei. Our guess that Petresti was formerly known as Mezöpetri, birthplace of Anton Juszli, turned out to be a correct one. A chain reaction starting with a roadside soda stand inquiry sent us to other places and finally brought about introductions to the

parish pastor and a 23-year old English-speaking girl whose grandmother was a Juszel. The pastor showed us some pre-1900 records (possibly duplicates), revealing dozens of Juszel entries, including two Martons who were probably father and brother of Anton. The girl changed into a dressier dress and accompanied us to the cemetery. Several different spellings of the name Juszel are on the stones. There are also many Tepfenharts buried in the Petresti cemetery. (The Akron, Ohio,Tepfenharts are cousins of the Tiream Mokks.)

The question of whether or not Rose and Anton knew each other before emigrating to the USA in 1906 at ages 17 and 20 respectively, though unanswered here, might be answered thus:"It is quite possible since they grew up within 6 miles of each other, some Juszlis lived in Tiream, and they had a common "big town" to visit".

THE NAMES MÖK AND JUSZLI

Three different spellings of the name Mök have been encountered by our family over the years. Two of these spellings, Mök and Mokk, were used by closely related members of the family. Rose used Mök and her brother Joe used Mokk. An Anglicized version, Mock, was apparently introduced in the USA. When I put the Mök-Mokk question to Erzsie, she replied unhesitatingly: "Egy és ugyanaz"..."It is one and the same thing". Another German alternative may be Möck, suggested by the name of a town Möckmühl at the north edge of the Schwaben district in Germany.

No less than six versions of the name Juszli have appeared, namely: Juszli, Juszel, Jussli, Juszil, Jussil, and Jussel...still another is used by a probable relative in Trenton, one Michael Yuszli. The German "ss" and the Hungarian "sz" are pronounced like the "s" in "silk". There is very little difference in the pronounciations of "le", "li", "il", and "el". The "j" sound in both German and Hungarian is like the English "y" sound.

SOME OBSERVATIONS

By American standards the people of Tiream are poor. Yet, they are very self-sufficient. The Mokks of Tiream, as compared to others there, are fairly well off. The town itself has progressed little in the past hundreds of years. There is no sewage or water system. The people have few autos or motorcycles. The stores carry only the basics. The only telephone for general use in the town is located at the post office, typical of many European towns. There is no distinction between the militia and the police. A stranger in town must register with the militia. The presence of the military is overwhelming.

Most homes have electricity. Many have televisions. State television is a bore. A prime time broadcast which we watched featured a collective farm veterinarian who explained to a breathless audience how to detect and remove metal objects from the stomachs of cows! Everyone is employed, but many are in make-work jobs which have no future or incentive in them. Drunks on the streets of the larger towns abound. Churches are under tremendous pressure from the State.

People may purchase a state-built car named the Dacia if they have three years of salary to put up. Repair services are available for cars only in state-run garages. I commented to one Dacia owner that his was a nice car, but he was quick to remind me that American cars are magas (big) and automatika (have automatic transmissions). Packages sent to relatives there require that the recipient pay a duty which is about half of the value of the contents.

A simple summary might liken the life style in Tiream to that of the smaller towns in the USA during the 1920's.

I hope that this little report prepared for other members of my family may serve as a reminder and thank you to some people who had the courage some 70 years ago to leave their familiar surroundings and migrate to the USA. The opportunities for those migrants were limited, but it is apparent that the children and grandchildren of Rose and Anton have had opportunities far in excess of their cousins whose acsendents chose to stay in the Old Country.

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OUR AUTO ROUTE VIENNA-ROMANIA-RETURN