

## BECHEROV HISTORY

### Number 8, Part 2

by Demeter Kokosh

"First" historic event in a chain of events culminating in the establishment of the first Orthodox parish in Becherov in the twentieth century.

### "868" Cyrillo-Methodian Mission to the Kingdom of Moravia

**Mission: to teach Christianity in Moravia in the language spoken by the people.**

In 863, Rastislav asked the Byzantine emperor for teachers to teach religion to his subject in their Slavonic language. For that mission, the Byzantine Emperor sent two brilliant monks, Cyril and Methodius. The monks were very successful. They first created the alphabet for the Slavonic language and translated the bible, liturgy, prayers, church and civil law into the language spoken in Moravia.



Figure 1. Moravian Kingdom

Their work was accepted by the bishop of Rome. Slavonic liturgy was accepted, sanctioned and placed on par with that of Latin, Greek and Hebrew.

### THE GREAT MORAVIAN KINGDOM: Historic Overview

Outside of Western Europe, the existence of Moravian Kingdom (Fig. 1) is almost unknown; within Western Europe, the existence of the Moravian Kingdom is almost forgotten, but within the Czech and Slovak land, the existence of the historic Moravian Kingdom is imprinted in the soul of the people. In June 2006, a new statue of King Svatopluk (Fig. 2) was unveiled in BRATISLAVA.



Figure 2. Svatopluk Bratislava (Unveiled in 2006)

At its height, the kingdom encompassed a vast territory, inhabited by Slavic people, speaking commonly understood dialects. The territory was interspersed with clusters of non-Slavic speaking people, principally with Hungarians, Germans, and French. The Kingdom was ruled by a strong, wise and respected monarch. He was recognized/sanctioned by the bishop of Rome. The kingdom was regarded to be on par with other European monarchies.

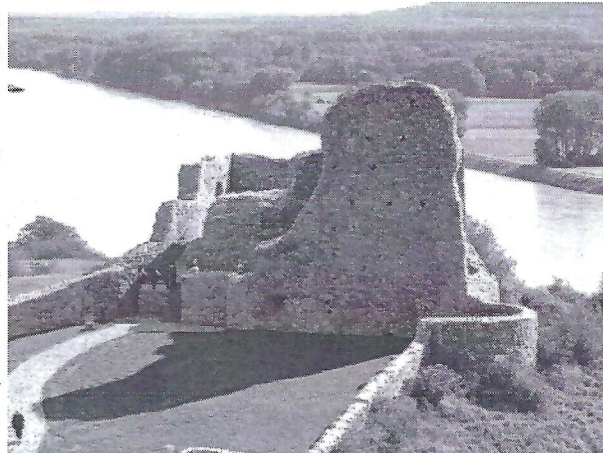


Figure 3. Devin Castle (Seat of Kingdom)

## BECHEROV HISTORY

Number 9

by Demeter Kokosh



Первый Православный Цер-  
ковный Выборъ (Комитетъ)  
въ Бехеровѣ,

### Becherov – First Orthodox Church Committee Members:

1. Fedor Cuper 2. Osif Cuper 3. Johan Zbihhej 4. Fedor Vadoc
5. Basil Jaroscak 6. Vasil Guzij 7. Michal G. Kokos 8. Fedor Lazorik
9. Fedor M. Grivna 10. Petro Porianda 11. Ivan Fedorko
12. Dimitrij Brinda.

Photo Sent to: Basilij D. Kokosh, Minneapolis. August, 1930.

### CATHEDRAL INFORMATION...

**Fr. Andrew's Scheduled Office Hours** for pastoral appointments: Tuesday: 10-1:00 PM; Wednesday: 7-9:00 PM; Thursday: 10-1:00 PM. Other times by appointment-please call the office at 612-781-7667.

**Fr. Benjamin's Scheduled Office Hours** are: Tuesday and Wednesday: 11-1 PM and 7-9 PM; Thursday: 9:30-11:30 AM

**Organizations looking for new members:** the Choir, Men's Club, 'O' Club, Women's Club, The Perohi Group, The Vet's Club - call the Church Office for meeting information (612-781-7667).

**The Visitation Ministry** is continually updating its list of parishioners who are homebound or in nursing homes and would like to be on our Visitation List. If you or a loved one is a member of St. Mary's and physically unable to attend church and church activities and would enjoy a visit or telephone call from a member of our Visitation Committee, please notify the Church Office (612-781-7667).

**Moving?** Please contact the Church Office with your new address and phone number (office@stmarysoca.org or 612-781-7667).

**Church Envelopes** Please contact the Church Office if you want to: (a) receive envelopes weekly or monthly; (b) stop envelopes; (c) combine envelopes (e.g., to receive only one set per household); (d) correct information on the envelope (including the title, e.g., from Mrs. to Mr. & Mrs.).



### St. Mary's Balalaika Orchestra

will be playing at Kramarczuk's on  
April 20  
From 7-9:00 PM.

## BECHEROV HISTORY

Number 10

by Demeter Kokosh

### "1715" BECHEROV LAND CENSUS

#### SURNAMES from CENSUS records in 1715:

Number of Family Names listed: 41

Petrus Svanyo, Farciscus Sbonis, Stephanus Findik, Joannes Suchanics, Sefranicska Henricus, Plichta Simeon, Turkur Joannes, Hasis Henricus, Samenda Ladislaus, Samen Stephanus, Szotulcsin Stephanus, Telicsak Joannes, Gallyur Lucas, Soroka Gulicskova, Joannes Hrabko, Simeon Kosztelnik, Petrus Volanszky, Josephus Mihalik, Ladislaus Grimya, Ruszinova Franciscus, Lagyur Georgius, Arisno Henricus, Peniskuv Penuska, Stephankova Joannes, Popovecz Josephus, Mlazar Joannes, Janecska Joannes, Kusenszky Joannes, Szuchanicz Ladislaus, Szuchanicz Stephanus, Cserep Joannes, Hudák Daniel, Gironya Simeon, Buchalics Henricus, Buvalics Michael, Zlezúr Petrus, Popovecz Franciscus, Vaducz Harricus, Szemancsak Joannes, Sefran Simeon, Kopitacs Hriczova

**At present, only seven family names from 1715 census remain in Becherov:**

SUCHANIC, 2. MIHALIK, 3. ROZUM, 4. POPOVIC, 5. HUDAK, 6. VADOC, 7. SEMANCAK

### Map of Europe, 1715

(Becherov near center)



# BECHEROV HISTORY

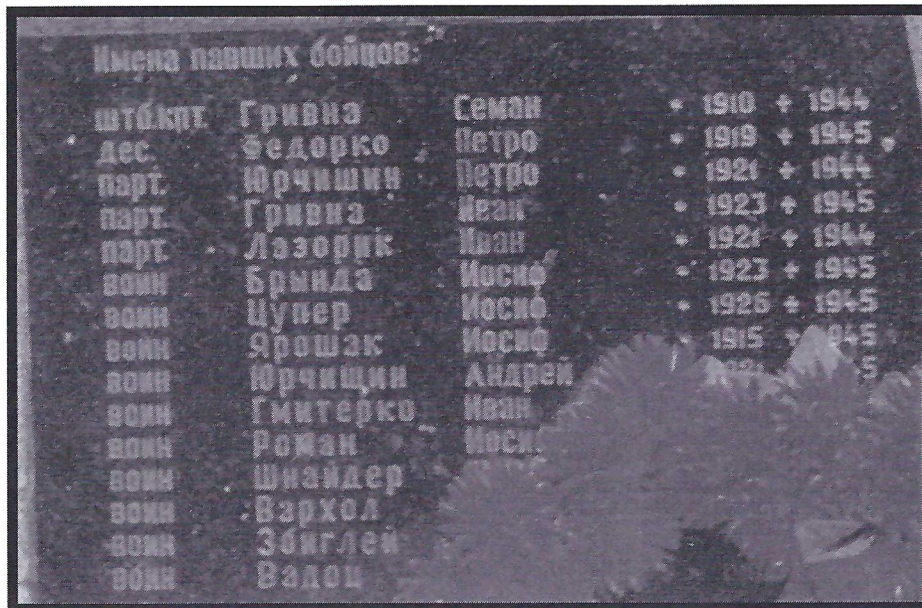
## Number 11

by Demeter Kokosh

### WW-II MEMORIAL



Located across the road from the Orthodox Church in Becherov.



Names of Memorialized Soldiers from Becherov:

- 1) Grivna, Seman 2) Fedorko, Petro 3) Jurcisin, Petro 4) Grivna, Ivan 5) Lazorik, Ivan 6) Brinda, Osif 7) Cuper, Osif 8) Jaroscak, Osif 9) Jurcisin, Andrej 10) Gmiterko, Ivan 11) Roman, Osif 12) Snyder, Petro 13) Varchol, Ivan 14) Zbihlej, Ilko 15) Vadoc, Andrej

Vecnaja Pamjat (Memory Eternal)

## BECHEROV HISTORY

by Demeter Kokosh  
Article 12

**1932 photo:** Volunteer woodcutting crew at an Orthodox parsonage.

At the end of the day, the workers clean up, ready to celebrate; but first, a prayer and blessing of food, then a toast, drink, eat and song and continued singing on their way home.



The people of the village of Becherov chopping wood in front of an orthodox parsonage

Photograph source: My "GRANDFATHER'S TRUNK", found in 1982 on my visit to Becherov.

NAMES OF THE WOODCUTTING CREW: 1) Fedor Lescisin; 2) Ivan Kostik; 3) Ivan Varchol; 4) Michal Cuper; 5) Josif Varchol; 6) Josif Semancak, ordained priest after WW-2; 7) Ivan Smajda; 8) Ivan Vadoc; 9) Josif Boris/Hajovcik; 10) IVAN KOKOS, my father; immigrated to Minneapolis in 1937. 11) Josif Boris/Hopko; 12) Anastasia Brinda; 13) Josif Cuper, ordained priest after WW-2; 14) Josef Guzi; (I know him as Ivan Kochanik, moved to Sudetenland in 1947); 15) Ivan Tutko, ordained priest after WW-2; 16) Josif Fedorko/Havlik; 17) Demeter Varchol; 18) Josif Jaroscak, killed in WW-2.

Additional notes: According to Mitro Jurchisin, "Carpathian People in Minneapolis", there were about 420 people from Becherov residing in Minneapolis. On average, that represents four people from each household who have immigrated to Minneapolis, most of whom were St. Mary's parishioners.

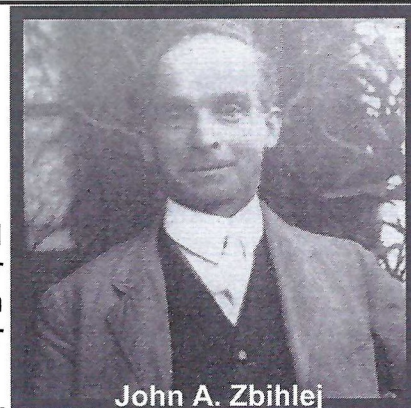
Two examples: 1) Ivan Tutko, his parents, brother and sister were St Mary's parishioners. He visited Minneapolis in 1962. I asked him, "How was it?": he said, "Like Becherov".

2) John Kokosh, my father, his relatives in Minneapolis: brother Andrew; cousin Vasil Kokesh and family; father-in-law Frank Jurcisin; sister-in-law Mary Porianda/Jurcisin; Mitro Jurcisin, Jaroscak, Semancak, Kotik/Mihalik, Hafic, Zbihlej and many others.

**BECHEROV HISTORY "1947"**

by Demeter Kokosh, Article 13

Letter From: John A. Zbihlej, BECHEROV, 03-10-1947  
 To: John Grivna, Clayton, Wisconsin



John A. Zbihlej

Slava Isusu Christu: with these words, I am greeting you my dear family. I know that you will be wondering who is writing to you. Well I am your brother-in-law, John A Zbihlej, writing to you, my brother-in-law, John Grivna. First of all, our warmest regards and best wishes to you and your children. Good health, good luck and the best of everything from God.

I have thought to write to you about how we live in our village of Becherov. We have a very hard time managing. After the war, everything is expensive, and everything is in short supply. It is most difficult to buy shoes. Many People are going to Russia. On the 25th of February, 9 (nine) families of farmers left Becherov; and they were good farmers. Families that left for Russia: 1. Michal Semancak (managed Brinda farm); 2. Valil Semancak; 3. Fedor Cuper/ Kit; 4. John Jurcisin / Kulpa (my uncle, my mother's brother); 5. Vasil Joroscak; 6. Seman Brinda; 7. Maria Brinda ( Cegelka); 8. Hric Panco - my neighbor 9. Andrej Dicko- gypsy (blacksmith)

Those families that are moving to Russia travel as a group: They chose to move of their free will. They may take with them all of their possessions. Their Possessions; farm animals-horses, cows, chickens, farm implements, feed, grain, wagons, are transported by truck to the rail road station in Bardejov. From Bardejov, they travel by train to their destination in Russia. They were able to sell their land - except for Seman Brinda - he was unable to sell his land because there were no buyers. Houses were left to the state. I think that more families will leave later. In Russia, they will receive free land and houses. These were the agreements made between the two governments.

Now, a bit about my life. I am still somehow able to farm, but I don't know what the future holds. We have two sons and two daughters. One daughter, (Maria) married Bacik and lives in Bardejov. I bought them a farm, so that they live fairly well. Our oldest son (John) has been married for 12 years, but has no children and he is a bit lax about farming. Our second son (Josef) is attending school. He finished "Gymnasium". Then he studied in Presov, but decided to change schools and has been admitted to a medical school in Praha. However, he got married at the age of 22. Don't know if he will be able to finish his education. I promised him financial support. My youngest, 14 year old daughter (Anna) is in her third year of secondary school (Mestita) in Komlosa. So you see my brother-in-law, although I have a fairly nice (substantial) farm, there is no one to leave it to. That is my situation. Write me how things are going with you. I don't



John Grivna, Clayton, WI, circa 1922

have anything to be proud of. My money is mostly gone; first for loans, second for my kid's education and third for land purchase. Currently my son (John) is serving as a mayor; I've been a mayor prior 8 years; there is no gain (satisfaction) in this either. That's about it. Once more, warmest regards from me, my wife and our children, John, Josef, Maria and Anna to you and your family. Please write after you receive my letter- write me about your life situation and names of your children. If possible, perhaps you could send me overalls, jacket, and shoes. For this I thank you in advance. I kiss you and remain your brother-in-law and your children's uncle.

Z Bohom - John Zbihlej

Notes: (1) Letter and photos from Larry Grivna, McGregor Minnesota., Grandson of John Grivna, Clayton Wisconsin. (2) Letter translated by Demeter Kokosh. (3) In 1947, "I WAS THERE"; I knew all but one family. Michal Semancak lived across the street from us. We were extension of one another. They had four sons; I played with them, went to school with them, I grew up with them. Others: Jurcisin (my mother's brother), Vasil Jaroscak (my mother's first cousin).

## BECHEROV HISTORY

### BECHEROV: VISIT OCTOBER 14, 2012

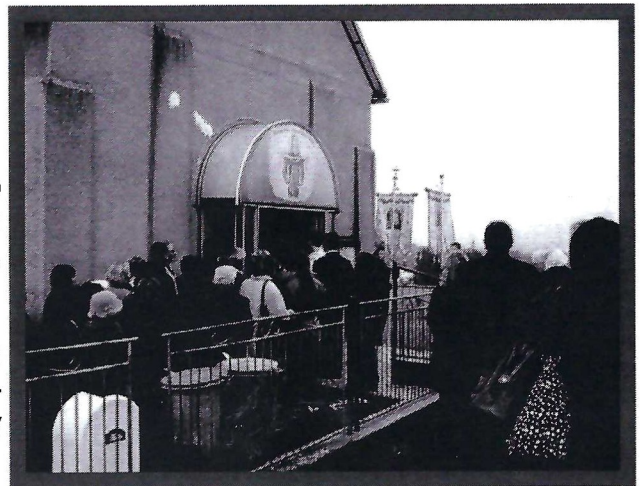
by Demeter Kokosh, Article 14



After the service, the attendees were treated outside to the finest food delicacies, vodka, and socializing with family members gathered from Bardejov, Presov, Kosice, and other parts of Slovakia.

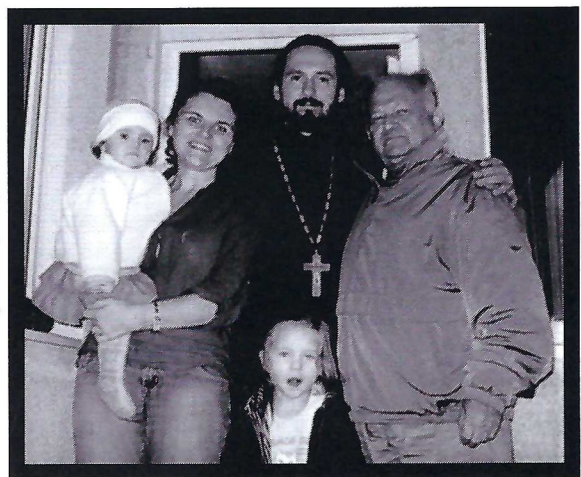
The festivities carried on in the cultural center with continued socializing with more food, drink and singing. I sang all the songs that I knew that were sung by the assembled merrymakers.

Evy and I were invited by Fr. John and Monika Pilko to Becherov's annual "KERMES" celebration. We attended the morning church service to an overflowing crowd. We were seated by Mrs. Gmitterko/Rozum in the front pew. For me, this was a very moving, tear evoking experience as this was the very church that I attended during my childhood years.



Marian Grivna (Becherov #5) escorted us through Becherov. In all, there are about 6 Grivna family households still in Becherov, including his sharp 90 year-old Grandmother who we conversed with. She remembers my mother and family. We also visited Frank Kohan's ancestral home, filled with family members from Bardejov and Kosice. We were warmly received and hosted with constant conversation, songs, food and associating merriment.

Then in the early evening we visited Fr. John and Monika. They expressed a keen desire to visit Minneapolis and asked for travel support; estimate round-trip Amsterdam/Minneapolis is \$1200.00 per person, and also accommodation for their stay in Minneapolis. I want to accommodate their wish; perhaps other St. Mary's parishioners are willing to financially support their visit.



*Photos by Evy Tusa Larsen*

## BECHEROV HISTORY

### HISTORY OF THE PARISH OF CHMELOVA/KOMLOSA, DISTRICT OF BARDEJOV.

by Demeter Kokosh, Article 15



Abstracted from published, "History of Parish of Chmelova", obtained in 1992 from John Super, one time resident of Komlosa, now a resident of Minneapolis and is also a parishioner here at St Mary's.

Focus: Verifiable information from available Official Church and Civil archived records

#### Chronology:

- 1410:** First record of Komlosa: Pyech and Pala threatened to burn down town of Bardejov if their friend, jailed for theft, was not released from prison.
- 1455:** A group of Komlosans hung a letter on the gate of Zmigrod, Poland, threatening to flog the entire population unless they pay a sufficient compensation for the killing of their fellow Komlosan.
- 1530:** Makovica estates were given to the Zapolski family of Poland.
- 1600:** Makovica estates were given to the Polish Prince OSTROGOVSKI.
- 1771:** Citizens swore their ev-

erlasting allegiance to the Makovica State.

- 1827:** A new, currently existing church was consecrated.
- 1834:** Fire destroys 34 houses
- 1873:** Last outbreak of Cholera epidemic.
- xxxx:** Large scale immigration to America. (many to Minneapolis).
- 1945:** Jan 19, liberated by the first Army Corps, commanded by General Svoboda.
- 1947:** About 15 families (93 individuals) immigrated to the Soviet Union.

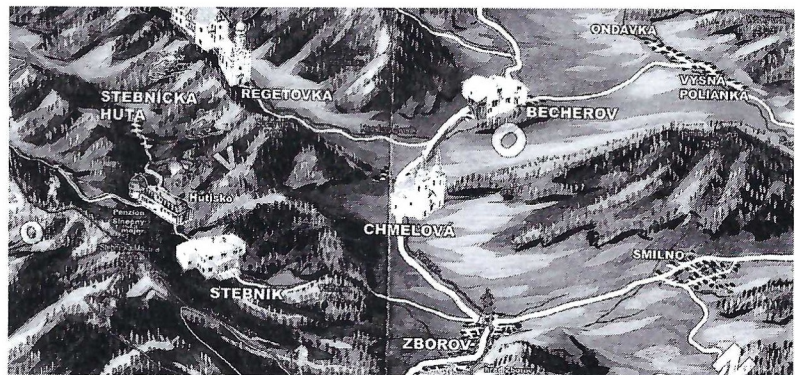
#### TAXATION: NOTES!!!

- (a) In effect at the time of Maria Teresa Reign, 1775 and after.
- (b) The tax rate in Makovica was 5 times higher than tax rate in Mukacevo.

1. Every third week, each household worked on the estate with teams of animals. I assume that this was performed during spring planting and fall harvesting. Historical land census indicate a progressive obligation/taxation. This obligation/ tax could be satisfied by providing a 96 Pressburg Gallons of OATS.

2. Entire Parish obligation/tax; Note: The chronicle indicates that the Parish included other villages, Stebnik and Zborov with a total of 1464 parishioners. (In some instances, the term, *Parish*, refers to Komlosa only.)
  - a. 100 Guldens per year, plus one gulden for salt.
  - b. Goods: 3 geese, 6 hens, 180 eggs, 4 sacks of unspecified goods.
  - c. Winter duties: 8 bales of spun wool, one "measure of hops". Other: pick mushrooms and walnuts.
3. Users fees: a) 6 pence for animal grazing on Estate pastures. b) fees for use of flour mill; c) fees for bishop; d) fees/work for parish; e) fees for all types of official documents.

Stebnik and Stbnicka Huta: located just about 3 kilometers NW of Komlosa. Population is not Wallachian/Rusyn; their language is Silesian; they were imported for their glass-making skills. They produced household necessities and glass tokens that were used as vouchers for services rendered. These artifacts are on display in the Bardejov Museum.



## BECHEROV HISTORY

### Demeter Kokosh and Evy Larsen's Visit to Europe Oct. 2 - 25, 2012.

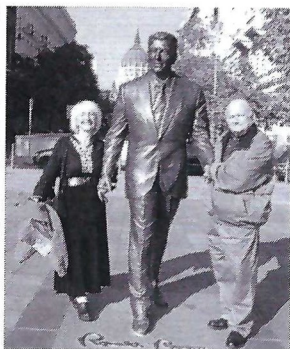
by Demeter Kokosh, Article 16

This trip just came upon us quite suddenly. It wasn't planned or scripted. We only had routing and destinations. Evy's primary destinations: find and visit her relatives in Oparany, CZ; Cencice, SK.; Ferkasljuk, HU; and see Budapest. We found her relatives and visited Budapest.

**BUDAPEST VISIT:** We spent six days in Budapest, had a marvelous time. We felt at home there.

**Events/experiences:** We took a three-hour, narrated bus tour and a narrated Danube cruise. We took daily walking tours. On their national holyday, commemorating the 1956 uprising, we took a walking tour to the Parliament Building where the official ceremony was held and encountered quite a few tourists from throughout Europe as well as the USA. Most surprising

was encountering a statue of "Ronald Regan" bigger than life. From the Parliament, we walked along the river Danube



and came upon an "non-violent/controlled" anti-government protest, a crowd almost as large as that at the official celebration, but with a much more animated protest speaker.

**Other experiences in Budapest:** We also visited an Immediate Care facility. Both, the doctor and the nurse spoke English and were very pleasant, attentive and competent. We were not charged for the service. Sunday, we attended a service at St. Steven's Cathedral. We also found a casino named "Las Vegas" where we played blackjack and enjoyed interacting with the dealers and other players. We also visited the Opera House, a magnificent structure; and ate at a few restaurants.

At our hotel, the staff and most guest spoke English. We had interactions with almost all natives and tourists that we encountered.

**BARDEJOV:** we stayed at Semiphore for eight days, our base for exploration and we visited Becherov, Regetovka, Komlosa, Zborov, Dlha Luka, Ondavka, Varatka, Svidnik, and Poland. (The borders to Poland and Hungary were open.)

On our daily walking tour of Bardejov, we encountered many unexpected sites and events:

- We stopped at a pharmacy for cold medication; I asked the pharmacist if she knew Bozena Poriandova. She said, "I'm Bozena".
- We encountered, a bus load of tourists from Japan; I greeted them in Japanese and they just lit up.
- One of the most unexpected sights found in Bardejov was an Uncle Sam Recruiting Poster that read, "I want you to speak English"

In Bardejov, we were hosted multiple times by Osif Jurusta as well as Ivan Bandurich, Museum Director and conservator of Bardejov heritage. We were also hosted by: Bozena Poriandova; Michal Kokosh, also related to Steve Kokosh's family in Minneapolis. Additionally, we met with and were hosted by Jancikova, Zelem and Ivan Lescisin; he was enlivened by our visit, talked and talked and related his 1944 war experiences.

On the last night in Bardejov, we attended a formal monthly event of retirees that was attended by about 80-100 people. This was a festive event with speeches, food, toasts, drinks, music singing and dancing



**BECHEROV:** We visited Becherov about six times: we were hosted by Mayor Osef Gmitterko; his parents; Fr. John and Monika Pilko; the Rusinko Family (Hafich's relatives); Marian Grivna; and Frank Kohan's relatives gathered in the family ancestral home. And of course we met up with Vasil Banickij, and Michal Brinda and we met with many other individuals.

During our travel we received, friendly, helpful assistance, not only from some of our contacts, but also from total strangers when needed and asked for, with only one exception, through "Charles de Gaulle Airport", where we had a horrendously nightmarish experience.

A few examples of courtesies from strangers:

- In Tabor, a McDonald's customer recommended and escorted us to Pension.
- In Oparany, the town Mayor found and connected us with Evy's 80-year old cousin and his family. We were escorted to a cemetery by a car full of teenagers.
- In Prague, we were driven by a car rental agent to a nearby hotel and granted a discount.
- From Zilina to Kosice, by a most astonishing co-incidence, we connected with a niece of Ivan Rusinko (Svidnik). She placed a call to her uncle and we talked for some time.
- In Presov, we asked for help at a service station. The gentleman there responded, "I don't work here", I asked, "where did you learn your English, "in Korcma" was his response. He escorted us to the reception at the Dukla Hotel
- In Fafkasljuk, Hu, a Slovak speaking man on the street, escorted us to a nearby school with an English speaking teacher; she was very helpful in finding and connecting with Evy's relatives.

This trip was a phenomenal adventure, far beyond our expectation, far beyond our imagination.