

April 1, 1997

HISTORY OF THE RERKO FAMILY OF FAYETTE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

Research on the Rerko family of Fayette County, Pennsylvania; was done by using the following records: St. Cyril and Methodius RC Church of Fairchance, Pa.; St. Michaels RC Church of Greenville, Pa.; St. John the Evangelist RC Church in Connellsville, Pa.; the National Archives in Washington, D.C.; Fayette County Courthouse in Uniontown, Pa.; the "Pennsylvania State Division of Vital Records" in Mercer, Pa. and the State Archives in Levoci, Slovakia. Here is a recap of what I have found on the Rerko family name. I have Americanized all names to make them consistent.

1. The family name (Rerko) has not undergone any change in spelling or use during the period of this study.

2. Our great-grandparents on the Rerko side are Andrew Rerko and Anna Krivjansky. Andrew Rerko had worked in the coal industry in Morewood, Westmoreland County, Pa. during the mid 1880's and then returned to Slovakia where he took up farming as his occupation. Andrew was born on August 28, 1855 in Odorin, Slovakia to Joseph [Jozef] Rerko and Anna Franko. Anna Krivjansky was born on December 29, 1856 in Bijacovciach, Slovakia to John [Jan] Krivjansky and Maria Kristofko. It is not known where they were married. It is believed that they both died in Slovakia after 1910. They had three children: Anna, John and Steve.

Andrew Rerko's parents, Joseph Rerko and Anna Franko had a large family of eleven children. The following is a list of their children and associated information. All children were born in Odorin, Spis, Slovakia.

Jozef -- was born on November 15, 1841 and died on February 27, 1842.

Stefan -- was born on January 20, 1843 and married Maria Baluch on January 29, 1872 in Odorin. They had at least one child name Maria who was born on November 30, 1872.

Maria -- was born on January 12, 1845 and died on January 9, 1847.

Anna -- was born on April 27, 1847 and married Jan Kossar on February 1, 1869. Their children were: Jan (born on October 12, 1869), Jozef (born on April 27, 1873), and Matej (born on January 2, 1876 and died on September 2, 1877).

Maria -- was born on January 2, 1850 and married Stefan Baluch on January 29, 1872. Their children were: Valentin (born on January 23, 1873 and died on March 8, 1898 in America), Maria (born on December 23, 1874 and died on August

12, 1953), Jan (born on June 26, 1876 and died on January 7, 1878), Anna (born on December 9, 1878 and died on March 30, 1889), Katarina (born on August 7, 1881), Jan (born on October 7, 1883), Stefan (born on June 17, 1887), and Anna (born on January 1, 1891 and died on September 21, 1897).

Jozef -- born on August 23, 1852 and died on December 20, 1854.

Andrej -- born on August 28, 1855 (see paragraph 2 above).

Katarina -- born on April 5, 1859 and married Andrej Godulya on November 18, 1878. Their children were: Maria (born on March 11, 1880), and Anna (born on January 13, 1882).

Zuzana -- born on February 5, 1861.

Jozef -- born on August 21, 1863 and married Maria Grecsko on November 14, 1887. They had at least one child named: Stefan (born July 13, 1891 and died on February 6, 1912).

Helena -- born on July 13, 1866 and married Michal Kiszely on September 7, 1885.

3. The Rerko family originally came from the Spis region of Slovakia. We have references to Odorin, Spis, Slovakia as being where Anna Rerko, Steve Rerko and John Rerko were residing prior to coming to the U.S.. Both Steve and John indicated that they were born in Odorin, Slovakia. Church and immigration records indicate that the family lived in Odorin from at least 1841 through 1910.

4. Anna Rerko was born on December 10, 1885 in Morewood, Westmoreland County, Pa.. She apparently returned to Slovakia as a young child and lived in Odorin, Spis, Slovakia until 1906 when she re-immigrated to the U.S.. She departed Bremen, Germany on August 23, 1906 aboard the SS Frieder Grosse of the North German Lloyd shipping company and arrived in New York on September 05, 1906. She indicated to immigration officials that she was going to join her cousin Andrea Baluch, P.O. Box 82, Tarrs, Pa. She met her future husband (Paul Vrabel) at a wedding in 1907 and subsequently was married on September 07, 1907. Her husband, Paul Vrabel was born on June 29, 1885 in Velbach (new name Bystrany), Spis, Slovakia. When he immigrated to the U.S., Paul indicated that he had been residing in Domanovce, Spis, Slovakia. He departed Bremen, Germany on January 24, 1903 aboard the SS Zieten of the Northern German Lloyd shipping company and arrived on February 9, 1903 in New York. He indicated to immigration officials that he was going to Elm Grove, Pa. to join his brother Michael Vrabel. Paul Vrabel's parents were Jan Vrabel and Ann Kozar. Paul died in a coal mine accident on May 19, 1928 in Mather, Pa. (near Waynesburg, Pa.) Anna died on July 10, 1939 of cancer in Uniontown, Pa.. Paul and Anna Vrabel had eight children with five surviving. The following are the names:

Anne Elizabeth Vrabel

born: February 22, 1911 in Wynn, Pa.

married: October 22, 1935 spouse: Andrew F. Hovanec

died: July 18, 1970 in Uniontown, Pa

Andrew F. Hovanec was born on January 15, 1913 in Adelaide, Pa. His father's name was Andrew Hovanec and his mothers was Maria Vrabel. See write-up on the Hovanec family for more information. Anne and Andrew had three children with the following details.

Richard Hovanec

born: July 10, 1936 in Uniontown, Pa.

married: none spouse: none

died: July 14, 1936 in Uniontown, Pa.

Evelyn Anne Hovanec

born: December 23, 1937 in Uniontown, Pa.

married: none spouse: none

died:

Andrew George Hovanec

born: December 13, 1945 in Uniontown, Pa.

married: February 27, 1971 spouse: Linda Suzanne Burkholder

died:

Andrew and Linda were married in Laural, Md. and have resided in Maryland since 1971. Andrew and Linda had three children with the following names:

Rebecca Ann Hovanec

born: November 8, 1978 in Baltimore, Md.

married: spouse:

died:

Brenda Michale Hovanec

born: October 29, 1980 in Baltimore, Md.

married: spouse:

died:

Andrew David Hovanec

born: March 11, 1986 in Baltimore, Md.

married: spouse:

died:

Mary Vrabel

born: about June 1912 in Wynn, Pa.

married: none spouse: none

died: January 15, 1915 in Wynn, Pa.

Paul Vrabel

born: October 19, 1913 in Wynn, Pa.

married: August 26, 1945 spouse: Ann Plevich

died: March 08, 1989 in Morgantown, W.V.

Paul served in the U.S. 3rd Army in Europe during World War II. When Paul entered service, his name was changed from "Vrabel" to "Vrobel".

Margaret Louis Vrabel

born: May 22, 1915 in Wynn, Pa.

married: June 26, 1954 spouse: Joseph Leroy Hower

died: still alive and kicking

Joseph Hower was born on August 23, 1927 in Greensboro, Pa. His fathers name was John Hower and his mothers name was Emma Raugaugh. John Hower was born in Warren, Ohio and worked as a miner in the Masontown, Pa. area. Emma was born in Brier Hill, Pa. According to Joseph Hower, the family name was changed from "Auer" to "Hower" in the late 1800's or early 1900's.

Joseph Vrabel

born: April 07, 1917 in Wynn, Pa.

married: none spouse: none

died: July 03, 1918 in Wynn, Pa.

Helen Agatha Vrabel

born: May 23, 1919 in Wynn, Pa.

married: March 24, 1946 spouse: John D. Helt

died: May 02, 1986 in Cleveland, Ohio

John D. Helt was born in about 1918 in Amend, Pa. His fathers name was John D. Helt Sr. and his mothers maiden name was Susan Janos. His father was born in Austria and worked as a blacksmith. His mother was born in Mt. Pleasant, Pa.

John Vrabel

born: January 21, 1921 in Greene County, Pa.

married: none spouse: none

died: February 5, 1922 in Mather, Greene County, Pa.

Steve Vrabel

born: about 1923

married: spouse: Eleanor

died:

Steve served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and like Paul Vrabel, his name was changed from "Vrabel" to "Vrobel" while in the service.

5. John Andra Rerko was born on July 1, 1889 in Odorin, Spis, Slovakia. He immigrated to the U.S. aboard the SS Kaiser Wilhelm Der Grosse of the North German Lloyd shipping company, which departed from Bremen, Germany on 23 April 1907 and arrived in New York on May 02, 1907. He indicated to immigration officials that he was going to meet his cousin Andrea Baluch, P.O. Box 82, Tarrs, Pa.. John submitted his declaration of intent to become a citizen of the USA on June 3, 1938 and was naturalized as a citizen of the U.S. on May 05, 1941 in Uniontown, Pa.. John married Veronica Hunchuck [Hanczak] on May 27, 1914 in Fairchance, Pa. Veronica was born on February 10, 1901 in Harast, Spis, Hungary. She arrived in the USA from Hungary (Slovakia) on January 21, 1905 aboard the Hamburg-American line vessel "Pennsylvania". At the time of their marriage, both John and Veronica were living in Olyphant, Pa. Her father was Josef Hunchuk [Hancsak] and her mother was Mary Mikolaj. In 1943, John Rerko quite working in the coal mines of Fayette County, Pa. and bought a farm in the Collier, Fayette County, Pa. area and returned to farming. John Rerko died on October 2, 1960 and his wife Veronica died on November 10, 1940. John and his wife Veronica had at least seven children with the following names:

Mary Louise Rerko

born: April 29, 1915 in Lemont, Pa.

married: June 8, 1937 spouse: John Zentkovich

died: 1957

John was born on March 22, 1916 and died on October 13, 1990. His parents were Mike Zentkovich and Catherine Kasper, both from Slovakia. John worked as a coal miner.

Helen Eleanor Rerko

born: November 8, 1916 in Gilmore, Pa.

married: spouse:

died:

Anna Rerko

born: April 21, 1919 Collier, Pa.

married: none spouse: none

died: 1920

Margaret Veronica Rerko

born: May 29, 1921 in Collier, Pa.

married: September 2, 1941 spouse: John Balazik

died:

Margaret and John were married in Fairchance, Pa. John was born on May 4, 1920 in Republic, Pa. and died on March 6, 1993. His parents were Ludwig Balazik and Klotilda Douk, both of Slovakia.

Joseph John Rerko

born: March 29, 1923 in York Run, Pa.
married: June 3, 1950 spouse: Eleanore Patricia Hancak
died: May 1986
Eleanore was born in 1921.

John A. Rerko

born: March 12, 1925 in Collier, Pa.
married: spouse: Ethel Fargus
died: February 4, 1992
Ethel was born in Bobtown, Pa. on July 27, 1931. John worked as a coal miner.
John and Ethel had at least one son with the following details.

John A. Rerko III

born: March 6, 1952 in Uniontown, Pa.
married: June 22, 1974 spouse: Sheila A. Suba
died:
Sheila was born on July 20, 1954 in West Virginia. Her parents were Stanley Suba and Lucy Myers. Stanley was born in Collier, Pa. and Lucy was born in Fairchance, Pa. Stanley worked as a coal miner. John A. Rerko worked as a coal miner.

Andrew J. Rerko

born: November 25, 1926 in Collier, Pa.
married: August 27, 1948 spouse: Eleonore Rosalia ?????
died: June 1980
Eleonore was born on December 4, 1923 in Munich, Bavaria, Germany. Andrew and Eleonore were married in Munich, Bavaria, Germany. Eleonore arrived in New York, N.Y. on November 17, 1948. They had at least one son as follows:

Andrew Rerko

born: December 25, 1950 in Uniontown, Pa.
married: spouse:
died:

6. Steve Rerko was born on March 25, 1891 in Odorin, Spis, Slovakia and died on November 14, 1965 in Greenville, Mercer County, Pa. Steve Rerko arrived in New York, N.Y. from Bremen, Germany on January 16, 1910 aboard the North German Lloyd steamship SS Prinz Friedrich Wilhelm. According to immigration records, Steve was to be met by his brother John Rerko of #32 Elm Grove, Pa.. After he arrived in the U.S. he stayed with Anna Rerko and her husband Paul Vrabel in Wynn, Pa.. Steve married Mary Yohman [Johman] on May 13, 1913 in Fairchance, Pa.. At the time of their marriage, both were living in Wynn Works, Pa. Mary's parents were Martin Yohman and Mary Fundura. Mary was born on May 19, 1893 in Smizany, Spis, Slovakia; arrived in New York N.Y. on February 16, 1912; and died on June 26, 1965 in Greeneville, Pa.. Steve was living in

Brier Hill, Pa. with his wife (Mary) in 1926 and he subsequently moved to Mercer County, Pa. after 1931. Steve quite coal mining and went back to farming when he moved to Mercer County, Pa.. Steve submitted his declaration of intent to become a citizen of the USA on November 26, 1927 and was naturalized on February 12, 1931. Steve died on November 14, 1965 in Greenville, Pa.. Steve and Mary had several children, including the following:

Mary Rerko

born: September 10, 1917 in Wynn, Pa.
married: spouse: John Liska
died:

Steve Rerko

born: July 4, 1919 in Wynn, Pa.
married: spouse:
died:

Andrew William Rerko

born: February 8, 1924 in Marianna, Pa.
married: June 14, 1947 spouse: Pearl May Burazer
died:

Pearl was born on September 7, 1925 in Vandergrift, Pa.. Her parents were John Burazer and Catherine Marovic of Warren, Ohio. Andrew and Pearl had two children with the following names:

Ann Marie Rerko

born: April 25, 1949 in Warren, Ohio.
married: August 17, 1968 spouse: Michael Vincent Zarecky
died:

Michael was born on February 9, 1947 in Greenville, Pa. His parents were Frank L. Zarecky and Mary Galus of Greenville, Pa..

William John Rerko

born: April 8, 1953 in Warren, Ohio
married: spouse:
died:

Margaret Rerko

born: June 1, 1926 in Brier Hill, Pa.
married: October 18, 1952 spouses: George Sherasky
died:

George was born on April 17, 1922 in Maderia (Boardman), Pa. His parents were George Sherasky and Mary Panco of Curwinsville, Pa.

Anna Rerko

born: July 13, 1928 in Brier Hill, Pa.

married: September 15, 1951 spouse: Stephen Motika

died:

John J. Rerko

born: March 8, 1931 in Brier Hill, Pa.

married: spouse:

died:

7. Andrea Baluch who was referenced above for Anna and John Rerko was related as follows: Andrew Rerko (the father of Anna, John and Steve Rerko) had a sister named Maria Rerko, who had married a Stefan Baluch in Slovakia (see paragraph 2 above). This sister and her husband had a son named Andrea Baluch who immigrated to the USA. This is the Andrea Baluch referenced above. They also had a daughter Katherina, who stayed in Slovakia and married a Stefan Melek (born: December 05, 1874 and died: June 26, 1952). Katherina and Stefan Melek had a son named John, who in turn was married and had a son named John. This second John currently lives in Slovakia and is a doctor. He also has a son who is named John and works as an engineer. Even though there is no Andrea Baluch listed as a child of Stefan Baluch and Maria Rerko, it is quite possible that he was born some where else. This is also the case of Anna Rerko, who was born in Morewood, Pa. in 1885.

Interestingly, when Anna Rerko came to the USA in 1906, she was accompanied by her cousins Janos Baluch (see paragraph 2 above) and Janos Godulya (not listed in paragraph 2 above, but the same family name is given.). Both cousins were going to Hostetter, Pa. (located near Mt. Pleasant, Pa.). The name Godulya was changed in the USA to Gonda by subsequent generations in the USA.

8. The Hunchuck [Hancsak] family is closely allied with the Rerko and Vrabel families. There are at least three marriages of children of Joseph Hunchuck and his wife Mary to Vrabels or Rerko's. The Hunchuck family originally arrived in the USA on January 21, 1905. Joseph [Josef] Hunchuck [Hancsak] was naturalised a citizen of the USA on January 12, 1939. The family came from Smizaney, Spis, Slovakia. The following is a list of names and birth dates for the family.

Joseph [Josef] Hunchuck [Hancsak]

born: March 19, 1880 in Bresovica, Slovakia

married: August 15, 1902 spouse: Mary Mikolaj

died:

Mary was born in 1880 in Vellbahi, Slovakia and died in 1924 in Fayette County, Pa..

Joseph and Mary had at least six children as follows:

Veronica Hunchuck

born: February 10, 1901 in Harast, Spis, Slovakia

married: May 27, 1914 spouse: John Rerko

died: November 10, 1940

Matthew Hunchuck

born: February 7, 1903 in Smizaney, Spis., Slovakia

married: spouse: Mary Vrabel

died: June 1980

Mary Vrabel was the daughter of Martin Vrabel.

Maria Hunchuck

born: August 17, 1906 in Brownfield, Pa.

married: spouse:

died:

Paul Hunchuck

born: January 17, 1909 in Edenborn, Pa.

married: spouse:

died: May 1977

Julia Hunchuck

born: February 1, 1915 in Oliphant, Pa.

married: spouse: Steve Vrabel

died:

Steve Vrabel is the son of Michael Vrabel.

Sophia Hunchuck

born: May 10, 1920 in Masontown, Pa.

married: spouse:

died: