

Schafer Family Reunion Report

Descendants of Anton Schafer and Rosina Hörner

Saturday, 09 July 2011 will long be remembered by many Schafer descendants. Four hundred and twenty descendants of Anton Schafer and Rosina Hörner gathered at the Medicine Hat Cypress Centre to recognize the 100th year-anniversary of the immigration of Great Grandmother Rosina and her twelve children into Canada from Crimea, Russia.

At the registration tables, each Schafer descendant was given a color-coded identification tag associated with one of the twelve original Schafer children. Thus, all descendants of Michael Schafer for example wore orange name tags. Inside the auditorium, family display tables had been set up for each of the twelve Schafer families. There were people standing in front of these displays all day long.

Ray Schafer, grandson of Johann Schafer, was the EmCee for the day's program. Greetings were delivered by local Alberta MLA Len Mitzel and Medicine Hat Mayor Norm Boucher. The early bird registration draw was won by Dorothy Marquardt Cocks, and the sponsorship draw was won by Jeanette Schafer Forrest. After a delicious hot lunch of farmer's sausage and perogies, each of the 12 families gathered in turn for group photos, while everyone else spent the afternoon visiting with one another. It was an especially fun time for those who had not seen each other in many years. A children's entertainer occupied the children for two hours, and then Dick Lerner on the accordion entertained for over an hour before dinner was served. During dinner, photos taken during the day, and photos from Crimea cycled through the projector onto two screens at the front of the hall. Dinner consisted of Alberta roast beef and oven roasted potatoes with salads and vegetables. Two bottles of wine were provided to each table.

The evening's program began with awarding the prizes from the raffle table. Incredibly, Brian Kohlman's name was drawn 3 times for a raffle prize, and he said he only bought three tickets. The door prizes were a mix of donated items, and items purchased by the Reunion Committee. The Silent Auction Table consisted of a framed aerial homestead photo of an Alberta farm of the winner's choice, donated by Homestead Aerial Farm Photos of Alta Ltd. This was awarded to Maryanne Schile Bouw. A hand-painted portrait of Great Grandmother Rosina Schafer by Jeanette Schafer Forrest went to Bruce and Valerie (Walker) Miller.

After the draws, Merv Weiss delivered an hour-long presentation of the Schafer family's history, beginning in the Rhineland region of Germany, to Russia, and then to Canada. This was followed by some musical entertainment provided by Valerie Folk, including her version of "A Schafer Farmer's Daughter" and her son Brent on the guitar. Hazel Schafer Eagles sang some verses of old German songs which she remembered. Closing off the home-grown entertainment was the hilarious musical skit "Jammin' with the Anton Schafer gang". The crowd favorite would have to be "The Devil Went Down to Georgia"!

The 2011 Schafer Family Reunion closed the next morning with a pancake, eggs and ham breakfast served by the Knights of Columbus at the Holy Family Parish Hall. Approximately 250 enjoyed the breakfast and the company, as well as the chance to say some good-byes.

Saturday, 09 July 2011 in Medicine Hat, was a wonderful opportunity for the hundreds of cousins to celebrate the Schafer family history in Canada and the USA.

Merv Weiss. Saskatoon. 22 October 2011.