

The Last Residents of Schowe: Summary Data

Art Steinmetz

October 2019

Introduction

Schowe was one of many Yugoslavian villages settled by ethnic Germans in the late 1700s. It is where my father's family is from. At the end of WWII, the populace either fled, were put into concentration camps established by the Yugoslavians or sent to Russian labor camps. Those that survived scattered throughout Germany and the United States. You can **read about the “Danube Swabians” here.**

While most traces of German presence in what is now Serbia have been scrubbed away, we know much about Schowe from surviving records, particularly the **1944 census** and **“1961 Heimatbuch”** compiled by the last mayor of Schowe. Most usage of these records is by individuals looking for their personal family history. I thought it would be interesting to take a broad view of the data, as well. The data as presented is a bit messy and required a lot of cleaning. It's still not perfect but I was able to get the data into a useful table containing the following items:

Information Pulled from Raw Data

Extracted Facts

last_name

first_name

maiden_name

faith

street

house

village

born

died

fate

last_location

last_district

birth_date

death_date

raw_text

gender

Population

What were demographics of the town before the end of the war?

Schowe was a village of about 2,500 souls.

gender	count	age
Female	1,358	38.6
Male	1,152	36.5
unknown	8	39.0

Population by Street

What was the population of Schowe by street? Here are the top 10 streets.

village	street	population
NeuSchowe	Debrezin-Gasse	417
NeuSchowe	Lange-Gasse	414
NeuSchowe	Haupt-Gasse	370
NeuSchowe	Allee-Gasse	234
NeuSchowe	Wolf-Gasse	187
AltSchowe	Lange-Gasse	149
NeuSchowe	Rappen-Gasse	136
AltSchowe	Seil-Gasse	132
AltSchowe	Kuzuraer-Gasse	122
NeuSchowe	Frosch-Gasse	85

Most Common Names

These German villages, small and surrounded by Yugoslavians, were fairly insular. Marriage among cousins was common so there is not a lot of surname diversity. There were 250 Hallers in the village. There were 23 Jakob Hallers and 29 Elisabeth Hallers! Things must have been confusing at the church picnic. The word clouds below show relative frequency of names as larger type.

First Names



Last Names

Female



Male

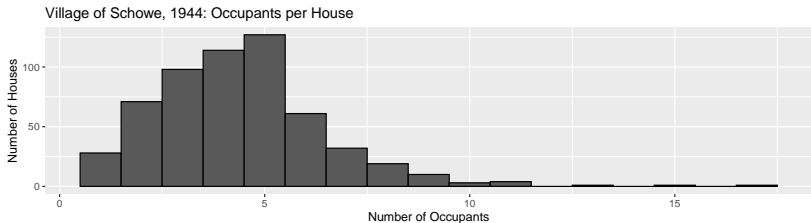
Couples

Here are the most common marriage parings.

Marriage	Couples
Brücker-Haller	11
Haller-Haller	9
Bolz-Haller	8
Brücker-Krieger	7
Brücker-Haug	6
Haller-Hetzel	6
Geyer-Haller	5
Brücker-Brücker	4
Brücker-Hetzel	4
Brücker-Seil	4
Brücker-Welker	4
Febel-Hetzel	4
Geyer-Müller	4
Haller-Heil	4
Haller-Krieger	4

Households

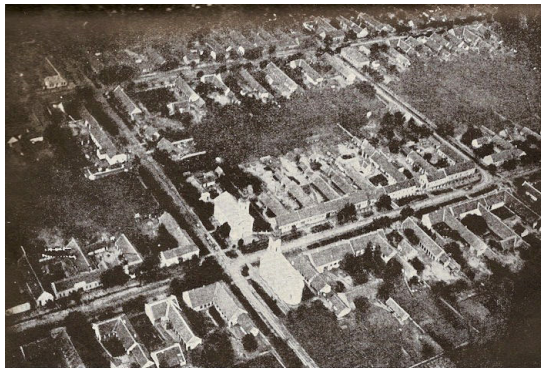
Number of people per household.



Source: Heimatbuch der Gemeinde Schowe – 1961

Religion

There were four churches in the town. Two massive Lutheran churches, Reformed and Evangelical, faced each other in the center of town. I can only speculate about the competition between the pastors for best sermon each Sunday.



Fliegeraufnahme von Neuschorve

Source: dvhh.org

Different Faiths - Not Really

In addition there was a Catholic church and a Jewish synagogue. As you might imagine, after five years of Nazi rule, there were no Jews listed in the 1944 census. The locations of all four churches are visible from Google Street View and, interestingly, all are vacant lots today.

faith	count
Evangelical	1,038
Reformed	882
unknown	585
Catholic	13

Ethnic Cleansing of Schowe

During a chaotic few weeks in October 1944, the German army retreated westward, the Yugoslavian Partisans and Russians advanced, and many villagers fled. Some stayed. What was their fate? The Heimatbuch lists the fate of most of the residents. If there is no death date in the Heimatbuch, but there is a last location that is not a camp, I classify them as “expelled.” Note that people may have spent time in the camps and survived (like my great aunt) so are thus counted as expelled. “Died” is usually in one of the Yugoslavian concentration camps or in Russia so I break that out as a separate category.

Fate of the Schower after WWII



1 body = 10 lives

Source: Heimatbuch der Gemeinde Schowe - 1961

Fates of the Schower

fate	count
expelled	1,616
died in Lager Jarek	487
died	169
unknown	107
died in another camp	55
died in Russia	35
missing	35
murdered	7
killed in action	6
hanged	1

The Camps

A large fraction of the village population was sent to concentration camps in Yugoslavia or labor camps in Russia and died there. An unknown fraction of those counted as “expelled” went through the camps and survived.

last_location	deaths
Lager Jarek	485
Lager Krusevlje	33
Other Lagers	23
Rußland	38

Camp Death Year

Among the residents whose death year is specified, in what years were the deaths concentrated? While the fates of most residents are in the table, only a few have the year of death so this is a small subset of all the deaths.

fate	avg_died
died	1950
died in another camp	1946
died in Lager Jarek	1945
died in Russia	1943
expelled	1939
hanged	1944
missing	1944
murdered	1944
unknown	1947





Deaths in the Camps

Schower Deaths in the Camps after WWII



1 body = 10 lives

Source: Heimatbuch der Gemeinde Schowe - 1961

	Lager Jarek 485
	Lager Krusevije 33
	Other Lagers 23
	Rußland 38

Russia

My great aunt chose not to flee with her daughter, presumably to care for her mother. The choice was fatal for her daughter, Elisabeth and mother, Theresia. Only my great aunt survived to emigrate to Cleveland in the '50s.

33 villagers were sent to Russian labor camps and died there. 4 of the 33 were women, aged 20,20,20 and 26. Among them was Elisabeth. Theresia died in Lager Jarek at the age of 79.

One Victim from My Family

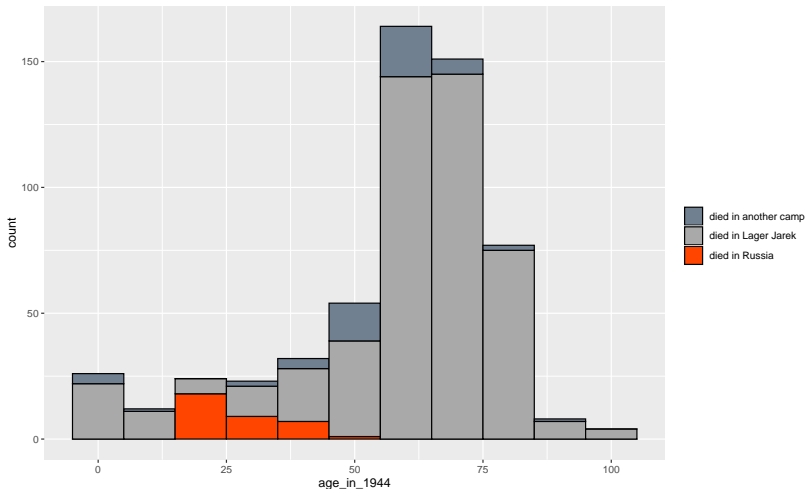


Elisabeth Poth about 1940. Photo by the Johann Pataki studio in Neu Schowe. Johann Pataki also died in a camp.

Age of Camp Victims

Schowe Villagers: Deaths in Camp by Age

The youth were sent to Russia. The old did not survive the camps.



Note: Age "100" means "unknown"
Source: Heimatbuch der Gemeinde Schowe – 1961,

Where Did the Survivors Go?

Among those who survived expulsion, most wound up scattered throughout Germany but the most popular single destination, by a wide margin, was Cleveland, Ohio, USA. Cleveland is home to a large Danube Swabian community that was established before and after WWI. Many of my family came to Cleveland during this time.

last_location	count
Cleveland, USA	292
unknown	170
Waiblingen	64
Winnenden	48
München	44
Endersbach	34
Wien	34
Canada	29
Schwaikheim	28
USA	24
Massing	23