

The Story of Majaki

By Merv Weiss

The people of Selz were the last to evacuate Odessa district in late March of 1944. They headed for the ferry at Ovidipol, but several miles out, they encountered a very long line-up of wagons, horses, and people waiting to cross the liman to Akkermann on the other side of the Dniester River.

After a while, it was decided to head back to Franzfeld to wait a few days, but they soon heard the approaching cannons of the resurgent Russian Army. It was decided to check out the single ferry at Majaki which had been commandeered by the retreating German forces. It took 2-3 days to get the ferry running, and the 3,500 Selzers and their transportable households began to cross. It was a very slow process as you can imagine.

About 2 pm on the afternoon of Good Friday (April 6 or 7), the ferry took a direct cannon hit in the middle of the river crossing. Survivors still remember the screaming horses as the ferry went down. Four hundred and fifty people were stranded on the east bank, and quickly surrounded by Russian partisans. Twelve people were shot on the spot, including the grandfather, uncle, and aunt of Johannes Derzap of Munich.

Several people, including the eminent Dr. Anton Bosch, have written about it. Peter Goldade has extensively researched the MVD arrest records of these Selzers who obviously did not go through the EWZ process. The majority were arrested in 1945 and 1946, and exiled to the east.

Johannes Derzap erected this cross at the site of the Majaki river crossing in memory of his family members who were killed.

(For more details on the history of Majaki as described by Anton Bosch, see: <http://www.russianroots.ca/images/rrstory6.pdf>)

