

Essay Contest 2016/17

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Believe in your dreams

»We become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic. Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes and different dreams.«

Using this exceptional quote by Jimmy Carter, former president of the USA, I would like to establish a connection to that specific immigrant I am going to write about in this essay. In fact, I am going to write about an outstanding man who left his horribly devastated home country just a few years after World War II, hoping that his dreams and his ambitions for a better future might come true. In that respect, one could literally say that another tessera was inserted into the beautiful Canadian mosaic of society: the Austrian entrepreneur *Joseph Kuchar*.

The reason why I have chosen this immigrant is the strong bond that connected him with my grandfather. Today, as both have already passed away, there is only my father left to tell me several amusing anecdotes about *Joe*. Starting off with these stories at this point of the essay would be an inconsiderate draw, though, as they are way more interesting when knowing the noteworthy aspects of Kuchar's life.

Joseph Kuchar was born in the Austrian monarchy in 1916. It was love that brought him to former Czechoslovakia where he met his future wife. After having raised a family, the severe economic circumstances that worsened during World War II made him decide to leave Austria and set up a new life on the other side of the Atlantic. However, it was not the USA that caught his attention, it was the rather exotic Canada that attracted him more in these days. This decision turned out to be a thorough success because Canada offered him a market niche, which was perfect to implement his economic ideas. After a short period of time, he and his wife founded Record Chemical Co. Inc. (later renamed Recochem Inc.), a

company that exported bulk chemicals. His irrepressible determination and dedication led the company to growth and made it a multinational business, selling its products to Europe, South America and Asia, which was a remarkable breakthrough for the Canadian economy.

His career may be particularly notable; yet, it was especially his character that made him an outstanding (?) Canadian immigrant. One of his most memorable qualities was his warm-heartedness. My father has told me that Joseph used to treat everyone equally, regardless of their social background. Consequently, good friends were almost accepted as family members, which came to include my grandfather, who shared one passion with Joseph: the Haflinger horse. Actually, they had not known each other before, but after my grandfather, who can somehow be regarded as the “creator” of the Haflinger horse, had received an order of approximately 50 horses from Canada, a unique friendship started to develop. This bond lasted until my grandfather’s death in 2007. Just a few years later, in 2011, Joseph Kuchar died too. Kuchar’s legacy, however, has not vanished. Today, his company *Recochem Inc.* is still active and some personal anecdotes remain.

Joe was undoubtedly a man of intense determination and endless energy. When asked about how he managed to pursue his relentless work, he was said to respond: “4 hours of sleep are enough for me!” His dedication to work was stunning: seven days a week, without any rest. But his determination also showed in other respects: my father remembers an episode when Joseph first visited my family in Austria. It was back in the late 80s, when travelling from Canada to Austria was a seemingly endless journey. Of course, at that time inventions like the navigation system were not available for private customers, so the only possibility to find the way from Munich Airport to our home village Ebbs near Kufstein was by means of maps and locals. Joseph Kuchar, however, was a man that never relied on anyone else, let alone on maps. So it was up to him to make sure which way was the fastest to get to Ebbs. Therefore, at one point he stopped the car on the service lane near Holzkirchen in Bayern and crossed the highway in order to ask several employees at the gas station opposite where Ebbs was.

These are just a few stories of an exciting life. Although Joseph travelled nearly the entire world, and also returned to Austria several times, it was *Canada* that captured his heart. When visiting my family, he always told them (he apparently used to talk in five languages

just to confuse them) about the incredible landscape of *Quebec*, about his favourite mountain *Mont Tremblant*, about the tremendous people there and many other things concerning Canada.

By and large, his Austrian character never changed, but he felt Canadian all through. For me, *this* is probably the greatest achievement of Canadian integration. For centuries, people from all over the world have immigrated to Canada, living together under the protective shield of common values. They have always known where they had come from. Yet, they have sought to achieve prosperity and peace. It cannot be denied that Canada has been built on the fundament of immigration; undoubtedly, Canada will continue to build on that fundament. To conclude this essay, I would like to frame it with the initial quote: Immigrants act as tesserae embellishing the beautiful mosaic that Canada is.

Erzählungen/Internet als Quellen