

## **The Rescue from Behind the Dovecote**

### **A Story of Courage and Humanity During World War II**

My great-grandfather was always a special man. He was a hardworking and kind-hearted person who showed compassion for every form of life he encountered on this Earth. He proved this on many occasions, but his most remarkable act took place during World War II when, with the help of his close family, he managed to shelter a German child from the Soviet authorities, saving his life.

A key factor that helped him accomplish this act was his father, who was the mayor of the village “Bătrâni” at the time. This meant that he faced fewer and less severe inspections compared to other villagers, as well as access to more resources since they were considered wealthy in comparison to the rest of the community.

The story begins when Hans, a 12-year-old boy, and his family were captured by the Soviets. However, he managed to escape and arrived at my great-grandfather's house, frightened, agitated, and unable to speak a word of Romanian. My great-grandfather took pity on him and decided to save him from certain death by hiding him in the dovecote behind the house.

The family chose the dovecote as his hiding place because it was the least likely spot for the authorities to search.

Hans remained in my family's yard for approximately three months, until the war ended, after which he managed to return to Germany, a place that had changed completely from how he remembered it.

In the following years, my family's life changed in surprising ways. Through hard work and dedication, they managed to build a new and beautiful house for my great-grandfather. He got married, moved into the new house with my great-grandmother, and together they built a garage, a farm, and a mill (a very known symbol of prosperity and resilience in Romanian culture).

During those times, when Romania was under Soviet control, Hans used to send letters to my great-grandparents.

When communist policies escalated into unjust political condemnations, more than ten years after what had happened, my great-grandparents decided to burn all the letters Hans had sent out for fear that they might be imprisoned by the communists for treason. More importantly, they feared that their two children's future would be affected due to an "unhealthy" background, which could have meant being denied access to education and many more state institutions.

Despite all their achievements, the memory of the boy hidden in the dovecote remained forever alive in their hearts. Even in the middle point of their new responsibilities and successes, they remained humane and stood by the values that defined them.

This story has been passed down from generation to generation to truly showcase the courage and kindness of my family members, from my great-grandfather to my grandfather, to my father, and I am eager to pass it on to my own descendants.