

# FINDING OUR SLOVENIAN ROOTS, FROM AMERICA TO EUROPE

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HINT: IT'S EASIER IF YOU HAVE SOME EARLY FACTS,  
BUT I FOUND WONDERFUL RELATIVES TO WORK WITH!

# GROWING UP, WE PARTICIPATED IN KSKJ AND ZVEZA EVENTS AT ST. ELIZABETH'S IN DULUTH

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1989 DAD AND I SANG IN CHISHOLM



1999 JOHN AT BARAGA  
CELEBRATION



# MY SLOVENIAN GRANDPARENTS; ANGELA STERLE MARRIES JOHN SKULL 1921, DULUTH, MN.

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AFTER MUCH WORK, WE REALIZED THIS IS A SIBLING PHOTO AT THEIR WEDDING.  
JOHN'S SIBLINGS ANNA, JOSEPH, MARY AND KRISTINA  
ANGELA WITH BROTHER JACOB AND STEPSISTER JOSEPHINE AND STEPBROTHER ANTHONY

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# THE SHORT FAMILY STORY I HEARD

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- John Skull's father, John Skull, emigrated to Pueblo 1900. He was in Pueblo for a number of years, going back and forth to Europe. He sent for his two oldest children ( my grandfather John and sister Mary). Those 3 came to Duluth and the rest of the family was sent for. In 1920 Agnes came with Anna, Joseph and Kristina. They were detained at Ellis Island until the family relationship was established and Agnes would be supported.
- I knew Angela was born in Eveleth, but raised in Europe. Not sure why she was left there.
- Angela died as a result of injuries sustained in a car accident in 1941. My dad was just 16.
- John married Margaret, a widow who soon died of illness. He then married Olivia.
- John died 1958.
- Since Skull family was larger and more present, I was more familiar with them.

THE OLDEST PHOTO WE HAD OF ANGELA, TAKEN 1919 IN LJUBLJANA.  
AND THE NOTICE IN ZARJA, NOV. 1941 OF HER DEATH.



## STERLE HISTORY? WHAT I HAD TO WORK WITH:

Grandma M. Sterle

Angela

Jacob  
M. Mary

Josephine Iron Range  
~~Am. Magdalen~~ Max?  
- Brightus  
- single

Stale died, Grandma married Frank Blatnik 1 widowed

Abel 909 Anthony Blatnik  
M. Magdalen - Tony's 1st of Buzz's  
Anthony "Buzzy" Iron Range

~~Thomas~~  
Magdalen died. Anthony M. Thomas  
Thomas

John came from  
Milwaukee  
ca 1975  
for USA

# OFFICIAL RECORDS

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- Angela – No state record of her birth. Found marriage and death records. Mother's maiden name not listed. No community in Europe. I eventually found her baptism in Eveleth.
- Angela's parents – no state record of father Jacob's death. Since mother Johanna remarried, we have her records as Blatnik, no community in Europe.
- John- immigration, death records, very few details. Birth Struge, but all other records state Ljubljana.
- I looked off and on for a several years to solve details.

# STERLE - A PIVOTAL MESSAGE RECEIVED

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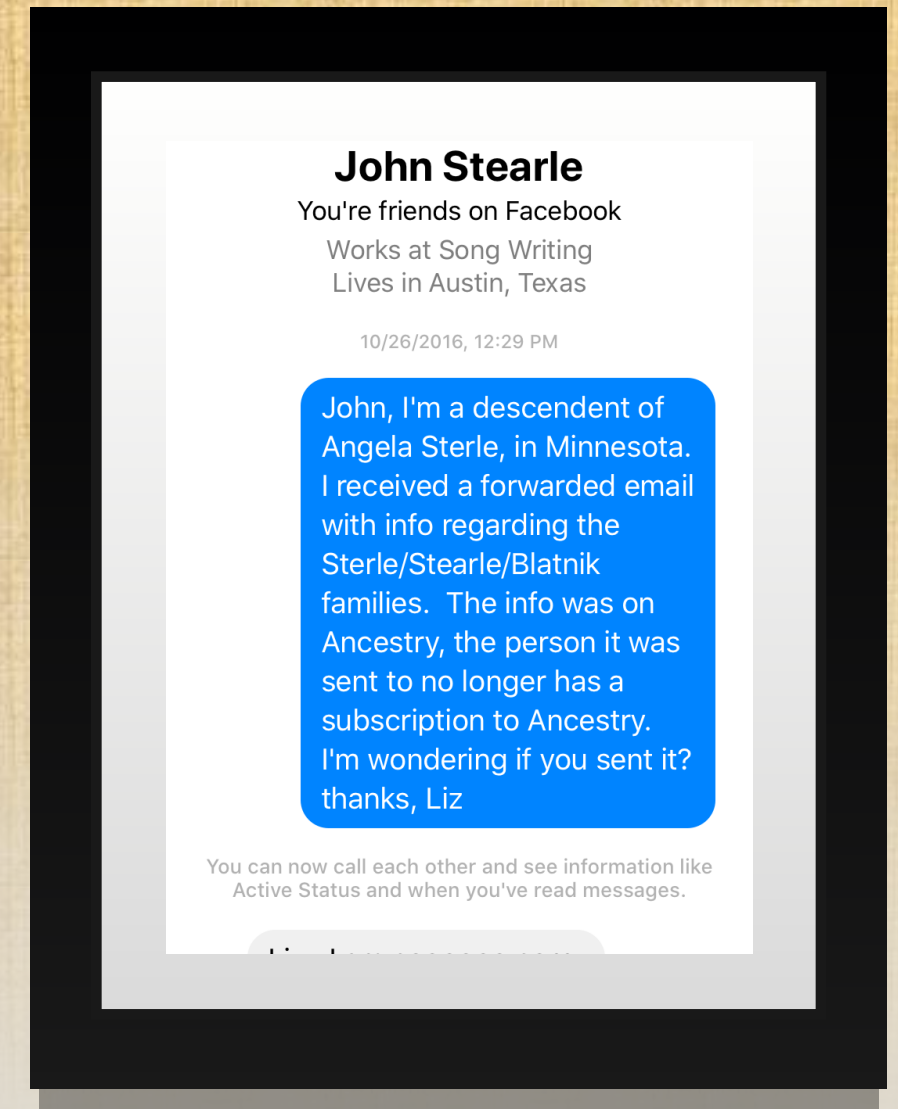
Hello, I am writing again because I think I figured out a timeline you would be interested in. I was mistaken in an earlier message when I thought Angela Sterle was the sister of my great-grandfather. She is actually the sister of my grandfather. Since we are related, I look forward to corresponding and sharing information with you. Thanks, John Stearle

5/12/96 - Jacob (Jakob) Stearle (Sterle) arrives in New York, bound for Eveleth, MN. 1897 - Johanna (Marjana) Mesojedec comes to Eveleth, MN. 1898 - Johanna (Marjana) Mesojedec marries Jacob Strle (Sterle/Sterla/Stearle) – not sure where. 7/24/99 - Birth of Daughter Angeline (AKA Angela) in Eveleth, Minnesota 1900 - Johanna (Marjana) Mesojedec returns to Slovenia, probably with daughter Angeline. 1901 - Jacob Stearle returns to Slovenia. 4/24/01 - Birth of Son Jacob Stearle, maybe in Bruhanje Vas, Slovenia 10/16/01 - Jacob (Jacob) Stearle (Sterla) returns to New York from Liabach, Slovenia, bound for Eveleth, MN. Indication on document that he was in America from 1895 to 1901.

# STERLE - USING INFO FROM HIS MESSAGE, I WAS ABLE TO FIND JOHN ON FACEBOOK

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Thus started a 4 year genealogy collaboration. John does a lot of work on Ancestry and worked with DNA results from several relatives. I supplied names I had heard of. We were able to put the pieces of the Sterle lives together and meet many relatives.



# PHOTOS FROM JOHN STEARLE

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WEDDING OF JACOB STERLE AND JOHANNA  
(IVANKA)MESOJEDEC, EVELETH, 1898



FUNERAL OF JACOB STERLE, JOHANNA IS HOLDING THEIR SON  
JACOB BEHIND COFFIN. ANGELA IS LIVING IN EUROPE WITH  
HER GRANDPARENTS. JACOB WAS BORN IN EVELETH.



# FROM JOHN STEARLE

ANGELA AT 6, WITH HER STERLE GRANDPARENTS AND UNKNOWN WOMAN.  
THE EARLIEST PHOTO WE HAVE OF ANGELA

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WITH THE SKETCHY FAMILY HISTORY, WE NEEDED THE MINNESOTA HISTORY CENTER IN ST. PAUL! JOHN WOULD EMAIL ME A LIST OF DOCUMENTS HE WANTED EVERY WEEK.

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# I WOULD FIND THE DOCUMENTS, PRINT, SCAN THEN EMAIL. WE GOT A LOT OF WORK ACCOMPLISHED!

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STACKS OF FILES; DEATH CERTIFICATES,  
NEWSPAPERS, IMMIGRATION RECORDS



HUBBS MICROFILM ROOM



# WITH MUCH HELP FROM THE FOLKS IN CHISHOLM , I FOUND THE ELUSIVE JACOB

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No state record of his death. But I knew his widow Johanna remarried 1903 to Frank Blatnik. His funeral entry in the church record gave a location of his birth, which had been unknown.

As one historian said, they can run, but they can't hide forever!

Tukaj pocivo



# I HAVE MET SOME WONDERFUL PEOPLE ALONG THE WAY. HINT: ALWAYS BRING POTICA!

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PAT JOHNSON AND HER DAUGHTER SUE,  
DESCENDENTS OF JOHANNA'S SISTER JOSEPHINE.  
PAT REMEMBERS THE 1941 CAR ACCIDENT.



PHYLLIS ANNONI AND HER NEPHEW CRAIG,  
DESCENDENTS OF JACOB'S BROTHER ANTON  
STERLE



JULY 2018 I FINALLY  
MET JOHN AND WE  
HELD A FAMILY  
REUNION IN DULUTH

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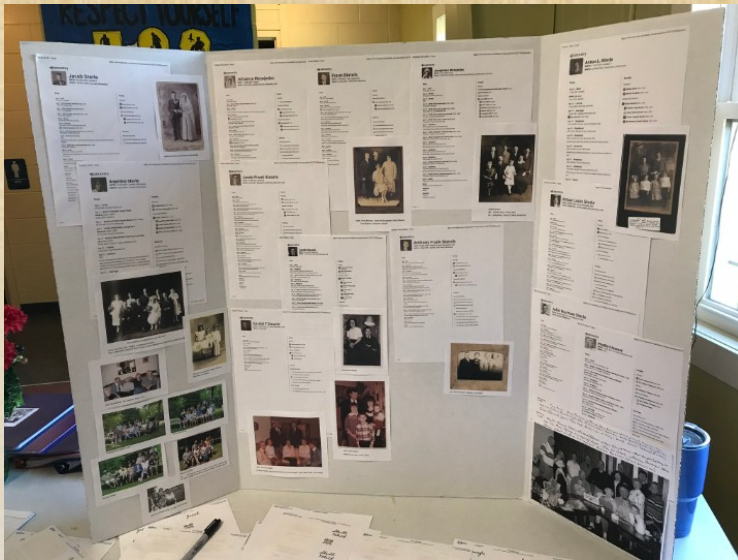
It was sort of a “get to know you”  
since many hadn’t met before!



# WE HAD A GREAT TURNOUT- A MIX OF SKULLS AND STERLES!

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I ARRANGED THE PICTURE  
BOARD BY FAMILY GROUPS



ALL ATTENDEES, SAVE A COUPLE  
OF PHOTOGRAPHERS



# WE WERE ABLE TO SKYPE WITH STERLES IN SLOVENIA

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# SKULL WEDDINGS

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ANA MARRIES JOE ANTONOVICH,  
DULUTH 1922



JOSEF MARRIES JOHANNA  
ZUPANCIC, DULUTH 1923



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KRISTINA SKULL MARRIES MATT  
VEKICH, DULUTH 1923



KRISTINA AND HER SON JOHN



# SKULL SLOVENIAN DOCUMENTS- PRECIOUS DETAILS OF DATES AND LOCATION –FROM JOHN VEKICH

Pokrajina Slovenija  
Provincia Sloveniae

Škofija ljubljanska  
Diocesis Labacensis


Štev. 288  
Num.

**Poročni list - Testimonium copulationis**

Iz poročne knjige župnije (duhovnije) Velike Lašče  
Extractus e libro copulationum parochiae

Zvezek 9 stran 60 štev. 16  
Tomus pagina numerus

Leto, mesec, dan Annus, mensis, dies	poroke copulationis	<u>1891 - 19. oktober</u>
Kraj — Locus		<u>Velike Lašče</u>
Ženin — Sponsus:		
Krstno in rodbinsko ime, bivališče, stan, starost, samec, vdovec, vera Nomen, cognomen, domicilium, conditio, aetas, religio sponsi	<u>Janez Škulj 1/2 zemljarka sin. Grič 6</u> <u>25 let samec r.k.</u>	
Krstno in rodbinsko ime, stan, vera Nomen, cognomen, conditio, religio	očeta patris	<u>Janez Škulj 1/2 zemljarka</u>
	matere matris	<u>Marija Hočevar</u>



Kraljevina Jugoslavija.  
Regnum Jugoslaviae.

Ljubljanska škofija  
Diocesis Labacensis


Štev. 392  
Num.

**Rojstni in krstni list. — Testimonium nativitatis et baptismi**

Iz rojstne in krstne knjige duhovnije v splošni bolnici v Ljubljani:  
Extractus e libro natorum et baptizatorum parochiae:

Zvezek 10 stran 47 štev. 157  
Tomus pagina numerus

Leto, mesec in dan Annus, mensis, dies	rojstna nativitatis	<u>24. julij 1907.</u>
	krsta baptismi	<u>+</u>
Kraj rojstva Locus nativitatis	<u>Ljubljana, porodnišnica.</u>	
Ime otrokovo Nomen infantis	<u>Kristina</u>	
Zakonski, nezakonski Legitimus, illegitimus	<u>zakon. hči</u>	
Krstno in rodbinsko ime, stan, bivališče in vera Nomen, cognomen, conditio, religio	očeta patris	<u>Jovan Škulj</u> <u>porodnik, Lipa, 6</u>
	matere matris	<u>Veža Škulj</u>
Krstno in rodbinsko ime, stan botrov Patrin	<u>Jožefa Krstija, babica</u>	
Krstitelj Baptizans	<u>Gregor Elis</u>	



## IT'S TIME TO PLAN OUR ADVENTURE!

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John Stearle and his girlfriend Deborah had a wedding in Hungary, my son and I wanted to spend some time in Italy as well as Slovenia. We met in Ljubljana for 6 days. I found a large apartment near the Dragon Bridge and we were off!



OUR FIRST EVENING WE MET BOŠTJAN AT KLOBASARNA.  
HE IS COMBINATION TOUR GUIDE, INTERPRETER AND PAPARAZZI!

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WEDNESDAY WE WALKED LJUBLJANA, NATIONAL GALLERY, PARLIAMENT, GRAD, ETC.

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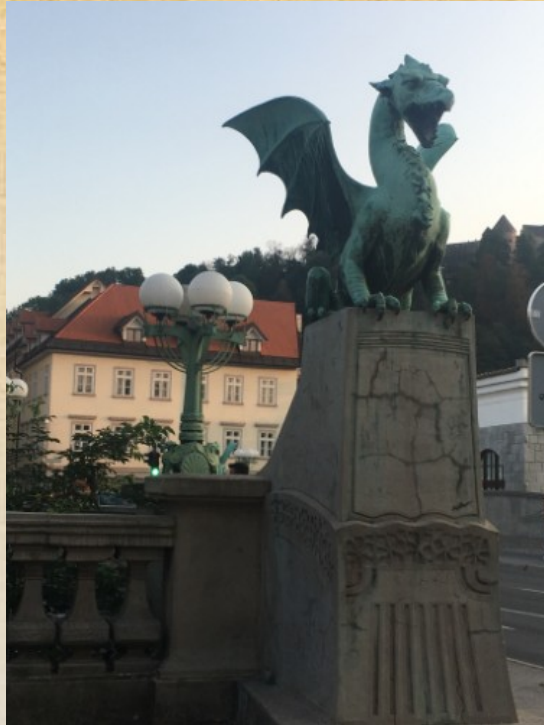
# JULIA, AND CATHEDRAL OF ST. NICHOLAS

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# TYPICAL PHOTOS OF DRAGON BRIDGE AND GRAD

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THAT EVENING WE MET GABRIELA AND BENJAMIN AND FAMILY AT THEIR HOME. ONE OF THE MOST POIGNANT MOMENTS OF THE TRIP- SHE ASKED WHY THE LETTERS STOPPED COMING IN WW2.

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# JOHN STEARLE AND DEBORAH JOINED US



# IF IT'S THURSDAY, IT MUST BE PIRAN AND OTHER EASTERN POINTS OF INTEREST

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# COFFEE, GELATO AND BEER, WITH GREAT COMPANY

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# ON TO POSTONJA AND LIPICA

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WE MADE IT BACK IN TIME TO ATTEND A KRILA CONCERT IN LJUBLJANA, FEATURING OUR FAVORITE PIANIST!



# IF IT'S FRIDAY, IT MUST BE BLED, AND POINTS NORTH!

YOU SNOOZE, YOU LOSE!

OUR PHOTOBOMBER FROM FRANCE!

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# BREZJE, MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

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# VRBA, POP. 196, BIRTHPLACE OF PREŠEREN IN 1800



# THE CRADLE IS ORIGINAL

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FROM VRBA, TO LESCE, AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY. YUM

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JESERKO, WHAT A SURPRISE! THE GUYS FOUND THIS PRIEST, FR. BRANKO ZADNIK, A SKULL RELATIVE, AND GETTING TO MEET HIM WAS SUCH A WONDERFUL BLESSING.

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# BRANKO'S PARISH, ST. OSWALD, AND THIS IS THE CHURCH KEY!

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THE WALLS OF THE RECTORY ARE ABOUT 36 INCHES THICK!

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# SATURDAY - A LITTLE BIT OF TOURING, A LOT OF FAMILY TIME!

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The day that stole our hearts

# RAŠICA, HOME OF PRIMOŽ TRUBAR, PROTESTANT REFORMER WHO WROTE IN SLOVENE LANGUAGE.

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# TURJAK CASTLE

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# NOW FOR THE TIMES THAT PUT MY HAND ON MY HEART

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BEING WELCOMED BY MANY FAMILY MEMBERS, WALKING IN  
THE HOMES OUR FOREBEARS WALKED IN. PRICELESS!

# VELIKE LASCE, CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY WHERE MY SKULJ GREAT GRANDPARENTS WERE MARRIED

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# KAPLANOVO, HOME OF THE SKULJ FAMILY

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KAPLANOVO 6, WAS RENAMED FROM GRIC 6. IT SEEMS THERE WERE SKULJ AT GRIC 7  
AS WELL

# KAPLANOVO 6, BIRTHPLACE OF MY GREAT GRANDFATHER JANEZ SKULJ

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THE FAMILY HOME



TOPLAR, OR DOUBLE KOZOLEC IS DOCUMENTED AS OLDEST KOZOLEC IN SLOVENIA. IT WAS ADDED ON TO IN 1772



ZADNIK FAMILY; MARIJA, TONY AND WIFE MARICA, AND THEIR DAUGHTER HANA. TONY, MARIJA AND FR. BRANKO ARE SIBLINGS.

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# MARIJA SERVING UP AN “OVER THE TOP” LUNCH, WITH NOODLE SOUP AS A STARTER

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# THE MILL WORKS, CONFIRMING THE STORIES

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# SHARING FAMILY HISTORY

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# ON TO GRADEŽ, HOME OF THE STERLE FAMILY

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Gradež stole my heart

Gradež is one of the oldest villages in Škocjan hills as well as in the municipality of Velike Lašče. The village was established below an ancient fort.

In the Middle Ages the documents about Turjak mention the mansion of Grades (1352, 1372).

The oldest stone houses we see in Gradež today were built in the second half of the 18th century.

A composer, Marij Kogoj (1892-1956), created an important part of his opus in Gradež.

You are welcome to visit some of the other Gradež points of interest:

- a fruit drying house from 1938
- a collection of old agricultural tools exhibited under a hay-rack
- a black kitchen from the beginning of the 19th century
- an old inn cellar from the 18th century
- a chapel from 1882 and the new one built in 1935
- old granaries, wells and hay-racks

Please try some of our local specialities.

Take a walk around Primož Trubar's home parish, along Kogoj's Route, and along the Turjak Tourist Route.

The photo below shows the central part of the village in the middle of the 20th century. "Kogoj's house" is at the back and the village pond, under the trees, is at the front)

# GRADEŽ STOLE MY HEART

7 IS THE HOME OUR ANGELA WAS RAISED IN

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# GRADEŽ 7, HOME TO VIDA AND JOŽE.



# ON TO GRADEŽ 25, HOME OF ANDREJ AND MAJDO JAKOB, WHO HOSTED A PARTY!

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WHAT A LOVELY WELCOMING FAMILY WE HAVE!

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# A BOBBIN LACE PROJECT, AND GIRLS LADEN WITH GIFTS

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# MUSIC, FOOD AND DANCING!

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# ANDREJ MANAGES A DRIED FRUIT HOUSE

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GIFTS: FROM THE STERLES, HANDMADE LACE BY BETI, AND  
FROM THE SKULJ FAMILY, THE BOOK THE TOPLAR IS IN

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# SUNDAY, AND ON TO VELIKE PLANINA!







# A WARMING LUNCH AT GOSTILNA ROB



BACK TO LJUBLJANA AND TO SAY  
NA SVIDENJE TO SLOVENIA.  
WE'LL BE BACK!

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OUR TRIP TO SLOVENIA HAD BOOKENDS IN ITALY; ROME BEFORE AND VENICE AFTER





# HERE'S A LITTLE LAGNIAPPE FOR YOU

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John and I have socks from Slovenia, potica socks and klobase socks!

<https://slocks.net/collections/all>



WE WERE SO FORTUNATE – SO MANY THINGS CAME TOGETHER TO MAKE THIS TRIP POSSIBLE. THE FAMILIES WERE SO HOSPITABLE AND WE MADE LIFELONG CONNECTIONS. WE WERE ABLE TO SEE THINGS IN ITALY, AND TRAVEL BEFORE CORONAVIRUS!

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NEXT TRIP, HOPEFULLY AUGUST 2021. THE STERLES HOLD FAMILIJADA, A REUNION ON THEIR GRANDMOTHER'S NAME DAY. WE'RE HOPING TO GO!

HVALA, LIZ AND JOHN TCS OCTOBER 2020