

## Reflections on Christoph and Ingeborg Ledermann

By Stephanie Lorenz-Russev

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First, thank you for honoring Inge and Chris Ledermann's love of the natural areas of Rhode Island, and also for inviting me to take part in the celebration. I am a cousin of Chris Ledermann and his last relative.

He was born on the 25<sup>th</sup> of September, 1909, in Berlin. He died in New York City on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2006, at the age of 96 -- a long life which was influenced by important historical events, principally the first and second world wars. In World War I Chris lost his father. He was five years old, and it was an awful shock for the little boy. His grandfather, who was my great grandfather, helped Chris and the family. He was a forester in Rauschmülle, which means "roaring mill." This place was located at the river Pleiske in the woods not far from Frankfurt on Oder. At that time it was part of Germany; today it is in Poland. Chris and my mother visited their grandfather there at holiday times. The whole family was fond of Rauschmülle, although life was very simple there. The paper mill gave electricity for the mill and the house, but at night the family had to use petrol lamps. The children gathered mushrooms and blueberries. Chris liked to fish, and sometimes he caught eels with his hands. I think that his love of nature was born in Rauschmülle.

He came to the United States in the 1950's to work for the West German Chamber of Commerce, from which he retired in the late 1970s. In 1989 after the Berlin Wall fell, he and Inge and my mother and I visited Rauschmülle. The mill had been destroyed and also the forester's house. We could just recognize where the mill stood, but it was completely gone. To my surprise, Chris and my mother were not sad. Both were content that, as they said, "Nature got back what human beings had once taken away."