

Hidden Hitler book boasts rare photos

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By STEVE PECAR

If a term could be applied to William Schwarz's latest dilemma, it would have to "a pleasant problem."

Schwarz, a 17-year resident of Mississauga, owns a book, which may be the only one of its kind in the world. The trouble is very few people know that his book even exists.

"I'm the only person in the world to have a book like this, I'm sure of it," claims the 52-year-old Schwarz. "But no one would ever think of asking about it."

The book in question, loosely translated into English, is entitled *As Austria Was Freed* and was produced in Schwarz's homeland of Austria in 1939.

Basically a history/biography the book traces the life of Hitler up to the point where Austria was "freed" by the Germans. What makes it unique is that to go along with the story, picture-cards had to be collected and pasted into the book to make it complete. As well, the pictures include many rare photographs of Hitler and his family.

"They gave the pictures away in cigarette packages and me and my friends challenged each other to collect them," says Schwarz. "I was only 8 at the time and didn't know any better. I didn't know what Hitler was all about. It was just like how kids today collect hockey cards."

"My father hated Hitler and he would beat me when he found I was still collecting the cards. Looking back, I can understand why, but back then I would do anything for the cards; plow fields, trade food, anything," he said.

However rare the cards were, Schwarz eventually collected the entire 312 to complete the book, but it wasn't easy — he had to trade his motorcycle for the final card.

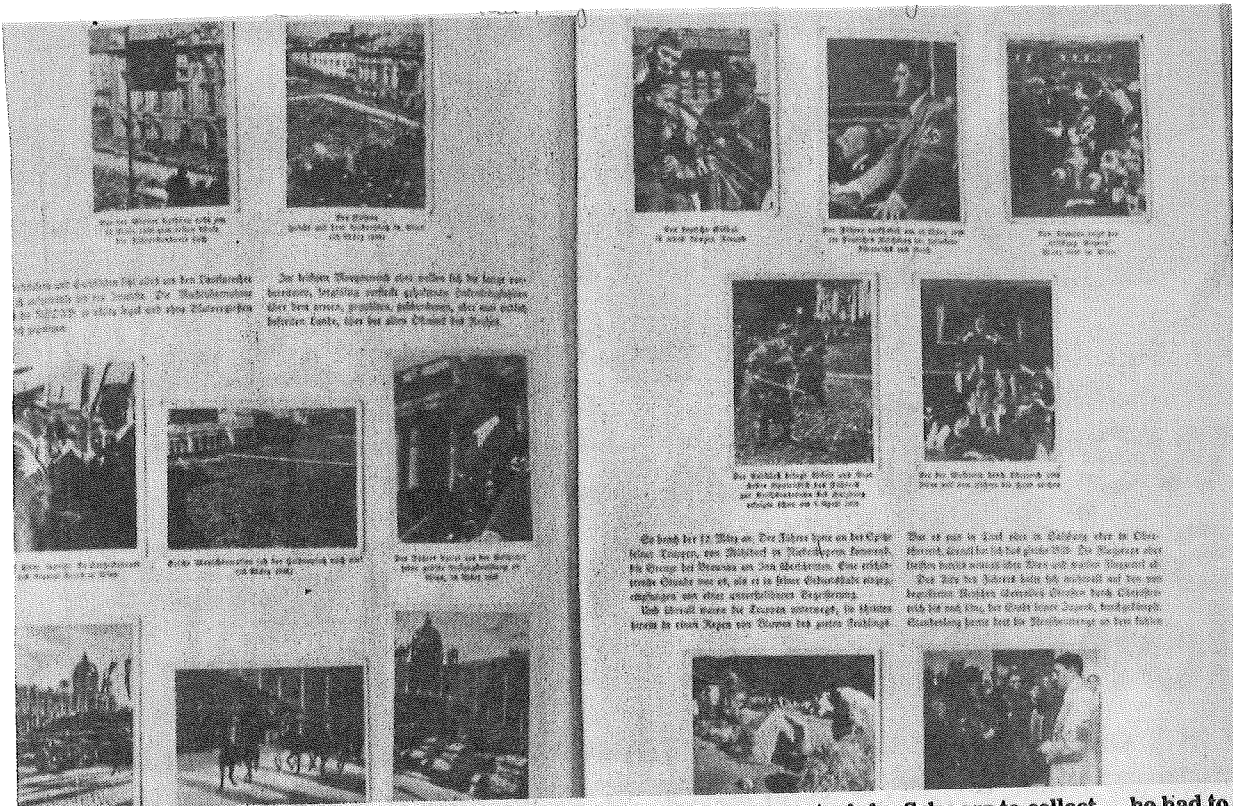
What convinces Schwarz even more that his book is the only complete one, if not the only one in existence, is that when the war was over, most Nazi material was destroyed because, as he puts it, "We didn't know which of the Allies were going to come in. If it was the Russians and they found German literature you would be in big trouble."

Schwarz took the risk and buried the book in his yard where it remained hidden for a few years.

After serving in the American Army, Schwarz left Europe for Canada but made his brother promise that the book would be taken care of.

For 30 years Schwarz left the book in his brother's care.

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As Austria Was Freed includes 312 rare picture-cards which was no easy task for Schwarz to collect — he had to trade his motorcycle for the final card to make the book complete. (Staff photo by Rob Beintema)



William Schwarz displays the book As Austria Was Freed, a history/biography that traces the early life of Hitler. Schwarz claims the book is the only one of its kind in the world. (Staff photo by Rob Beintema)