



Gen Dobry!

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*** WELCOME! ***

to the latest issue of *Gen Dobry!*, the e-zine of PolishRoots®. If you missed previous issues, you can find them here:

<<http://polishroots.org/GenDobry/tabid/60/Default.aspx>>

*** THE POLISH PEASANT ***

by Charles Phillips

Editor—Oliver W. Clemons, Jr. very kindly sent me this article. It originally appeared in the *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, 1923, and he thought our readers might find it enjoyable. It is a bit of a shock to read it and realize how different attitudes were less than a century ago, and also how much American English has changed! But the view it gives of the Polish peasant, while somewhat romanticized, is consistent in many ways with other accounts, such as that of the Polish peasant Jan Słomka. The text appears here as in the original, with no changes in grammar or punctuation. In a couple of instances, however, I provide the Polish version of place names that may be hard to recognize in their Americanized forms.

I

One of the most interesting figures in the world today is the European peasant—that man of the soil, who, by the fortunes of the world war, has in half a dozen countries suddenly found himself rising to the stature of a living factor in the making of history. And of all the peasants of Europe, Russian, Roumanian, Czech, Hungarian, Serbian, or what not, perhaps the most interesting is the peasant of Poland, because of the vital part he plays in the fortunes of the one country destined above all its neighbors, by reason of its peculiar geographical situation, to preserve the future peace of Europe. Vastly in a majority in the Polish population, and holding a dominating position in the Polish congress, the peasant of Poland is a man well worth our getting acquainted with.

But he is interesting from more than merely the political viewpoint. Simply as a human being, he is, in fact, one of the most picturesque figures in the world today. “Good stock,” the salt of the earth, with qualities like iron, he lives a rugged and wholesome life in his little *wioska* or village, a life which, despite the changes of time, still bears many marks of an ancient communal system, holding his councils, electing his *soltys* and *starostas*, and realizing in his own small circle a rudimentary democracy such as his ancestors knew further back than history goes. He is a traditionalist to the marrow, the most conservative creature on earth, clinging to age-old customs and habits with the greatest tenacity; not very progressive, it is true; hard and rather inflexible, if not intractable, in the modern movement of affairs, but sure, solid and dependable. As for his conservatism, it shows at every angle of his daily life. In no corner of the world, for example, have the inroads of fashion in dress made less headway than on the Polish countryside among the Polish peasants. The spinning-wheel and the loom still hold their place of honor in the cottage. Homespun is still the garb of solid respectability. Men’s coats and women’s skirts are cut as were those of their great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers for generations back. When they come into the cities they still wear unabashed the brightest and best of this picturesque garb, though, alas, I must confess that in the case of the women I have seen its fine primitive beauty spoiled more than once by staggering experiments with French high heels!

The peasant's cottage is small, either of frame, logs or brick, white-washed often, and usually with a thatched roof which is the owner's special pride. He may have a telephone or an electric light wire strung to his gable, but the thatch seems to stay. If, however, the roof be shingled, its long sloping surfaces are not left to fate unadorned, but are often painted with a design of conventional squares and angles, red or blue, which give an effect of neat gaiety to what might otherwise be a drab spot on the landscape. High up alongside the door, or on the roof, or at the end of the cottage, under the gable, one will almost invariably see a cross either painted or made with the bricks set out in the desired cruciform lines. Thus the Polish peasant puts a blessing on his little home, even while he is building it, embedding that blessing into the actual structure, as it were; and at the same time he proclaims to all who pass that his is the house of a Christian. These are the definite intents of this typical Polish decoration.

Such is the cottage of the plains, in the dooryard of which will be often seen in the early autumn months neat piles of peat fresh cut from the neighboring marshes and seasoning for winter use. In the mountain districts of the Tatry quite a distinct building pattern, entirely of wood, is found, now known among architects as the Zakopane style. The steep roofs of the Tatry cottage tell the story of heavy snows, while its wide eaves and galleries and colonnades are made for the torrential rains and the blazing sunlight of mountain regions. Whole villages are found in the Tatry hills built in this picturesque and airy fashion.

The garden around the Polish peasant's cottage, plainsman or mountaineer, is bright with flowers. Flower-boxes often fill the windows. All the old friends we know at home bloom there in profusion, lilacs, the sweet-smelling pink, the tall, lusty hollyhock, pansies, asters, roses galore, and invariably the sunflower, the seeds of which are in some districts a staple delicacy.

When you enter the cottage of a Polish peasant you will encounter good manners that may astonish you. Your host, in the first place, will be sure to greet you with a hearty "May Jesus Christ be praised!" It is the greeting of the Polish countryman for a thousand years; to which you must answer, "For ever and for ever." This custom may surprise you at first; but if by chance you should surprise him if you are an old acquaintance, let us say, arriving unexpectedly – you will hear another exclamation, this time straight out of the Book: "And the Word became!" It is not irreverence but sincerity and honest piety that speaks thus. As for the manners, everyone I know who has come in contact with the Polish peasant in his home has been impressed by the unconscious grace of his modest etiquette. I was continually opening my eyes at revelations of gentle breeding in the most unexpected places. The manners of the children, neither bashful nor forward, were a constant source of delight to us.

The interior of the cottage, not well lighted, would be dark were it not for the white-washed walls. There is always one great central feature, the oven. This is built into the house, or rather the house is built around it; a huge permanent affair, which not only bakes the family bread and cooks the family meals, but serves also as the single heating apparatus of the home, beds even

being made, in the coldest season, on its broad stone flanks. After the oven the next thing that catches the visitor's eye is the "Holy Corner" – I know no other term to use – in which hangs a crucifix or a picture of the Blessed Virgin, the Madonna of Chenstohova [i.e., Częstochowa]. This is the family shrine, before which the rosary or other family prayers are recited. Often a miniature sanctuary lamp burns on the shelf under the crucifix or image; there are blessed wax candles on either side; many festoons of colored tissue paper cut into the most delicate lacelike patterns; and fresh flowers, if it be the season, breathing the tribute of the fields to the peasant's holy of holies. Here also, or perhaps upon one of the rafters, if not over the door where you have entered, you will see the little duster of grain and flowers which has been blessed in the village church on Lady Day, and which is treasured the year around along with a spray of evergreen or palm given out at Mass on Palm Sunday.

If there is a baby in the house – and there always is a baby in the peasant's house – you may see a cradle that you won't forget. A supple elm pole bends down from the rafters, with a strap or a heavy cord on the end of it. The cradle is a basket tied to the cord. With what a gentle motion, rise and fall, it hushes the little one! It is as if a soft wind in the trees were rocking him.

II

The land, the countryside of Poland, is so intimately woven into the life and language of the people that even the names of months of the year are taken directly from the fields. Thus April, "Kwiecien," is "the flowering time"; Lipca, July, is "the month of the blooming linden"; August, "Sierpien," is "the sickle"; September, "Wrzesien," "the heather"; November, "Listopad," "the falling leaves"; while "Pazdziernik," October, is "the month of the flax," the word signifying the hull of fibre of the flax straw. If you happen into a peasant village at this season you will see a curious and a very ancient process going on, as the flax is threshed and drawn and worked into its eventual linen fabric. "Bees" are held, peasant women going from house to house to help their neighbors, making much merriment and enjoying plenty of gossip and singing and dancing on the way.

The flax is hauled in from the field, either in the low narrow wicker-work carts, which Americans in Poland have christened "puppy baskets," or else by hand, usually by the women, to whom the entire ritual of the flax seems to more or less belong, and who take special pride in the ease and grace with which they can walk up the road with huge bundles poised on their heads, or with broad wooden yokes across their shoulders, a bundle or pail swinging from each end of the stick. The straw is first soaked, either in the village stream or in a big primitive vat hewn from the trunk of a tree; pounded and worked by a great pestle into the proper degree of softness and pliability; then drawn and redrawn with a large wooden comb until it becomes fibrous and stringy.

One often sees long strands of this fibre draped on the fences, where it is bung out to dry before it goes to the spinning wheel and the loom, to be woven into great bolts, which later must be carefully washed and spread on the grass to bleach. Seventy-five per cent. of the garb worn by the Polish peasants is homespun.

Flax and the homespun linen of the countryside play an intimate part in the life of the Polish peasant. His days are woven into its fabric, from birth to death, from his swaddling clothes to his funeral sheet; from the time that he runs knee deep through its blue flowery fields till he is wrapped in his shroud, not to speak of the good old fashioned uses to which his wife puts it, making oil from its seed and poultices for his back. It enters into the Polish folk-lore, too, one of the peasants' favorite legends being the story of the coming to Poland of the first flax, the "treasure from Heaven." According to this legend the flax was planted in the beginning by the Madonna of Chenstohova to befriend a motherless peasant girl who was in distress over her parents' illness and the ruin of their crops. "Worry no more, my daughter," said the Queen. "I shall send you a treasure from Heaven. Tomorrow, when the sun rises you shall find new flowers in your garden, smiling up at you with eyes blue as the sky. Pluck them and they shall serve you well."

So it befell, as the legend goes; and the bewildered girl obeyed, though she did not know what to do with the flax after it was plucked. But the Madonna came in the night, attended by troops of angels, who set up a workshop in the poor cottage, and taught the child how to work the flax and spin and weave it. "And when morning came Hela held in her hands the first piece of linen in all Poland. And she made a shirt of it for her father, and at once he was cured. And from that day there has been linen in Polska, and that is why the flax is a holy flower. How could it be else? Was not the Lord Christ Himself wrapped in it both at His birth and at His burial?"

Reymont, the most famous of living Polish novelists, whose analysis of Polish character is so keen that the German authorities, during their occupation of the country, ordered his writings read by all the Prussian military officials, writes at his best when he deals with the Polish peasant. There is one page in his novel, "The Comedienne," which sums up in a few sentences the whole life of the peasant. "Imagine for a moment the fields," he writes, "green in springtime, golden in summer, russet-grey and mournful in winter. Now behold the peasant as he is, from his birth until his death—the average normal peasant!" And he goes on:

"The peasant boy is like a wild, unbridled colt, like the irresistible urge of the spring. In the prime of his manhood he is like the summer, a physical potentate, hard as the earth, baked by the July sun, grey as his fallows and pastures, slow as the ripening of the grain. Autumn corresponds entirely to the old age of the peasant—that desperate, ugly old age, with its bleared eyes and earthly complexion, like the ground beneath the plough. It lacks strength, and goes about in tattered garments like the earth that has been reft of the bulk of its fruit, with only a few dried and yellow stalks sticking out here and there in the potato fields; the peasant is already slowly returning to the earth whence he sprung, the earth which itself becomes dumb and silent after the harvest and lies there in the pale autumn sunlight, quiet, passive and drowsy ... Afterward comes winter; the peasant in his white coffin, in his new boots and dean shirt, lies down to rest in that earth which has, like him, arrayed itself in a white shroud of mist and has fallen to sleep—that earth whose life he was a part of, which he unconsciously loved, and together with which he dies, as cold and hard as those ice-covered furrows that nourished him."

III

I never shall forget the first time I visited the Polish village of Lowicz [Łowicz]. It was Sunday, and when we arrived Mass was being celebrated in the old Abbey Church. The place was packed, with the congregation overflowing at all the doors. A young peasant mother, in brown and orange stripes, knelt by the main entrance with her little three-year-old girl, the child dressed in an exact duplicate of her own gay garb, even to a wee kerchief folded on her baby breast. But oh, how sleepy and noddy she was in her warm Sunday gown! ... One or two young fellows, in top boots and long, black much-befrogged and braided coats, loitered by the iron gate. They carried their flat beribboned hats in their hands, and knelt when the Consecration bell rang.

Within, in the dim light of the large church, we could see nothing but a great irregular floor of color, a mass of kneeling people clad in such rainbow hues, such kerchiefs and cloaks and shawls and skirts as I had never seen before, not even in the Warsaw ballet. And then a hymn began; and it grew and grew till the whole church echoed with it, and the kneeling mother by the door and the loiterers by the gate joined in. The little one, her eyes still dewy with sleep, awoke, but she stayed very still. The hymn went on, sad, minor-chorded and chant-like and very long ...

The scene brought back memories of Chenstohova, that chief of all the shrines of Poland, where as many as eighty thousand pilgrims have gathered at one time to kneel and pray for their country. It is an historic spot, the scene of the famous defense of the monks of Yasna Gora [Jasna Góra] against a Swedish invasion in the seventeenth century, and also the shrine of the celebrated “Black Madonna,” an ancient painting on wood, so called because of the discoloration with which age has darkened it. According to tradition, this picture was painted by St. Luke the Apostle. It is deeply venerated by all Poles. I have seen thousands of peasant pilgrims kneeling before it, their packs on their backs, their bright garb dusty with travel over many miles on foot. I have heard thousands singing at the altar of Chenstohova, their faces and their voices lifted in rapture as the curtain was slowly raised from the sacred picture, while the organ pealed, and bugles high in the galleries above the shrine blew a thrilling aria of praise.

When the hymn was finished at Lowich that Sunday morning and the congregation began to pour out of the church, the sadness of the peasants’ chant was quickly forgotten in the gay picture they made. Such a massing and movement of color it is impossible to describe. I had seen touches of it before at the Diet in Warsaw, or when an occasional peasant appeared in the city streets, or a little group crossed the open fields near the roads where we happened to travel. But here there were hundreds of them, crowding through the big churchyard gates, streaming into the wide street and the square beyond, all clad in their famous rainbow wool, a great animated blur of color, rich and bright and gay, like an illuminated page from a story-book come suddenly to life.

The men’s trousers, tucked into high boots, and the women’s skirts, all were of the famous Lowich wool, broad striped, dyed much in canary yellow and orange, alternating with blacks and

browns, violet and amaranth, rich chocolate hues, deep purples, green and rose and cram color. But yellow seemed to prevail, a yellow so radiant and luminous that I can liken it to nothing so much as to the hue of the California poppy.

The men's vests were very gay, but their coats were more sober, black, long, and much befrogged and trimmed with braid. The women's fancy aprons and their cloaks, very full and gathered at the neck, were of a piece with their skirts; and their skirts were so ample, one might think they were wearing hoops. Most of them wore highlaced boots, the laces of a color to match the dress; a few wore tan top boots, cut like a cavalryman's. Many carried their cloaks on their arms, displaying linen bodices literally crusted with rich colored embroidery. Around their necks endless chains of coral or amber beads; on their heads kerchiefs, tied close if they were matrons, worn loose if they were unmarried, with long braids reaching below their waists. When a Polish peasant girl marries, she cuts her hair and binds her brow with a tight kerchief of wifehood. But she dresses none the less prettily whether she shows her braids or not. And she clings to this gaiety of raiment even into old age; she walks all her days in its rainbow hues. We saw scores of tots, some blue eyed and flaxen hair, some dark as gypsies, like dolls out of the Warsaw shops, clinging to their mothers or their grannies' skirts. The grannies, too, though wrinkled and grey, were dressed in the gayest of Sunday "rainbows."

The hand of nature weaves a bright thread through the whole fabric of the Polish peasant's life. Flowers especially play an intimate part in his history –at his christening, at his betrothal, at his wedding. A christening in Poland is a joyous affair, while to witness a Polish wedding is a privilege not to be forgotten. If it be summer, bride and groom are wreathed with flowers. On the eve of betrothal her bridesmaids have crowned the bride-to-be with rosemary, barberry blossoms, rue and the green leaves of the periwinkle; but on the wedding day her crown is a much gayer one, of daisies, rosebuds, whatever flowers the season affords, built high like a coronet and tied with streamers of multi-colored ribbon worked in rich patterns of flowers and leaves, these ribbons themselves telling a gay story, since they are the traditional gift of Polish peasant beaux to their ladies; a girl's collection of streamers on her wedding day representing the extent of her popularity in maidenhood. There is dancing on the lawn, a feast spread out of doors; or else, if it be fall or winter, in the house, where the tables creak under their festive load. The cup of cheer brims for days before and after, to welcome any and every guest, friend or stranger, who happens along. The bridesmaids sing; the older folks chat in the corners; the dancing keeps up for hours, till the sod thunders or the floor of the cottage trembles under the gay stamp of boots. The wedding cake, which in the eastern border region is called "korowaju," has a very special significance, and must be first cut by the "match-makers," usually the godparents of the bridal couple. After the wedding, when the bride first enters her new home, she is welcomed with the traditional gift of bread and salt, symbol of homely plenty; and this is a custom equally honored among the gentry.

Sometimes a Polish wedding lasts for days. I went to one Saturday evening in the district of Lodz. We danced till six o'clock the next morning –there was no breaking away; left for Liskow; returned Monday night –and found the wedding still going on! But, elaborate as

the affair was, the *pièce de resistance* of the feast was truly a reminder of war times. Plain rabbit. There was fun and hospitality enough, however, to more than make up for all the fatted capons in Europe.

Summer evenings the peasants often set their table out of doors, eating their simple fare in the shade of the family apple tree. Then they have music, of flute or fiddle, and they sing and chat till the frogs begin their nocturnal chant. The stork on the roof has already given the signal. The old Polish legend says that what the frogs sing when bedtime comes and the stork, their daytime enemy, disappears in his nest, is a joyous refrain, “The stork is dead! the stork! the stork!” – first the froggy chorus leader, then a duet; a quartette; finally a vociferous song in unison, “The stork is dead! Kro-ak! Kro-ak ! Hurrah-h-h !” The peasant who told us this, having talked of the problems of his country and his kind, particularly of invading Bolsheviks and Germans, smiled dryly at the frogs and said, “But he isn’t dead. He’ll eat them again tomorrow, if they don’t look out.” Frogs, as it happens, figure a good deal in Polish folklore and fairy tales, and give rise to many proverbs, such as the classic, “Frogs in the pond know nothing of the sea.”

The peasant’s work is hard and his hours are long. But if he and his kind are a quiet lot, not given to loquacity, they seem to be always ready to sing. In the fields they improvise songs as they go along, with tunes that are always melodious, and words that are either witty or sharp or very tender and sad. They set all their thoughts and feelings to impromptu music. It was from long days listening to peasant melodies that Chopin drew much of the material embodied in his immortal compositions.

The Polish peasants are a long-lived and prolific race, age into the nineties being common, and families always large. They are vegetarians in spite of their heavy toil; yet what strength, what ruddy skin, what clear good-humored eyes. The men are big framed fellows, often of almost giant stature, and strong as oxen. When they appear, as I have seen them on occasion, in the uniform of their military service, wearing the enormously tall caps of the *Ulans*, for instance, they are veritable giants. Powerful, broad-backed, with the stamp of the wind and sun on them, they are a hardy, sturdy people, women as well as men; the women (as I have frequently seen them in wartime) doing the tasks not only of the men but of the beasts, drawing plough or wagon like horse or oxen. In the mountain districts I have seen men bearing a strange resemblance to our southwest Indians, almost bronze in coloring, high cheekboned and supple. Their costume, brightly trimmed with braid and buttons and beads, and their white wool dose-fitting trousers cut to the shape of the leg and slit at the ankle, not unlike the buckskin breeches of the Indian, heightened the effect, which was completely topped off by the “*ciupapa*” or mountaineer’s stick, the handle of which is practically a tomahawk.

IV

The peasant of Poland has a deep-seated respect for books and learning. He takes readily to schooling, and is already making the most of the new educational laws of the country, which are not by any means designed exclusively for the younger generation. Numbers of men and

women of middle age may be seen already attending the evening classes opened in towns and villages, figures which would be pathetic were it not for the admirable pluck they show studying their ABC's and trying to learn to spell and write. Pupils of this kind are far from being ignorant, however, for their general knowledge of Polish history and geography is much greater than might be expected, thanks to the traditional teaching of the countryside, which usually has had its centre in the manor house. That the peasant's eagerness for learning is fruitful is evidenced in the fact that he has already shown his capacity in letters and art and affairs by giving some of the best-known men of the nation to public life. Witos, the prime minister of the Republic today, is a peasant.

The whole subject of Polish art and architecture might be touched upon here, in relation to the peasant, for it is an interesting fact that through all the centuries during which Polish culture developed, inevitably shaped and moulded by France and Italy, the arts and crafts of the Polish peasant remain untouched by outside influence. While the formal architecture of Poland, for example, passed through the varying stages of Roman and Renaissance and Baroque, common to all European countries, the Polish peasant learned to build his house and his church in a style uniquely his own, designing its steep roofs with their sloping curves and wide eaves – like the careful topping-off of a grain stack – to shed the heavy snows and rains of his northern climate. In woodcraft and weaving, pottery and basketwork too, he and his women-folk made their own expressive way from aboriginal crudity to finished art, developing a mode of line and symbol unlike any other in the world, except it be, curiously enough, that of our southwestern Indians, whose bright colors and stripes, at their best, often resemble the more primitive Polish peasant handcraft. In this regard, it is interesting to note the strange fact that, in far off Europe, the peasant of the Polish plain, without any possible foreign inspiration, invented the art of Batik supposed to have originated solely in Batavia: exactly the same process of designing and coloring with wax springing up ages ago in these two immensely different lands. In Poland it began with the coloring and picturing of eggs, at a time when Christianity, just introduced, appropriated the old Festival of Spring to the celebration of Easter: and this fact brings up another interesting detail of the history of the peasant and his art. It was due to the foresight of Italian and French missionaries that the faith finally took root in the Polish soil, at a time when its introduction was being fiercely resented because the earlier German missionaries had ruthlessly stripped the land of every sign and symbol of its heathen age, stamping the iron “*verboten*” of the Teuton on all the old customs and usages grown dear to the people from immemorial ages. The Italians, knowing better than that, followed the wise policy of the early Church in Rome. Instead of tearing down the old pagan structure of festival and folk-lore, they put a Christian blessing on it and preserved it with a new significance.

Today it is from the peasant art of Poland, thus originating in the very soil and thus preserved, that the modern art of the country is drawing its strongest inspiration. One needs to see with his own eyes the rich and curious designing of Polish peasant furniture, wood-carving, leather-embossing, pottery, rug-weaving or embroidery, to realize what a fund of originality it furnishes to the artist of the new Poland; a glimpse, for example at the treasure-

chest of a peasant bride—a treasure in itself of delicate carving and chasing and coloring, almost Oriental in the sumptuous intricacies of its deep-cut lines and figures. So also in the case of architecture: the whole story of modern building design in Poland to-day draws its inspiration from peasant origin. And so also, as time goes on, the whole structure of the new Poland of modern times will draw much of its strength and stability from the peasant, the Christian God-fearing Catholic man of the soil.

CHARLES PHILLIPS.
Minneapolis, Minnesota

***** UPDATE FROM GENTTEAM.EU *****

by Felix Gundacker

Editor—We always like to pass along updates from the head of GenTeam.eu, Felix Gundacker, because he provides information on sources you can access at no cost that may prove valuable, especially for those with roots in the Austrian partition.

Dear Researcher and Genealogist,

On my own account:

With today's online data, **more than 15.4 million entries** are now available for the 34,200 currently registered users.

At this point, I would like to thank all individuals, who have furnished GenTeam over the last 6,5 years with vital information, all those who work on long-term projects, but also all those who work behind the scenes to ensure that GenTeam functions properly and continues to expand.

GenTeam is an European platform through which historians and genealogists, who work independently or as a team on databases, can furnish this data to all researchers. **All data at GenTeam is available free of charge.** The use of GenTeam also requires **no membership fee.**

Additional developments created parallel to GenTeam are <<http://www.GenList.at>>, a bilingual mailing list which more than 1,700 members, as well as the genealogical link collection at <<http://www.GenLink.at>>.

New: Military Casualty Lists Austrian-Hungary World War I

In the Casualty Lists you will find the wounded, prisoners of war, and the fallen from all member countries of the Habsburg Monarchy. In total, there will be approximately 2.5 to 2.8 million entries. You will find offices, one-year volunteers, and, naturally, the whole gang with all confessions, this, also Jewish, Muslim and Protestant soldiers.

We find: Last Name and First Name, nobilization and academic degree, charge, body of troop, sub-branch, home country, district and homeland affiliation, year of birth, type of casualty (deceased, wounded or captured), in exchange back, etc.), and number of the list, numbers of additions and corrections, date of the list, page, and a link to Anno.

All the casualty lists are online; however, the originals are not in a good printing quality, so that a full-text search often does not yield a positive result.

Two of the excerpts (84 and 686) with a total of over 700 lists are already online on GenTeam. After completion, we will install expanded search functions, so that you can search for casualties in a certain hometown – for example.

I invite you cordially to participate in this fascinating project. We gladly send you a compilation and organize the number of your list. Please, contact the project manager, Frank Raschka (many thanks, Frank!) at <verlustliste@gmail.com> or <kontakt@GenTeam.at>.

New: Vienna – Coroner's Inquest Protocols from 1648 onwards

In Vienna, the task of inspecting a corps was assigned to the city coroner. This office was outfitted likely in the wake of the adoption of infection procedures of 1551.

The mortem protocols of the coroner's office have survived from 1648 to 1920 in the Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv (the Vienna Municipal- and Provincial Archive) with minor gaps in the early years (between 1920 to 1938 evidence certificates were published). The database contains names, date of examination, profession, residence, age, sickness, date of birth (since 1804), status (since 1811), religion (since 1841), jurisdiction (since 1867) cemetery (since 1897) and parish of death (since 1900) of each individual. The date of examination does not have to be identical with the day of death. The exception is the notation of the hour of death in the protocol. To Martha Melchart, who already reviewed the years 1648-1653, I would like to express here my gratitude.

New: Vienna – Jewish Community Resignations 1915-1945

After having been able to post the databases of these resignations in Vienna from the Jewish Community 1648-1914, made kindly available a few years ago by Dr. Anna Staudacher, we now put the index of resignations for the years 1915-1945 online on GenTeam in an own database.

New: Commonly Called Names in Carinthia

This database contains place, commonly called names, cadastral community, plat number, manor and arable land number as well as today's local community. The data were collected as house and yard files within the framework of chronicles for the Carinthian communities Afritz, Klein St. Paul, Maria Saal, Rosegg, Steuerberg, and Weitensfeld. In the case of Weitensfeld, the number of deposits and the number of arable land were not investigated since only manufacturing structures were depicted here. I would like to thank Joachim Eichert for the database.

Vienna – Jewish Community Registers

This database was **completely rebuilt**, many new entries were added (mostly deaths) and integrated Mödling, Baden and St. Pölten (all three in Lower Austria, but with close connection to Vienna!).

Mag. Wolf-Erich Eckstein, I would like to thank you cordially for the enormous work!

At the request of many researchers, we have now also created a function to search for fathers at the births of children.

Dioceses Passau – approximately 202,000 new entries

Of the now approximately 3,16 million church records from the Dioceses Passau about 440,000 are marriages (now complete), about 1,4 million are baptisms, and the remainder are deaths.

In this database you will find parish, volumes, page numbers, Last Names, First Names, date/year or records, not always profession, as well as address/town. You will find the church registers of the Dioceses Passau at <<http://www.matricula-online.eu>>. You will also find a table listing all parishes with updated time frames and important tips under Hilfe/Info (Help/Information).

The archives of the Dioceses Passau and GenTeam would like to thank cordially for the transmitted corrections as well as for all new records.

Vienna – Baptism Index between 1585 and 1915

With today's update, the first district of Vienna between 1784 and 1900 was completed: all Catholic baptisms for this period are recorded!

Entries from the parishes 01 Sankt Stefan, 01 Am Hof, 01 Kontumaz/Armenhaus, 02 Sankt Josef, 02 Sankt Johann Nepomuk, 03 Erdberg, 03 Landstraße, 04 Wieden (Paulaner), 05 Sankt Josef Margareten, 06 Gumpendorf, 07 Sankt Ulrich, 08 Alservorstadt Pfarre, 10 Sankt Johann Evangelist, 19 Grinzing and 21 Leopoldau were added.

You will find a table listing all parishes with updated time frames under Hilfestufe/Help.

At this point, I would like to thank Wolfgang Altfahrt, Gabi Koller, Eva Korbl, Elisabeth Kultscher, Georg Marlovits, Dr. Günter Oppitz, Marco Puhr, Gerda Smodej, Judith Starke, Wolfgang Strnad and Mireille Trauner as well as all who already work on various indices with will soon go online.

I would like to invite to participate on this Index. Simply contact me at <kontakt@GenTeam.at>.

Vienna and Surroundings: Index of Catholic Marriages

The index of Catholic marriages of Vienna (1542-1860 including the military), which was drafted many years ago, is now extended until 1938.

Entries from the parish 09 Votivkirche were added.

A list of all parishes with updated time frames you will find under Hilfestufe/Help. Many thanks to Jesko Stampa.

Vienna: Index of Catholic Deaths

Since the list of deaths in the Vienna Newspaper contains vast gaps (even with consideration of Viennese historic borders, as well as the interesting fact that on average approximately 40% entries of deceased children 1-year and under are missing); therefore, we at GenTeam have begun an index of Catholic burials.

Entries were added today of the parishes of 01 Schotten, 01 Kontumaz/Armenhaus and 10 Sankt Anton.

You will find a table listing all parishes with updated time frames under Hilfestufe/Help. I would like to thank Monika Fischer, Martha Melchart and Franz Spevacek.

Indices from Jewish Registers

Births, marriages and deaths of the Jewish Community Jamnitz/Jemnice in Moravia between 1735 (sic!) and 1846 were added. I would like to thank Mag. Wolf-Erich Eckstein!

Register Indices from Lower and Upper Austria, Burgenland, Styria, Tyrol, Bohemia and k.u.k. Silesia

Registers of the following Catholic parishes were added:

Lower Austria:

Ameis, Aschbach, Altruppersdorf, Drosendorf, Erdberg, Falkenstein (completely new from the beginning to 1938 plus), Gösing, Pottenhofen, Schwarzenbach, Sitzendorf an der Schmida, Stockerau, Waldenstein and Ybbsitz.

Upper Austria:

Gutau

Burgenland:

Großhöflein, Halbturn, Kogl, Pilgersdorf

Tyrol:

Sankt Jodok am Brenner, Steinach am Brenner

Styria:

Bad Aussee

Bohemia:

Bukownik/Bukovnik

Austrian Silesia:

Hotzenplotz/Osoblaha

You will find a complete listing of parishes with updated time frames under Hilfestufe/Help.

At this point, I would like to thank Dominik Bichlmayer, Mag. Friedrich Eichler, Ingrid Fleischer, Min.Rat.i.R. Johann Frank, Monika Hauser, Franziska Heidrich, Reinhard John, Elisabeth Kultscher, Martha Melchart, Leo Pum, Herwig Reidlinger, Mag. Gabi Rudinger-Ferger, Bernhard Siegl, Peter Sollinger, Katharina Staudacher, Clemens Weidmann and Theodora Winkler.

If you too would like to participate, please, contact me directly at <kontakt@GenTeam.at>.

We would be more than happy if you too would like to play a part with GenTeam by creating a database or furnishing an already completed database.

However, if you only have questions, please, contact me anytime.

Now I wish you much joy and success with your research with GenTeam and the new entries.

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***** UPCOMING EVENTS *****

Note: see also <<http://eogn.wikidot.com/>> for a large selection of upcoming events in the world of genealogy.

December 26, 2016 – January 20, 2017

POLISH GENEALOGY RESEARCH STRATEGIES 201

Family Tree University Course

This is an online course being offered by Family Tree University and taught by Lisa M. Alzo, M.F.A, a lady who knows her stuff! The course outline looks very promising. The price of enrollment is \$99.99. To enroll or learn more, visit the website:

<<https://www.familytreeuniversity.com/courses/polish-genealogy-201>>.

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March 3 – 5, 2017

2017 WINTER VIRTUAL CONFERENCE
Family Tree University

This sounds like a potentially fascinating experience: a virtual conference, with a selection of talks in many different subjects that you can attend without leaving your house! Granted, you will miss out on the in-person excitement and enthusiasm of a standard conference. But the set-up allows enormous convenience; and it could very well make possible a line-up of speakers that would be hard to match. I don't have a crystal ball, so I can't say whether this will be a rewarding experience or a total flop. But I think it might be an idea whose time has come.

The price is \$199.99. You can learn much more, and enroll, at this website:

<<https://www.familytreeuniversity.com/courses/2017-winter-virtual-conference-family-tree-university>>

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June 16 – 18, 2017

POLISH FEST
Henry W. Maier Festival Park • Summerfest Grounds • Milwaukee, Wisconsin

For more information, visit the website:

<<http://www.polishfest.org/>>

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July 28–29, 2017

2017 INTERNATIONAL GERMANIC GENEALOGY CONFERENCE
Minneapolis, Minnesota

This is expected to be a unique conference, organized through an international partnership of societies across the United States and Europe. Given how many people of Polish descent came from areas ruled by Germany from 1815 to 1918, this event may be worth your attention even if your ethnic identity is not primarily German.

For more developments, keep an eye on the website: <<http://www.ggsmn.org/>>.

*** MORE USEFUL WEB ADDRESSES ***

<<https://fromshepherdsandshoemakers.wordpress.com/2016/10/18/5-places-online-to-find-polish-census-records/>>

Julie Roberts Szczepankiewicz's blog "From Shepherds to Shoemakers" continues to provide articles sharing practical insights and strategies for genealogists, and I recommend checking it out. This particular entry deals with Polish census records—not necessarily the easiest source to find, and not always as helpful as one might wish. But Julie helps you with ideas where to look and what you can hope to find. The November 18 entry has "10 Tips for Finding Your Family on Passenger Manifests." If you don't take a look, you're missing out on something good.

<<http://www.fgs.org/rpac/2016/11/12/closing-death-records-the-logical-flaw/>>

A piece in EOGN [*Eastman's Online Genealogical Newsletter*] with the title "Closing Death Records — The Logical Flaw" cited this article. It points out the flaw in the logic of those who say death records must not be publicly available because crooks use them to steal identities. A key sentence is, "The lesson: The personally identifiable information of persons 'known' to be dead (even if erroneously so) loses its value, thus thwarting its abuse by identify thieves!" Another is, "The need for a major educational effort on the part of the genealogical community and other legitimate historical users of the Death Master File is clear." As one aspect of the whole "right to be forgotten" controversy, this is interesting reading!

<<https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1930345>>

For those with Czech roots, it may be worthwhile investigating this link. It takes you to the FamilySearch collection "Czech Republic Censuses and Inhabitant Registers, 1800-1900." The description reads, "Census images and inhabitant registers for the Czech Republic. Currently includes only those for Northern Bohemia housed in the regional archive of Litoměřice, for Eastern Bohemia housed in the district archive of Trutnov, for Southern Bohemia housed in the regional archive of Třeboň, for Southern Moravia housed in the regional archive in Brno, and for Northern Moravia and Silesia housed in the regional archive of Opava. Also includes images and indexed records for the Zámrsk area taken from the Zámrsk Archive. The inhabitant registers may be grouped in year ranges by locality." The collection was recently increased by over a million images. I know at least some Polish-Americans also have Czech family, and they may find this valuable.

<<http://mapy.lubgens.eu/1772.html>>

We may have mentioned this site before, but even so, it's worth another look. Jan Ciesarczyk posted a note to the Polish Genius mailing list mentioning this map on the Lublin Genealogical Society site, which shows parishes in Poland as of 1772. He added that this map shows parishes in Poland as of 2013, and parishes in former eastern Poland as of 1939: <<http://mapy.lubgens.eu/polska.html>>. I've bookmarked these pages because I'm sure I will be

referring to them frequently in the future.

<<http://easteurotopo.org/maps/>>

Jan also posted this link to the Polish Genius site. It connects to a page with eight choices for topographic maps of various parts of Poland during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. They include Galicia, Prussia, Silesia, and the Kingdom of Poland.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=0HYNawAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false>

If you have long-established roots in Pennsylvania, this item in Google Books might be worth a moment's attention. The name of the publication is *A collection of upwards of thirty thousand names of German, Swiss, Dutch, French and other immigrants in Pennsylvania from 1727 to 1776*. It was compiled by I. D. Rupp and published in 1876. Google Books only has a preview, but allows you to buy the publication in the form of an e-book for \$4.46.

<http://pgsctne.org/Marriage_Database/All%20States%20Database.aspx>

This is another source I think we have mentioned before, but it is surely worth repeating. Bernie Olender posted a note to the Polish Genius mailing list to announce that the Polish-American Marriage Database is now available on PGSCTNE's site, at the above URL. "It contains the name of couples of Polish origin who were married in select locations in the Northeast United States. It includes the States of Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Vermont. It includes the years 1892-1940." Please note that the database covers **selected locations** in those states; the list is available on the site.

<<https://www.archive.org>>

Joel Ratner posted a note to the JewishGen newsgroup stating that issues of the *Vilna Provincial Gazette*, or *Vilenskie Gubernskie Vedomosti*, are now available for the period 1838–1917, with some gaps. "Search on the term joelrat1 and you will find a page by the title Vilna Provincial Gazette 1838 - 1917. This one page contains all the issues available to date."

I did as indicated, and found the page, but got a note that "This item is currently being modified/updated with a 'derive' task." Apparently that one page he mentioned is not available right now. But on the right of the screen is a box "Download Options," and the PDFs, for instance, link to 76 files, each with scans for a specific time frame. So the material can be accessed—but be warned, it takes a little doing, the files tend to be quite large, and the publications themselves are all in pre-Revolution Russian. So this is not exactly everyone's cup of tea!

But in a specific instance, I can imagine that a researcher with roots in the general area of Vilna gubernia (covering much of what is now eastern Lithuania and western Belarus) might benefit greatly from this source. For example, the third item in the 3 January 1854 issue gives details on a land transfer from Izydor and Stepan Dowgiałło to Józef Adam Pieszkowski, son of

Mateusz, issued by the Troki County Court. There may not be a single reader who cares; but you never know....

<http://fidkar.wbp.krakow.pl/fidkar/temp/poczekalnia/ap_kr_2011/pdf/genealogia.pdf>

Ceil Jensen posted a note to the Facebook group Polish Genealogy, suggesting researchers take a look at the guide available in PDF format at this link, *W poszukiwaniu przodków: Źródła do badań genealogicznych w Archiwum Państwowym w Krakowie*, that is, *Searching for One's Ancestors: Sources for genealogical research in the State Archive in Krakow*. The author is Karolina Gołąb-Malowicka, and an English version is included. Ceil described it as "a very user friendly guide to download from the State Archive in Poland. In both Polish and English, it has samples of records you seek for your family research and a word list to help translate the records." It really is a nice piece of work. If you download it, don't be discouraged by the pages and pages of Polish. The English starts not quite halfway through. The only thing I would point out is that the publication date is 2008, so I would assume some of the info needs to be updated. But I think the pointers and methodology will prove helpful.

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