



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>>

*** A BIO OF WŁADYSŁAW REYMONT (1867–1925) ***

by *Oliver W. Clemons, Jr.*

Editor—Oliver very kindly sent me two items for publication, one of which appeared in the November 2016 issue of *Gen Dobry!* It was a reprint of a 1923 article “The Polish Peasant” from the *American Catholic Quarterly Review*. This article was written by Mr. Clemons himself, and provides a brief biography of the great Polish writer, Władysław Stanisław Reymont. One might ask how this relates to Polish genealogy; but over the years, I have often seen researchers of Polish genealogy praise Reymont’s best-known work, *Chłopi* or *The Peasants*, as a wonderful story that gave them valuable insights into the lives of their ancestors. So I think many of our readers may find this information interesting. I should mention that different years of publication are often cited for Reymont’s works. Many of his writings appeared in installments in periodicals. The dates cited here are when these works were published in book form.

Polish writer and novelist whose works offer a vast panorama of Polish life in the last quarter of the 19th century, Władysław Reymont was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1924; a year later he died. He is best known for *Chłopi* or *The Peasants*, an epic, four-part novel of peasant life. It is almost entirely written in peasant dialect. Reymont considered it his best work.

“I still have many things to say and desire greatly to make them public, but will death let me?” (from Reymont’s note to the Swedish Academy, 1924)

Władysław Stanisław Rejment was born in Kobile Wielkie, a small town in southern Poland near Łódź, a fast-growing industrial city, which was at that time occupied by Russia. The change of name from “Rejment” to “Reymont” was made by the author himself during his publishing debut, as it was supposed to protect him, in the Russian part of Poland, from any potential trouble for having already published in Galicia a work not allowed under the Tsar’s censorship. Reymont spent his childhood in the country and later depicted in his books the life of the peasants, their customs and work. His father, Józef Rejment, was the village organist, who supported with his meagre income a large family; Władysław was the fifth of twelve children. Józef tried to teach his children to play the piano, but Władysław was more interested in reading, and devoured books whenever he had the chance. Among his favorites were *Robinson Crusoe* and novels by Walter Scott.

Reymont’s family was very patriotic and rigidly Roman Catholic. His mother, Antonina (nee Kupczyńska) had taken part with her brothers in the insurrection of 1863. After third grade, Reymont left the school and his home—he had failed to pass the entrance examinations for a secondary school in Łódź. At that time, the schools were also instruments of Russification; students were not allowed to speak Polish inside the school. Reymont was admitted to the tailor’s guild as a journeyman in Warsaw. During this period, he became interested in theatre and developed a lasting love for the stage. Reymont was not able to finish his journeyman

years. When the Russian authorities suspected him of taking part in a strike in Łódź, he was expelled from the guild.

At the age of seventeen, Reymont began his wandering years. He joined a travelling acting company but soon found out that he lacked the necessary talent. He also unsuccessfully joined a monastery as a novice. Later, he worked in the railways and in a factory. Reymont's railroad job paid very little, but it provided him opportunity to write. He produced feverishly short stories, poems, dramas and novels without end. Like Maxim Gorky, Reymont relied on experience, and used his adventures as raw material for his fiction. Between the years 1884 and 1894, he kept a diary, which helped him in his literary apprenticeship.

After being injured in a railroad accident, Reymont received a substantial settlement, which brought him financial independence with no need to earn a living from other work.

In 1893, Reymont moved to Warsaw. There he gained success with *Pielgrzymka do Jasnej Góry* [English translation titled *Pilgrimage to the Mountain of Light*] (1895), which explored the mood of a group of people on pilgrimage to Jasna Góra. The book attracted the attention of the closed circle of Polish intellectuals and writers by its portrayal of the collective psychology. Reymont's first novel, *Komediantka* [*The Deceiver* or *The Comedienne*] (1896), dealt with theatrical life, and was followed by a sequel, *Fermenty* [*Ferments*] (1897). It told about the rebellion of a young woman, who realizes that the revolt against the laws of society must end in failure.

Ziemia obiecana [*The Promised Land*] (1899) was about the rapidly growing industrial city of Łódź and the cruel effects of industrialization on textile mill owners. "For that land people were born. And it sucked everything in, crushed it in its powerful jaws, and chewed people and objects, the sky and the earth, in return giving useless millions to a handful of people, and hunger and hardship to the whole throng" [from *The Promised Land*]. Reymont painted a kaleidoscopic view of people, places, generations, nationalities. The narrative technique adopted influences from film, cutting from one scene to another.

Reymont saw industrialization as a huge beast that swallows human resources, anticipating modern environmental debate. Noteworthy, Reymont depicted Jews as *krajowi cudzoziemcy* (domestic foreigners); they are the involuntary villains, along with Germans, who, in pursuing their dream of the "promised land," have turned Poland into a jungle "in which, if you have good strong claws, you may fearlessly go ahead and do away with your neighbors; else they will fall upon you, suck you dry, and then toss your carcass away." Andrzej Wajda's film adaptation of the book from 1974 was not shown in American movie theaters due to accusations of anti-Semitism, but it received an Oscar nomination for Best Foreign Film.

In 1902, Reymont married Aurelia Szablowska, a nurse he had met while recuperating from the railroad accident. They went to Paris, where Reymont finished his major work, *Chłopi* [*The Peasants*], in four volumes: *Jesień* [*Autumn*], *Zima* [*Winter*], *Wiosna* [*Spring*], and *Lato*

[*Summer*]. It first appeared in 1902 to 1906 in serialized form in the magazine *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* (Illustrated Weekly). Upon the publication of the final volume, it was compared to the best works of Thomas Hardy and Emile Zola.

The narrative structure followed the seasons from autumn to summer and the church holidays and religious rituals interwoven with the rhythm of the season. In the plot, Reymont focused on the love affair of Antek Boryna, the son of Maciej, a wealthy peasant, with his father's young and sensual stepmother, Jagna. This love triangle is resolved by the old man's death and Antek leaves Jagna because "one has to plow in order to sow, one has to sow in order to harvest, and what is disturbing has to be weeded out, like a bad weed." Because Reymont had used a local dialect, the novel, especially its dialogue, was not easy to translate into another language. However, the first volume came out in Russian in 1904 and a German translation was published in 1912. In France, Reymont's work received much attention through Franck Louis Schoell's translation.

Although Reymont continued to write prolifically, he did not gain the same popular and critical success that greeted *The Peasants*. His later works include *Marzyciel* [*The Dreamer*] (1910), about a lonely railroad employee, and an occult novel, *Wampir* [*The Vampire*] (1911), which deals with Theosophic spiritualistic problems. Reymont returned to Poland in 1914. During World War I, Reymont spent much time in Warsaw and Zakopane. He traveled in the United States in 1919 and 1920 in search of materials—Reymont did not speak English but interpreters served as go-betweens. In the 1920s he settled on his own estate in Kołaczkowo—in Polish, *Palac Władysława Reymonta w Kolaczkowie, Gmina Kolaczkowo*.

The first volumes of *The Peasants* appeared in Swedish in 1920; four years later, he was awarded the Nobel Prize. By that time, he was too ill and unable to travel to Stockholm to attend the award ceremony. Reymont died in Warsaw on December 5, 1925.

In his early novels, Reymont depicted the life of workers in a naturalistic style with short sentences. Later, he became interested in spiritualistic movement and wrote a three-volume historical novel, *Rok 1794* [1794], an interpretation of Polish political and social life in the closing years of the 18th century. The work was meant to equal Henryk Sienkiewicz's famous trilogy about Poland in the mid-17th century, *Ogniem i mieczem*, *Potop*, and *Pan Wołodyjowski* (1884–1888). Reymont focused on the last years of the Polish Republic, before its partition among Russia, Prussia, and Austria. He was an ardent supporter of Ignacy Jan Paderewski, a pianist, diplomat and politician, who was for a short time Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland.

For further reading: *Władysław Stanisław Reymont* by Julian Krzyżanowski (1937); "*Chłopi*" *Reymonta* by Maria Rzeuska (1950); *Les paysants de Ladislas Reymont* by F.L. Schoell (1925); *Władysław Stanisław Reymont* by J. R. Krzyżanowski (1972); *Reymont: Opowieść biograficzna* by Barbara Kocówna (1973); *A History of Polish Literature* by J. Krzyżanowski (1978); *Studie iiber die "Chłopi" und Dorfnovellen Władysław Stanisław Reymonts* by P. M. Boronowski

(1994); *Encyclopedia of World Literature in the 20th Century*, Vol. 3, ed. by Steven R. Serafin (1999) – See also: Henryk Sienkiewicz, Polish writer who received Nobel Prize for Literature in 1905.

Editor—The Polish text of *Chłopi* is available at <<http://slavcenteur.ru/Proba/knigohran/pl/reymChłopi.pdf>>.

***** LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *****

Subject: Who Will Participate?

Editor—This is a note sent out by GenTeam.eu, and I was one of the recipients. I thought I should pass it along, as there may be some readers who would like to get involved.

A century ago, our forefathers lived through the horrors of World War I. Many sons, brothers and fathers were drafted into the military. Millions were wounded, captured or died. These cases were published in the casualty lists of Austria-Hungary, which are also available online.

Unfortunately, there is no index to these lists; a full-text search yields unsatisfactory results due to the poor print quality. Therefore, we have decided to create such an index which cannot [be] made by a person alone.

Will you, please, help us through your assistance to keep these soldiers from being forgotten?

All necessary information can be found at the site of GenTeam at:

<http://www.genteam.at/files/Casualty_Lists_of_World_War_I_Austria-Hungary.pdf>

If you have any question, please, don't hesitate to ask.

With kind regards,

Frank Raschka & Felix Gundacker

***** SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION TO “ONLINE RESEARCH IN THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE AND NEARBY” *****

by Edward David Luft

Some *Gen Dobry!* readers will be aware of an article that I wrote: “Online Research in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Nearby,” published in *Avotaynu: The International Review of Jewish Genealogy*, Teaneck, New Jersey, Vol. XXXII, No. 3, Fall 2016, pp. 29-35.

For various reasons, the following information did not appear in that article. The letter/number at the end of each book reference is the Library of Congress call number.

1. Books by Felix Gundacker, not listed in the *Avotaynu* article:

Gundacker, Felix, *Historisches Ortsverzeichnis des Königreiches Galizien und es [i. e. des] Herzogtums Bukowina* [Historical Gazetteer of the Kingdom of Galicia and the Duchy of Bukovina], Vienna: F. Gundacker, ©1998, xviii, 272 pp., [1] folded leaf: map + 1 CD Rom. DK4600.G342 G86 1998.

—, *Matrikenverzeichnis der jüdischen Matriken Mährens* [Index of vital registers of the Jewish vital records of Moravia], Vienna: [IHFF, Institut für historische Familienforschung], ©2000, 74 pp. CS3010.Z9 M674 2000.

—, *Matrikenverzeichnis der jüdischen Matriken Böhmens* [Index of vital registers of the Jewish vital records of Bohemia], Vienna: [IHFF, Institut für Historische Familienforschung], ©2002, 122 pp. CS3010.Z9 B644 2002.

2. There were mill owners in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, including Galicia, formerly and later in Poland. On the GenTeam website in the directory of all mills and mill owners in Austria in 1876, *Sämmtlicher Mühlen und Mühlenbesitzer in Oesterreich (Cisleithanien)* (Complete list of all the mills and mill owners in Austria (Cisleithania)—note that this list does not include mills and mill owners in Hungary), published by the Wiener Frucht- und Mehlbörse (Vienna Fruit and Flour Exchange), Vienna, 1876, there are about 31,000 mills with their owners listed, many names of mills, each with its crown land (province) and district, identified by the Austrian crown land or territory and district. No book of that title appears in the Karlsruhe Virtual Catalog. The original book is not available online.

The Austro-Hungarian Empire crown lands consisted of Bohemia, Moravia, Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Galicia, Bukovina, Carinthia, Dalmatia, Austrian Silesia, Tyrol with Vorarlberg (and South Tyrol), Styria, Küstenland (coast land, for the Trieste area) and Krajna. The reconstructed Vienna Fruit and Flour Exchange building still exists in Vienna. See <<http://tiny.cc/q0dbdy>>.

***** STANLEY DIAMOND HAS BEEN AWARDED THE MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL OF CANADA *****

by Judy Baston (for the Board of Jewish Records Indexing-Poland)

Editor—This announcement was posted to various online venues, including *Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter* <<https://blog.eogn.com/2016/12/12/stanley-diamond-has-been-awarded-the-meritorious-service-medal-of-canada/>>, quoted here.

On behalf of the Board of JRI-Poland, and bursting with pride, I am delighted to announce that JRI-Poland's co-founder and Executive Director, Stanley Diamond, has been awarded the Meritorious Service Medal of Canada.

The letter from the Canadian Governor General's Office informing Diamond that he had won this prestigious award noted he had received "the Meritorious Service Medal for your work in documenting Jewish genealogy, and particularly for establishing and directing Jewish Records Indexing-Poland. The impact of your work has indeed been far-reaching."

Diamond, 83, a Montreal resident, also serves as the founding president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Montreal.

Dr. George F. MacDonald, CM, Director, Bill Reid Centre for Northwest Coast Art Studies in Vancouver, nominated Diamond for the award and emphasized that JRI-Poland has evolved into today's "sophisticated and internationally acclaimed online resource with indices to five million Polish Jewish birth, marriage and death records. Reliable data has become accessible, affordable and highly effective in helping thousands of people gain access to historical evidence of their families."

He added, "Information from JRI-Poland's efforts has been used to help reunite families torn by the ravages of World War II, has made it possible to quickly identify previously unknown family members who might be potential matches for those urgently needing bone marrow or tissue transplants, and has facilitated significant connections between the Polish and Jewish peoples."

Diamond emphasized, "This is truly an honor that I share" with all JRI-Poland leadership and volunteers: "What we have accomplished has only been made possible through teamwork and a level of collaboration and dedication unmatched in the Jewish genealogical world."

In honor of this award, I have just made a contribution to Jewish Records Indexing-Poland (at <<http://www.jri-poland.org/JRI-1.php>>).

***** CONTRIBUTE TO A POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY! *****

by Debbie Greenlee

Editor—This is note Debbie posted to several Polish genealogy mailing lists, and I thought it was worth passing along.

Why not do something different this year besides searching Ancestry.com for hours? There are several Polish genealogical societies in the U.S. and elsewhere that always need submissions even if you are not a member of that particular society. Please consider writing an article about your research experience, or submit an index you may have transcribed (headstones, memorials), to one of the society bulletins/newsletters.

I would also suggest that if you are not a member of a Polish genealogical society, you join one or suggest it as a gift from a family member.

Polish Genealogical Society of America

<<http://pgsa.org/>>

Polish Genealogical Society of Michigan

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

Polish Genealogical Society of Connecticut and the Northeast

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

Polish Genealogical Society of Greater Cleveland

<<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ohcdrt/members/polish.html>>

Polish Genealogical Society of Massachusetts

<<http://www.pgsmma.org/index.html>>

Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota

<<http://pgsmn.org/pgsmn/>>

Polish Genealogical Society of Texas

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

Polish Genealogical Society of California

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

Polish Genealogical Society of New York State

<<http://pgsnys.org/>>

East European Genealogical Society (in Canada)

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

Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku!

Editor—There are probably some very good societies that Debbie (and I) overlooked inadvertently. Please feel free to write me at <wfh@langline.com> and point them out to me, so I can give them a little publicity in the next issue!

***** AN OVERVIEW OF RECENT PERIODICALS *****

Editor—This is an ongoing feature, meant to inform you of articles published recently in newsletters and journals that may interest you.

East European Genealogist, Fall 2016, Volume 25, No. 1. <<http://eegsociety.org/>>

- From the *Słownik geograficzny*: Galicia, Part Two, translated by William F. Hoffman

The Galitizianer: The Quarterly Research Journal of Gesher Galicia, December 2016,
Volume 23, No. 1. <<http://www.geshergalicia.org>>

- Openings of the Space of Synagogues in Lviv, Marla Raucher Osborn
- The Progressive Synagogue in Lwów, Julian J. Bussgang
- Brody: Physical Places of Memory, Börris Kuzmany, Ph.D.
- Tarnopol's Lost Son: The Composer Karol Rathaus, Michael Haas
- Discovering Karol Rathaus: The Film Project, Lev Deych
- Map Corner: Synagogues of the "Kraków Suburb" of Lemberg, Jay Osborn
- WWII Rubber Farms in Eastern Galicia, Stephen Denker

*** UPCOMING EVENTS ***

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

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/>>

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/2016/12/07/50-useful-websites-for-polish-genealogy/>>

Julie Roberts Szczepankiewicz has a particularly valuable entry in her blog on this site, “50+ Useful Websites for Polish Genealogy.”

<<https://blog.eogn.com/2016/12/21/for-millions-of-immigrants-a-common-language-whatsapp/>>

This link connects to a fascinating story from EOGN about an app called “WhatsApp.” “WhatsApp lets users send text messages and make phone calls free over the Internet. Because it’s free, has a relatively good record on privacy and security, and is popular in so many parts of the world, WhatsApp has since been used by millions of immigrants who, whether by choice or by force, have left their homes for the unknown.” The story has a link to a *New York Times* article on the app and its developer, Jan Koum.

<<http://www.doomedsoldiers.com/dictionary-of-terms.html>>

On the Facebook page for the Polish Genealogical Society of Michigan, Valerie Warunek posted this link to a page on the Doomed Soldiers website, “Dictionary of Polish Language Terms, Abbreviations, and Acronyms Used on This Website.” The site deals with Polish Underground Soldiers 1944–1963, and the dictionary allows you to make sense of abbreviations and acronyms that can otherwise be difficult to figure out.

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5jJ0fWe0YY>>

This link connects to a 35-minute video on the history of surnames from Gens Video

Web. The video is by Pablo Briand, who also did a longer video on Jewish surnames that is quite interesting. His accent makes his English hard to understand at times; but if you hang in there, the content usually helps you figure out any words you don't get at first.

<<https://www.uscis.gov/forms/our-fees>>

On the PolishGenius mailing list, Debbie Greenlee mentioned that the U. S. Citizenship & Immigration Services has raised its fees for researching and copying genealogical records from \$20.00 each to \$65.00. She said, "This sort of puts things in perspective when you consider what Polish researchers charge in comparison." Learn more at the above URL.

<<http://polishorigins.com/tours/>>

PolishOrigins sent out a recent newsletter that included information on their Galicia and Kingdom of Poland tours. I noticed a reminder, "Remember that there is still a one-time discount of around \$120 for both Galicia and Kingdom of Poland tours, until January 31, 2017." The team also pointed out that the dollar is very strong right now, and that makes it a great time for Americans to visit Poland, because your dollar goes farther. If you're thinking about visiting to Poland, I definitely suggest you learn more about the tours PolishOrigins offers!

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