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A Lesson on Pisanki, Page 18

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PGSNYS - FOR YOUR INFORMATION

**FOUNDED BY
MICHAEL
DRABIK**

**In May 2015, the
PGSNYS became a
not-for-profit
corporation in New
York State and also
received Federal
501(c)(3) tax status**

**Postal Address:
PGSNYS
P.O. Box 984
Cheektowaga, NY
14225**

The PGSNYS meets the second Thursday of each month* in the
Villa Maria College cafeteria, 240 Pine Ridge Road,
Cheektowaga, New York, at 7:00 p.m.

Annual dues are \$20 (\$30 Canada, \$35 other countries), and membership entitles you to
three issues of the *Searchers* and participation in the PGSNYS Yahoo Group.
As a new member you will receive an information packet to help you get started.
The expiration date of your membership is on the mailing label of the *Searchers* and
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THE SEARCHERS NEWSLETTER

For submissions to the Searchers newsletter, deadlines are as follows:

- 1st issue (Spring)** - due March 1st for April mailing
- 2nd issue (Summer)** - due July 1st for August mailing
- 3rd issue (Winter)** - due November 1st for December mailing

Submissions to the *Searchers* (articles as MS Word doc; photos as .jpg)
should be sent via e-mail to: denise.oliansky@gmail.com

PGSNYS PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I am humbled, honored and privileged to serve as president of the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State for 2017. There have been many great past presidents, and I hope that I can live up to this great honor. As your president, one of my priorities is to continue the growth that has been initiated, not only in our Society, but also for all of Buffalo's Polonia. Since the early 1970s, the Broadway Fillmore area has been in slow decline. As the Polish population moved out, many stopped visiting the Broadway Fillmore businesses, churches, and the Broadway market. This inevitably caused businesses to close, churches to shut their doors, and many former residents to stay in the suburbs. We need the backing of Polonia and all of western NY to restore Buffalo's Polonia history. Small things, like going to a Sunday Mass at St. Stanislaus Church or visiting the Broadway Market (not just during Easter and Christmas) can help preserve what we all once treasured. Hopefully, the train station will be moved to the Central Terminal, which should stimulate rebirth and renewed interest in the area.

2017 is an exciting year for PGSNYS! We are halfway through the digitization of the *Dziennik* newspaper. We are looking at different OCR (Optical Character Recognition) programs to analyze what will work best with Polish fonts. OCR technology will allow us to search the entire newspaper for key words (like 'Corpus Christi') or surnames (like 'Lodyga'). This technology will aid us in building more family stories and expanding family trees. This could also break down some of the brick walls that hinder family research. Chuck Pyrak and Elizabeth Nowak have been working on updates to our website PGSNYS.org. Look for new content and expanded surname searches coming by the end of 2017. We also have a lot of great speakers on the schedule this year.

Thank you to all of our existing and new members for your support. We have committees that are looking for help. If you would like to volunteer, please see me at the next meeting or email me at npohancsek@gmail.com. You can volunteer for some projects even if you do not live in the Buffalo area.

~Sincerely, Nicole Pohancsek

POTPOURRI

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

The dates for upcoming 2017 PGSNYS monthly membership meetings at 7 PM at Villa Maria College are Thursday, May 11, June 8, and August 10. **The May and June meetings will be in the Student Center, Building 6** on the campus map. There is no July meeting. In August we will be back in the cafeteria as usual.

The May 11th meeting will feature a guest speaker, Daniel Szczesny, whose presentation is 'Polish Boy Abroad: Coming Home to Buffalo.'

Remember, you may renew your membership online through our website (pgsnys.org) using PayPal. If you are unsure about when your membership expires, check the mailing label on your *Searchers*.

The Polish Peasant

by Charles Phillips

Editor—William F. “Fred” Hoffman of Polish Roots shared this article in his *Gen Dobry* online newsletter on 30 November 2016. The article originally appeared in the *American Catholic Quarterly Review* in 1923, and, while lengthy, it is a wonderful read. As Fred stated, “...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 Slomka.” The text is in its original form, with no changes in spelling, grammar, or punctuation. In a couple of instances, however, Fred provided the Polish version of place names which he felt may be hard to recognize in their Americanized forms. As we celebrate this Easter month with our families, this article brings to life those Polish peasant ancestors from whom we came. The pictures have been added and were not part of the original article or reprint by Fred Hoffman. Enjoy!

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 Tatra quite a distinct building pattern, entirely of wood, is found, now known

among architects as the Zakopane style. The steep roofs of the Tatra 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 Tatra 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



over 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 hung 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 percent 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 clean 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 cream 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 high-laced 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 brides-

maids 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 home-ly 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 Ulan, 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 close-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 missionar-

ies 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 folklore, 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 today 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



Copyright Fundamentals for Genealogy

by Mike Goad

Editor— member Laurel Keough shared this article from the Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota's newsletter, Fall 2016.

Since genealogical research inevitably involves copying of information, questions involving copyright often crop up. When an answer is given, it may be less than satisfactory. Sometimes the answer is wrong, sometimes there is little or no explanation, and sometimes the answer isn't an answer, but a policy statement. In other instances, the answer is right, but it isn't what the questioner wanted to hear.

While copyright can be very complex and confusing, the parts of copyright law that usually apply to genealogy are really pretty basic. There are a few fundamentals that can help deal with just about any genealogy copyright situation.

Copyright means copy right

Literally, the term copyright means the right to make copies of some product. By law, the right belongs to its creator. In copyright law, the product that's copyrighted is referred to as a "work" and the creator of the work is its author. From that, we can say:

Making a copy of a work or a portion of a work is its author's copy right.

In the U.S., the right to make a copy of a protected work is a constitutional, exclusive right of the work's author, *except* that some limited copying is allowed by provisions of the copyright law. (see fair use)

Is it copyrighted?

If it's created today by the original expression of the author and it can be viewed or copied, then it is protected under copyright. The law says:

Copyright protection subsists...in original works of authorship fixed in any tangible medium of expression, now known or later developed, from which they can be perceived, reproduced, or otherwise communicated, either directly or with the aid of a machine or device.

For works created before today, there are a few basic durations and conditions for determining copyright status:

- If an original work of authorship was created after 1977, it's copyrighted and it's going to be for a very long time. The earliest that any work created after that will lose its copyright will be about 2049 – that's assuming that the author died right after he authored the work.
- If it was created before 1923, there is no copyright on it anymore, so long as it was published. If it wasn't published, it may still be protected by copyright.
- Works published before March 1, 1989 without proper copyright notice are almost always in the public domain because, under the law that existed before that, a proper

copyright notice was required for copyright protection.

- Works published from 1923 to 1963 had to be renewed after an initial copyright term for protection to continue. The U.S. Copyright Office estimates that over 90% of works eligible for renewal were never renewed.

For other situations there are many good copyright duration references online (including one on my web site).

Only original expression protected

All that's protected under copyright is the author's original expression. The protected material must have been independently created by the author with at least some minimal amount of creativity. Anything in a work that isn't the author's original expression isn't protected by his copyright.

Facts can't be original expression

No one can claim originality in a fact. At best, a person may discover a fact. If he discovers it and documents it, he has not created it. He has only reported it. There is no originality.

Census takers, for instance, don't create the data that result from their work. They write down the facts that they discover. Census data, therefore, can't be copyrighted because it's not original.

Since facts can't be original expression, the copyright of any work doesn't extend to the facts contained within it. This is a very important fundamental concept in genealogy, since genealogy so very much involves the pursuit, discovery, and collection of facts.

While copyright doesn't extend to facts, the facts may be expressed in an original fashion. When this occurs, the original expression used to convey the facts is protected, but the underlying facts are not.

Pre-existing material not protected

Any pre-existing material in a work that's not the original expression of the author isn't protected by the author's copyright. Facts, which exist before the work is created, can't be protected by copyright, as previously discussed. Other examples of pre-existing material that might be used in a work include the work of others, public domain material, and U.S. government material.

The copyright status of already existing material doesn't change when used in a new work. If an author uses material from the work of someone else, the copyright for the material still belongs to the original author. If something from the public domain is used, its copyright status is that it's still in the public domain, available for anyone to use.

U.S. government developed material, by law, cannot be copyrighted. However, material created by nongovernment authors and used by the government is usually covered by the author's copyright. In either case, though, use in a new work does not change the copyright status for U.S. government materials.

Compilations

A compilation is a collection of pre-existing material. It can be a collection of short stories, poems, or other narrative material. In genealogy, compilations are usually some kind of

collection of facts or factual material.

Many genealogy compilations aren't sufficiently original to be protected by copyright. Since facts can't be copyrighted, to be eligible for copyright protection, a factual compilation must have some amount of originality in either the selection of the facts, the arrangement of the facts or both. And, then, the only part of the compilation that's protected will be that which has originality.

- A pedigree, descendant chart, GEDCOM, or any other standard genealogy form or format that contains nothing but facts is not copyright protected. There is no originality of selection or arrangement and facts can't be copyrighted.
- Plagiarism and copyright are not the same. Plagiarism is the failure to properly document the source of the information or material that you use and is considered by many to be unethical.

Example

Joe records the names, dates and inscriptions of all of the headstones in the Farnham East Cemetery. He arranges them in three tables. The first is alphabetical by last name, the second chronological by date of death, and the third arranged by the relationship of the location of the headstone to a large oak tree in the middle of the cemetery. As well, in the third, he only includes the headstones of people who died in even numbered years.

Of the three tables, the first two used all of the names and dates and arranged them in standard formats, alphabetical and chronological. If "all" of an available quantity of facts is used, there is no originality of selection. If a standard format is used for the arrangement and ordering of facts, then there is no originality of arrangement.

Only in the third table is the selection and arrangement of the material original enough to be protected by copyright. Defining and describing the location of a headstone by relationship to something else applies originality in the arrangement of the facts. Selecting only those that died in even numbered years is a nonstandard way to select the information that will be included.

However, the copyright protection for the compilation of facts in the third table applies only to the selection and the arrangement of the facts. To copy the selection and arrangement of the facts would be to infringe upon the right of copy belonging to the author. However, the facts that are included in the compilation aren't protected and may be used by anyone.

Industrious collection and sweat of the brow

It's natural that someone who works very hard at researching, collecting, and arranging facts into a compilation would want to protect their efforts. And they can. So long as they don't make it available to others, so long as they don't publish it.

But that's the only way that it can be protected. Once it's made available to others, such a work will have little or no copyright protection in most instances.

Under copyright, the effort and work put into a project means nothing. Copyright only protects an author's "original expression."

In the past, lower courts have made "sweat of the brow" and "industrious collection" rulings, where the work and effort that went into the research, collecting and arranging counted in the copyright protection of a work. However, such rulings were invariably overturned by higher courts. The Supreme Court has reaffirmed and further defined the requirement for the author's original expression in a word being all that's protected.

Fair use (and some application of what we've read so far)

The constitutional purpose of copyright is to further the progress of science and the useful arts, which today is understood to mean scholarly growth. Since building upon the advances of others is often necessary for further advancement in most endeavors, this purpose is in apparent direct conflict to the rights of authors to control or even prevent the copying of their original expression.

The principle of fair use, which allows limited copying without consent, limits the conflict. Its limits intentionally ill-defined, fair use is very applicable to scholarship and research, important aspects of genealogy. Four factors are considered:

- Purpose of the use, including non-profit educational use
- Nature of the copyrighted work
- Amount of copying
- Effect of the copying on the potential market for, or value of, the original work

Examples

Joe is doing research at the Mid America Library in Independence, Missouri. He finds transcripts of four 18th century wills on pages 21, 23, and 87 of a book of deeds and wills from Virginia that is copyrighted 1979. He makes a copy of each of the pages that has the information he needs. He subsequently posts the text of each of the four wills online.

He also finds a little narrative family history book that was published in 1955 on the family of his great, great, great, granduncle. He copies the entire book and publishes it online.

In a third book, copyrighted in 1934, he finds several pages narrating the life of one his wife's ancestors. He copies the pages and posts small, significant portions from them online.

Which of the three examples was fair use?

Only the third.

In the first one, there is no potential for copyright infringement. While the book is copyrighted 1979, at best the copyright applies to the selection and arrangement of the information. If the book is sequenced the same as the original will book or covered time period and all of the documents available are included, then there is no originality.

A true transcript of a will is no more than a text copy of an existing document. While knowledge and interpretation may be needed to be able to read the old handwriting, there is no creative expression involved...and therefore no copyright involved.

In the second example, the book had no copyright date. It was published in 1955 without proper copyright notice. Therefore, the book is in the public domain and Joe can do anything with it he wants to.

If, however, the book included a proper copyright notice, it might still have been under copyright protection if the author had renewed the copyright. In that case, copying the book would probably not have been a fair use and posting the entire work online definitely would not have been.

Joe copied several pages out of a book, in the third example, that were applicable to his research. Assuming the book is still under copyright:

copying the pages for personal research is a good example of fair use.

Using small significant portions of the narrative from them in his online web page would also likely be fair use.

Posting the entire narrative from the pages he copied would not be fair use and would be copyright infringement.

Posting the factual information from the narrative would not be fair use because there is no copyright issue. Factual information abstracted from an author's original expression is not protected by copyright.

In conclusion

I could go on and on writing about copyright issues that apply to genealogy. For example:

- A pedigree, descendant chart, GEDCOM, or any other standard genealogy form or format that contains nothing but facts is not copyright protected. There is no originality of selection or arrangement and facts can't be copyrighted.
- Plagiarism and copyright are not the same. Plagiarism is the failure to properly document the source of the information or material that you use and is considered by many to be unethical.
- When material you submitted is used by a commercial company in their product, you retain the copyright for any of the material that is a product of your original expression.

Copyright infringement and piracy of copyrighted material are common on the internet. The online genealogy community is less exposed to it than other interests. An understanding of some of the concepts associated with copyright can be useful in both online and offline genealogy research.

7/29/2003

Additional copyright information, in more depth and detail, may be found on the author's website at <http://www.pddoc.com/copyright>

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A Trip into the Depths of Time

by Edward Prabucki

As many mothers did, so did my beloved mother, Mary Petyk, after much thought and at times willingly and other times reluctantly, reveal her youthful life during the years prior to and after migrating to America – leaving a trail of tension and tears to one of relief and comfort. I was fortunate in one way as Mother, in her disclosures, included my grandfather's youthful, turbulent life.

So, this is a story of my Grandfather. It had its beginnings in 1900, or thereabouts, in Poland (then controlled by Russia), when my grandfather, Michael Petyk -- during a time when Poland's authority lacked an affirmative stand on military service -- was conscripted by the Russian Military to serve an unspecified number of years.

In 1904, as Russia, due to her imperialistic designs, was entangled in a war with Japan, Grandpa Petyk, reluctant to serve, was dispatched to the borders of Manchuria, there to be involved in hostilities and subsequently wounded, received temporary medical treatment, and was then sent to his hometown, Lupkowice, to recuperate. There he assumed that, upon recovery, he would have to return to the Far Eastern war (not a pleasant thought!). So in the meantime, with his brother Joseph, they determined to stow away on an ocean-going ship, regardless of its destination. After a lengthy period on the ocean, they finally docked at a port in Brazil.

During a year or so, correspondence was exchanged with his family and my grandmother,

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Josephine Petyk, discussing and planning their future. Many months afterward, Grandmother and her eldest daughter, Cecelia, left for America, leaving her son, John, and daughter, Mary (my future mother) in the care of relatives.

With Grandma Petyk's sister, Antonina (married to Walter Przybysz), living in Buffalo, it was an obvious choice upon arriving to the shores of America, for Grandma to decide to live in Buffalo as well. Needless to say, Grandpa Petyk and his brother, Joseph, left Brazil to be reunited, after a long, unwanted separation, with his loving family on Buffalo's Eastside at 20 Lombard Street.

Within a year, Grandma Petyk left for Poland to complete the sale of the family's property and return with her son, John, while leaving her daughter, Mary, with her relatives. This was not to be, as my future mother, Mary, a youngster of five years, in never-ending and heart-wrenching tears, finally convinced Grandma Petyk to give in and allow her to return to America with them. Sad to say, in March of 1913, John was seriously hurt in a playground accident which resulted in a hemorrhage and premature death.

As time marched on it became obvious to my mother why Grandpa Petyk settled at 20 Lombard Street, as it was only a five minute walk to Dold's Packing Co. (his employer), and another five minute walk to Corpus Christi Church and the ever-expanding Broadway Market. A year or so later, it was auspicious fate that my future father, John Prabucki, also employed at Dold's, heard through the grapevine that my future grandparents were in search of boarders. Verbal agreement was reached, and my future father moved from Wick Street to board with the Petyks at 20 Lombard Street.

As my future grandparent's daughters grew up to become teenaged girls and marriage-inclined, my docile father, John Prabucki, did not need any prompting to become engaged and soon after marry, Mary Petyk, in the summer of 1919 at Corpus Christi Church. I am happy to write, the rest of this narrative has now become my personal history, to be included in a future revelation.

A Lesson on Pisanki

by Denise Oliansky

On Saturday, March 4th, I had the opportunity to learn how to create beautifully decorated Easter eggs from Michelle Kisluk at the Am-Pol Eagle offices on Harlem Road. Michelle ran several sessions of this class, and everyone I know who participated found it to be a thoroughly relaxing, fun, and instructive adventure. I figured I'd share the process for anyone who might be interested. Vidlers in East Aurora carries the basic equipment or it can be ordered online through Amazon or any number of websites. While there are various methods for creating these elaborate eggs, Pisanki (or Pisanky) is the method Michelle taught us. I think you will find it a fairly easy and enjoyable process.

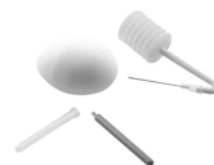


The Equipment

When we walked into the office, there were tables set up with each setting containing a foil plate, candle, a piece of beeswax, a paper towel, and an instrument called a 'kistka' which is used for drawing a design in wax on the egg. The word kistka (pronounced keest-kah) comes from the Ukrainian word *kist* which means bone, suggesting that the original kistka was a piece of animal bone dipped in melted beeswax. The singular is kistka; the plural is kistky (pronounced keest-ky.) Basically, it is a stylus with a small well or funnel to hold the melted beeswax.

The Process

We did not empty the eggs, but that is something you can do if you want, especially if you plan to hang it up. There are various kinds of blower tools available if you choose to empty the egg first. Or you can just poke holes and blow it out yourself. If you leave the contents intact, and as long as the egg is kept in the open with air circulation so the internal gases can escape, the insides will eventually dry up.



First the egg is cleaned with a spritz of vinegar and wiped dry with a paper towel. Let me tell you, vinegar makes the egg very slippery and, yes, I was the first to have the egg pop right out of the paper towel onto the floor. I wasn't the *only* one to lose an egg that day, but I was the first. Thankfully I hadn't decorated it yet! After that I kept the egg over the table at all times!

We lit our candles and proceeded to gently heat up the kistka before touching it to the beeswax and filling the small well with wax. I was surprised how the beeswax immediately produced a little puddle from the heat. The heat creates carbon which turns the wax black...making it much easier to see as you draw your designs. Once the kistka was filled, we divided our eggs with lines of wax. I can't say they were the best of lines, but I'm sure with practice, they will get straighter and more consistent. I quartered my egg with lines, others did more or less lines depending on the design they wanted to do.



Then we filled in each section of the egg with our various designs, heating and filling the kistka with wax as needed. Michelle had lots of handouts with a variety of images on them or we could just use our imagination. If you plan to use just a single dye color, as I did, when you melt off the wax, the design will be the white of the egg. However, you can start by dyeing your egg first with the lightest dye (our lightest choice was yellow), put on some of your wax design, then dye the egg with progressively darker colors between each wax

application. This will give you a multicolored design once you burn off the wax. Many people in our group were braver than me and experimented with lots of colors to great effect. In my case, I completed the entire egg in my black wax on white design. Then I was ready to dye it.

I had planned to do a dark blue egg with white design, but there were only light blues available, so I opted for a dark green. You carefully place the egg in the dye using a spoon and let it sit until it reaches the depth of color you want. Only a few minutes at most is needed. Always dye from light colors to dark if using multiple layers of dye. Remove the egg from the dye jar carefully; using



a spoon is easiest. It's important to wipe off the spoon after each use, so that other dyes do not get polluted with a color left on the spoon.

Then you are ready to melt the wax off your egg. This was trickier than you'd think. It took a while for me to get the knack of holding the egg close enough to the candle flame to heat the wax without scorching the egg. You are looking for a sudden sheen as the wax melts in the spot that is being heated, then you wipe off the wet wax in that area with a paper towel. It is so satisfying to see that first bit of white (or whatever base dye color you used) pop out from the rest. You just keep heating the wax all around the egg until all of it is wiped off. And there you have it. Your first pisanki egg!



The Result!

Below is my completed pisanki egg. I am storing it in its little cardboard crate on my kitchen counter, up-ending the egg every few days, until the inside dries out. On the cover of this issue you see some of the pisanki eggs that our group created, as well as the one done by Michelle that day (lower right of front cover). Everyone did a really great job and it was a lot of fun. I found the process of drawing on the egg very relaxing, and the result after removing the wax was a real 'wow' moment. I suggest a class like this to provide you the basics on how to use the equipment and get some practice, but after that, the sky is the limit! I look forward to trying a multitude of colors next time!



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