



As we enter the small library (left) we are reminded that here in the States the library is usually one of the best parts of a school. Here it is relegated to another room with shelves and maybe a collection of books. We are told that it is well stocked but we see many books stacked on the floor with virtually minimal room to move around the half dozen bookshelves. With a little time to spare, we return to the Director's office for tea and cookies. Both men explain the trials of running a secondary school in a country where funds are minimal and schools have to do with whatever they have on hand or are purchased by the staff or parents. In a moment of inspiration, I tell both men that Dolores and I were moved by this experience and that we would like to explore the possibility of donating ten (10) computers to the school and staff another computer lab. If a means could be found to purchase (and support) these computers in Lviv we would be pleased to fund these purchases. The manner of money transfer would be arranged later. We were told that used computers are available in Lviv for around \$200 US, with new ones costing around \$700 US. We left with the understanding that we would communicate our findings and conclusions over the summer. I personally feel that NOT supporting a school like Zymna Voda is tantamount to telling



the Ukrainian children that they do not deserve to enter the 21st century prepared. We depart Zymna Voda by noon after bidding our goodbyes to both men. Both were assured that we would keep our commitment one-way or the other.

On the road to Gorodok, by chance, we meet up with Olesya. We arrive in Gorodok by 12:30Pm and plan our strategy. Slavko would stay by the cars (he cannot lock his), Olesya would go on an undetermined tour and Dolores and I would explore the "podhaju" area that I visited in 2001. The "podhaju" (meaning "under the groves") is a community by the lake where the Rozylowicz family lived in the time period of 1923-1933, or thereabout. My reason for this return is to try to get pictures of additional homes in the area that the brothers may see back home to try to determine if any of them look familiar. None of the pictures I took in 2001 rang a bell with the brothers. So off we were, past the Rynek area, down the hill, by the lake, over the bridge, past the electrical distribution plant and onto the main street of "podhaju". We walked up and down the street seeing nothing that resembled an old house, other than what I saw in 2001. We stopped by one of the old houses and, seeing a man tending his garden, asked in Polish if he knew anything about that house. He did not seem to understand Polish and we made no headway with him. Just then a middle-aged lady and her daughter stepped into our misguided conversation and asked if they could help. Her Polish was as good as mine and we explained our situation to her.



Taking a sincere interest in our situation the lady, Sofia Rap (right), invited us to walk with her to her house for next to it is an "old house" that may be what we are looking for. Nice thing about Ukraine, people are sincerely interested in meeting foreigners and there is never any doubt that they wish to offer help or advice. Anyway, within 5 minutes we are standing on the doorstep of her two-story beautiful new house and are invited in. We are escorted to the upstairs family room, are politely asked to make ourselves comfortable while she prepares coffee for us. So typically Ukrainian ... unquestioned hospitality. She returns and we talk about the house we are looking for and other things in general. Time slips by, the coffee and cake is brought up and we delight in hearing Sofia retell the story of her life, her just recent return from Germany, the loss of her husband four years ago, etc. Is it me or do people just open up for us. Exchanging home addresses and taking the compulsory pictures, we take our leave with Sofia escorting us back to the spot where she met us. Along the way we view this "old house", take many photos of it and wander down the gravel street, past a grazing goat, and onto the main street. She promised to try to learn more about the community's older homes and if anything is found would let us know by letter. We wave goodbye to her as we plan our return to the Rynek.



Arriving at the Grodek Church where my parents were married in 1923, we linger awhile, taking pictures and move on to the adjacent building. This building happened to be an elementary school, for a myriad of boys were hanging out the windows (left), giggling and motioning to us. Being an interesting situation, I asked Olesya, who just happened to return, to explain to the boys that I wish to take a group picture of them. I would promise to send them a copy if they returned the favor by sending us Christmas cards ext year. One adventurous young man took the bite and wrote down his home address. I snapped a couple of shots, waved goodbye at the boys who were still giggling and headed for Slavko's car. It was time to boogie on down to Stodulki (Ebenau).

At the turn-off to the Gorodok train depot we made a left turn towards Stodulki. It was starting to drizzle. A few kilometers down the deserted road we enter an enclave that is Stodulki. Mostly it is of newer construction. Olesya, ahead of us, slows down and parks her car. We are at the location of Ebenau House #1. The history of this house is unique. I can trace our ancestors back directly to this very house. The Jahnsen ancestral branch of our maternal family side lived in this house from around 1806 to around 1875.

Our maternal grandmother Margaret (Jahnsen) Lautsch was born in this house (right) in 1870. As such it was of vital importance that a pilgrimage be made to this house. Interestingly, this house is the last surviving house still standing from the former village of Ebenau, now merged with Stodulki. On the side of this house is a plaque that clearly shows under the current modern house number the notation "Ebenau #1". Even though it's drizzling we walk up and down in front of the house, becoming one with history. We dare not enter the grounds for it is private property and the owners are not in sight. Still, the trip was rewarded with this vision from the past. In time we visited the Ebenau cemetery at the end of the village where we located several grave markers that included the Jahnsen and Kammer names ... surnames that are part of our ancestral line. If any of these departed are directly linked to our family it is not certain. As the drizzle intensified, we elected to leave Ebenau and make our way to the border ... the hour was getting late and all border crossings are tense and uncertain.



At 3PM we arrive at the Medyka border crossing, between Poland and Ukraine. What a sight greeted us ... cars, two abreast, were lined up waiting to clear the checkpoint. Seemed like it was ½ kilometer long. The wait, we were told, would be up to ten (10) hours to clear both sides. However, we had an ace up our sleeve. Olesya's husband, Andriy, a dean at the Lviv University Law School, had contacts with the Border staff and made an advance call to advise them of his wife's crossing with foreign dignitaries (us). As we pulled up to the checkpoint, ahead of all the other waiting cars, Olesya began her task of finding the right official to contact.

In the meantime, we in Slavko's car, were set upon by the border agents with nightclubs advising us to move our cars or else. Not a friendly bunch of people. The situation was tense and fraught with anxiety, as we did not know what to expect. This is not the time or place to start an argument with a border agent. They could make your life miserable if not downright put you in harm's way. After an anxious ten-minute wait we were waved on by the head guard and proceeded to the head of the line for passport control inspection and declaration. In less than five minutes time we were past the Ukrainian side and onto the Polish side.

Here we were on our own. Andriy had no contacts here. But leave it to Slavko to apply some creativity here. We parked at the end of the line and Slavko walked up to the passport control window and simply told the agent there that we had no "contraband", were simply foreign dignitaries and could we skip the mandatory inspection? Surprisingly, without paying any sort of a "bribe" we were waved on. We presented our passports, submitted to a cursory trunk inspection, answered a few simple questions and were cleared into Poland. Contraband ... what has this got to do with border crossing? Well, Medyka is a busy crossing point between Poland and Ukraine, between Przemysl and Lviv. Ukrainians and Poles travel both ways to buy low and re-sell those items back home at higher prices. This is for the most part illegal. You may only bring into each country things for your own consumption, not to engage in illicit trade in goods. Unless a "bribe" is extended, this practice will be closely monitored and prohibited. The fact that Slavko mentioned that we had no "contraband" meant that they were wasting our and their time just waiting in line. Truth is I told them I had only one (1) bottle of vodka, which was given to me as a gift. My partially unzipped duffel bag showed that the agent checked my luggage. He was also the one who asked me the question. Matter of fact is that I had five (5) more bottles of vodka in my locked suitcase that I bought for the brothers. I wonder what would have happened if they decided to open and inspect ALL of our luggage? Too late ... we were in Poland and heading for Przemysl ... 18 kilometers down the road. Slavko, by the way, would encounter the same situation but in reverse. He told us that he would sleep by the side of the road and attempt a crossover when the crowds thinned out. Slavko ... a real nice guy.



Przemysl ... my father, I was told, once labored here. Not sure what time period, but one of the brothers told me that his job was to paint the bridge. Interesting story, if true. My stepmother Julia once worked as a personal cook for a parish priest here. I have documentation to substantiate this fact. As such I have ancestral links to this town by the San River. Within 10 minutes of waving Medyka goodbye we were floating around Przemysl looking for the State Archives Building (left) ... our hotel for the next four nights. Seems that this particular archive has sleeping rooms that are available to people who do research here and do not wish to commute back and forth. At only \$9 US per person per night the rooms are adequate, clean, and all make use of a "community" shower and toilet down the hall. After \$115 a night in Krakow, this Spartan sleeping arrangement is a new experience. Only drawback, no towels ... and we did not bring any along. Believe it or not we had to use two of my clean T-shirts as a towels. A



laugh but what other option was there. Another interesting discovery ... when there are people using the sleeping rooms all the archive offices are double-locked with a seal on the actual door itself. Seems that they want to know if anyone "breaks in" one of their offices. Bizarre is the only conclusion. Anyway, all of us all checked in (two rooms), carried our luggage up to the second floor (no winda, elevator), located our tiny sleeping rooms and settled in for the stay. Beds were nothing more than elongated sofas (right) ... hard as stone and with sheets that are best described as "crude and itchy". The pierzyna (comforter) was heavy and the pillow was the size of a small cushion. After settling in and making some tea, which Olesya brought along, we contemplated our evening's agenda. We elected to go out for a walk and see what we can find in terms of a decent looking restaurant. The walk from the Archive Hotel to the San River took all of ten minutes. City Center, or Rynek Główny, was less than two blocks ahead. Not much to see in this old city at this late hour so we decided to pop into a restaurant that we frequented before. Deserted and dark, with only one other table occupied, we settled in and ordered drinks.

The menu was inviting and interesting and we all ordered the typical Polish fare ... I remember I had borsch and pierogis. We paid the tab and after one hour we were back on the road heading for our "Hotel". Not much happened that evening as we were all tuckered out from the long day of exploration and the drama at the border crossing. Sleep did not come easy on the hard beds; nor did the open window that brought in all the street noise. Next thing we knew, it was morning.



Wednesday came on bright and sunny. With only tea for breakfast we reminded each other that we must shop that day to make sure we eat tomorrow morning. Hygiene is always interesting with a community facility but it presented no logistical problems ... as some of us showered the night before and some showered early. The water was warm (not hot) and the "T-shirt towels" did an adequate job. As was so typical we were late getting started for the real archives – the Przemysl Diocesan Archives. It should be noted that access to the Przemysl Diocesan Archive is limited to between 9AM and 1PM ... but not guaranteed. It depends on the availability of Fr. Borcz, the caretaker, and any disruptions that are unanticipated. We leave our "hotel" and make our way down the main drag to the San River, cross the bridge, walk past Rynek Główny, up a long flight of stairs to the Roman Catholic Archcathedral (left), make a sharp right and arrive at the Archive, it is 9:15AM. Hello ... Fr. Borcz is just leaving for a last minute appointment and will be back in 30 minutes. Being late had no repercussions; we were left to cool our heels. We walked around the Archcathedral admiring its many features, around to the Bell Tower and back again.

By then Fr. Borcz (below) returned and ushered us into the Archive (right) reading room chamber, but excluded the women in our conversation. Fr. Borcz, my colleague and I held an impromptu short meeting and discussed a number of topics that we brought along plus our request to see the books for the Muzylovice Parish ... the parish where my grand-grandfather George Lautsch was ostensibly baptized. I expected to meet a man with horns, as I assumed (falsely) that Fr. Borcz was an ogre with a hard disposition and an attitude to match. Instead, I met an overly gregarious man, tall, lean and quite handsome (for a priest). He was open, displayed a flair for dry humor but his Polish was at a level I never experienced. I apologized for my weak Polish language skills but he seemed pleased that at least we could do some communicating with what skills I had. Frankly, the conversation went well, my adeptness was acceptable and the Padre. In short order our brief meeting was over and the women were invited to join my me in the reading room. Fr. Borcz gave us instructions and cautions on how to handle the old, but delicate, archival books and retrieved the books for us. The Holy Grail of our search was now before us ... the Muzylovice parish books for the years 1826-1900.



[Continued in Section 10](#)