



# Ukrainian Genealogy Group

## National Capital Region

The Ukrainian Genealogist

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### **Impressions of Poland and Ukraine, May – June 2004 -**

*By Chris and Elaine MacPhail*

We had often talked about visiting Ukraine, to find the village of Stariava from which Elaine's grandparents emigrated to Canada in the early years of the 20th century. An international conference in Krakow, Poland, offered the opportunity to travel to Eastern Europe and since Krakow is only 350 km from L'viv, it served as a jumping off point for Ukraine. We arranged our own travel and accommodation, which offered some additional insights into life in the two countries.

Krakow is a beautiful city, clean and well-organized for tourists. English is spoken widely, and we had no trouble with language. Poland had just been welcomed into the European Union, and the Poles were eager to please the visitors. Fortunately, the city had been spared the destruction of the Second World War, and has been declared a World Heritage Site. The Wawel Castle, churches, museums and other public buildings have been preserved, and represent a rich heritage. Krakow is definitely a destination city.

We took the train to L'viv, and learned something of the vagaries of train travel. The trains do not run every day, and when they do, each day seems to be at a different time. However, we arranged our own tickets and

arrived pretty much on schedule. An interesting point is that one can buy only one-way tickets for cross-border travel – we had to go through the same procedure in arranging our return to Krakow.

L'viv has also received the designation as a World Heritage Site, and boasts a wonderful legacy of classic buildings. However, the buildings are generally run down and in need of refurbishment. The city itself requires an investment in infrastructure, and its tourist industry lags behind that of Krakow. Through the internet, we found a small, modern hotel within walking distance of the city centre, and the English-speaking staff was most helpful in making our stay enjoyable.

We visited the Archives and met Ivan Svarnyk. Thanks to Myron Momryk's introductory letter, he had pulled the file for Catholic births, marriages and deaths for Stariava, 1865 - 1886. Those were the only records he had. He suggested that there might be records elsewhere, such as Przemysl in Poland, but wasn't certain. We reviewed the file and Elaine found a few details of her ancestors. Unfortunately, those that she was most interested in fell outside those dates. We asked for photo-copies of the records (3 pages) which were ready for us some 2 hours later, at a cost of \$40 USD.

With the help of the concierge at the hotel, we hired a taxi to take us out for a day to Stariava in

Mostiska region. Stariava lies on the Polish border, some 70 km west of L'viv. This trip was an education, since it gave us a real close-up look at rural life. And it was a step back in time, for our impression was that the way of life can't have changed much in the last 100 years. The farm labour appears to be all manual. Haying was in progress, and whole families were seen to be cutting the hay with scythes and pitching it onto the horse-drawn wagons. We saw one car in Stariava - a village of some 300 people - and no tractors, but many horses and wagons. It was very simple and rustic.

We did meet the parish priest who showed us around the church, and told Elaine that he has parish records dating back to 1850. But he didn't have the key to the office, so we couldn't look at them. However he did offer to look up some information for us, which is an opportunity that we have yet to pursue.

During her childhood, Elaine's family spoke Ukrainian at home. She was able to converse with many of the villagers who came out to see the strangers in town. Many of them shared the same surname - Yakimets - but no solid connection was made. Elaine's family tells of her grandfather, as a youth, being charged with the responsibility of tending the flock of geese at the village pond, which we found at the edge of the village. We were shown an abandoned house and barn, said to have been owned by a Yakimets family - the same one? We can only speculate. A visit to the local cemetery also turned up a few names and dates.

Being able to walk the same paths that our ancestors did has real meaning for us, as a link to the past. The trip was an education, and we were reminded of how fortunate we are in Canada, and grateful that our ancestors had the fortitude to emigrate when they did.

### **People Finders**

*From the Ottawa Citizen, October 16, 2004.*

Alberta opens adoption records on November 1, 2004. Adult adoptees and birth parents will be able to obtain identifying information about each other from their adoption records. Individuals who want to keep their information confidential must file a veto with Alberta's Post Adoption

Registry. For more information, visit [www.gov.ab.ca/adoptionrecords](http://www.gov.ab.ca/adoptionrecords) or call toll-free 1-866-825-4455.

### **Finding towns in Ukraine**

*Submitted by Ted Lomatski*

This is to let you know that there has been an improvement in map quality for the Europa (European Union) and Eastern Europe on <http://mapblast.com/>

Although there is still room for improvement, I was pleased to do several searches as return positive results. The transliteration left something to be desired in some cases, however, when doing a quick and dirty, you can establish the area and then go to a more detailed map.

You have to put in "town province country" (province is Oblast). It does not seem to have the county or raion in the system. Put them in the order above with the space.

### **The Plague and other Epidemics**

*Submitted by Alexandra Opar*

I found the following information in the book "In the Wake of the Plague" by Norman F. Cantor.

Research findings from 1997 confirm a genetic relationship between the Black Plague of 1348 and present-day AIDS. "The Black Death" was the first epidemic of the second plague pandemic to hit Europe. It hit 1348-49 and killed 30%-50% of Europe's population. It was the greatest natural disaster in European history. Poland lost 25% of her population.

If you are descended from a Caucasian who contracted the plague during the 1350's and survived, you have complete immunity to HIV/AIDS. 15% of the Caucasian population is in this category.

### **Adult Ukrainian Language Lessons**

We're looking at the possibility of starting an intermediate Ukrainian language class for Adults in January. In you're interested, please email Mike Dowhan at [mike.dowhan@sympatico.ca](mailto:mike.dowhan@sympatico.ca) or call 521-3449.

## **PEI-Atlantic Ukrainians**

*Submitted by Ted Lomatski*

We have a mailing list-serve, for all things Ukrainian in Atlantic Canada. We have had a rough start as the organization that hosts it, ran out of server space, but that seems to have been addressed and we have been stable for a couple months now.

We have not gotten much traffic, so hopefully it will not be a burden. Information on the list-serve, and how someone could sign-up or quit are shown at: <http://uggpei.isn.net/atlantic.html>

Basically, you can send an eMail to [pei-ukrainians@flora.org](mailto:pei-ukrainians@flora.org) and everyone on the list, will get a copy. I know that people here are interested in what is going on in Toronto and Ottawa, because mostly they go up to see their kids - and take the opportunity to do research.

## **LDS site**

*Submitted by Ted Lomatski*

Just to let you know, that Ukraine is featured in a video clip on the LDS site promoting the use of the Library at Salt Lake City.

<http://lds.org/newsroom/showpackage/0%2C15367%2C3899-1---9-117%2C00.html>

Warning!!! Don't try this without a high-speed connection!

## **Ukrainian Festival**

The Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Ottawa Branch cordially invites you to a Festival of Ukrainian Art, Music, and Food. Sunday, October 31, 12:30 - 17:30. Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral hall, 1000 Byron Ave.

You will be able to purchase unique Ukrainian art, paintings, embroidery, jewellery, food, and music.

## **Ukrainian Adoption Service**

For information on adoptions in Ukraine see [www.adoption.com.ua](http://www.adoption.com.ua)

## **Some Searchable databases on the Web**

*Buenos Aires Burials*

<http://www.amia.org.ar/difuntos.asp>

Todos is all four cemeteries.

*California State Databases*

<http://www.vitalsearch-ca.com/>

Marriage index is in Graphics form and includes Bride's name Groom's name Date of Marriage Certificate Number

*New York City Death Index*

<http://www.italiengen.org/NYdeath.stm>

1891 to 1894 Manhattan Only

1895 to 1897 Manhattan and Brooklyn Only

1898 to 1919 All Boroughs

*New York City Grooms Index*

<http://www.italiengen.org/NYCMarriage.stm>

Kings County Grooms and Brides: 1895 to 1897

Manhattan Grooms: 1895 to 1897

New York City Grooms: 1908 to 1936

To request a copy:

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/html/vitalrecords/home.shtml>

*Bronx County Court of New York Naturalization Records Index 1914-1952*

<http://www.italiengen.org/Bronx.stm>

*Online Searchable Death Indexes and Records (USA)*

<http://www.deathindexes.com/>

## *Index to the 1901 Census of Canada*

<http://automatedgenealogy.com/census/NationalSummary.jsp>

*A Polish organization prepared a searchable database called Karta which contains names and a few vital details of Poles and other Polish citizens (including Ukrainians) detained by the Soviets after September, 1939. This information is based on recently released Soviet archives. The database includes many who later served in the General Ander's Army and them immigrated to Canada. The web page is in Polish.*

<http://www.indeks.karta.org.pl/wyszukiwanie.asp>.

## **The Ukraine List**

Prof. Dominique Arel, titular of the Chair of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Ottawa manages The Ukraine List (UKL), an internet academic/current events newsletter that reaches over 650 subscribers in 25 countries. People can join UKL by sending an email to darel@uottawa.ca meetings.