Continued from issue #6, 2006

An interesting story of our people,
translated from Lemko Association records.

The Old and the Young

A Tale from the Time of the First World War

"You are very lucky, Herasim, that you didn't get here until now," Martin Repeta cheered him up.

"How is that?"

"A month ago, they bayonetted people like pigs. Now they just beat you over the head."

Petro did a lot of thinking because he wanted animals? He wouldn't get up an hour earlier, and because of that extra hour in bed he didn't stop but kept them going through the city, slowing down gradually to a walk, until the sweat on their flanks dried out. Then he drove to the market square, unhitched his horses, tied them to the wagon, and gave them some hay.

Petro himself sat on the wagon seat, and thought, "Why are people like that policeman born on this earth – heartless, no sense of humanity toward other people or toward animals? He wouldn't get up an hour earlier, and because of that extra hour in bed and another hour of preening his mustache, he almost killed my horses. And such a man gets a weapon and authority over other people. And our government gives such a man power over its citizens."

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"Petro! Hey, Petro!"

Out came the policeman, drunk, staggering. He clambered into the wagon. Petro backed his horses up to the wagon and started out. The horses were glad to be moving and the stepped right out.

"Take it easy, Petey. Hang on to those nags. Hoo-hoo! You want a drink, lad?"

"I don't drink, sir."

"You're a fool! But you have a pretty sister. I would like to marry her. I'll take her for my housekeeper, and then when we get to know each other, I'll marry her. She's a nice girl! You know what? Let's go there right now, to your house, to Hania... heigh you!"

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Continued on Page 2, Column 1

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The Church in Ripnik

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Continued on Page 3, Column 1

REMEMBER

OLD TIME LEMKO KERMESH

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New Jersey: Alex Herenchak, 609-758-1115

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"What's going on?" the policeman woke up, startled.

"Get out of the wagon, you dog." shouted Petro.

"What are you doing, boy? Don't you know what you can get for this kind of joke?"

"This is no joke! It's the real thing. Shut up and get out. I don't want to dirty my wagon with the likes of you."

The policeman got down slowly. "Petya! What are you doing? For God's sake!"

You didn't worry about God when you beat and tortured my poor father. You didn't worry about God when you pushed me away from the wagon when my father wanted to embrace me. You didn't worry about God when you shamed my sister. You didn't worry about God when you whipped my horses. So I am not going to worry about God as I kill you like a mad dog. You never in your life helped anybody. You only torment people. So now I'll just give you some time to say your own "Lord’s Prayer".

Whether this policeman had never known any "Lord’s Prayer," or couldn't recall it in his fear, he didn't have the strength to take advantage of this opportunity but just stood there trembling like an aspen tree. A shot rang out and echoed from mountain to mountain. Then all was quiet.

Just a short time ago this "hero," this Austrian policeman, who held the power of life and death in many neighboring villages and was greatly feared by many people, now lay dead at the hands of a lonely peasant.

Petro took the policeman’s pouch with its papers and ammunition and hung it on his own shoulder. He unhitched his horses, unharnessed them, and piled everything in the wagon, embraced the neck of the chestnut and then the gray, and started them off in the direction of their home village. He left the wagon by the side of the road, and the policeman’s body in the ditch on the other side. Then he went off up the mountain and into the woods.

In early 1915 at Talerhof, the German concentration camp for the best sons of our village, thousands of our people died of a frightful epidemic. There was no help from the soldiers on guard duty. Control in the central concentration camp for the best sons of our people, death reaped a rich harvest. The dread typhoid fever killed thousands. Damp, crowded, and filthy conditions in the barracks, thinking. "What's going on?" the policeman woke up, startled. "You were dreaming that up to scare people."

Just dreamed that up to scare people. Petro.

"As he was walking before his barric early one morning, in front of another barric Herasim saw a genuine old-time Lemko long cloak. 'That's why old Nikolai Shcherba's coat,' he shouted and ran as fast as he could to the fifth barric over. 'Nikolai! How did you get here?'

He hugged the old man, and in that coat he sensed the smell of his native village. Old Nikolai could hardly get out of that embrace. He wiped his old eyes and looked and looked.

"Herasim! Is that you!"

"It's me, Nikolai!"

Now the old man embraced Herasim, and they both shed tears. Neither the one nor the other could utter a word for some time. Their throats were choked up. Herasim was the first to speak.

"So, what do you hear from home?"

Nikolai related how the policeman had come to Herasim’s house and why, how Petro had taken him to the city, and that neither the policeman nor Petro had ever returned. He told that since then "patrols" had been combing the mountains looking for Petro, and it had been reported to the mayor that Petro had been caught and shot.

"But don't you believe that last. They just dreamed that up to scare people. It's not an easy thing to find Petro in the mountains. He knows every thicket, every burrow. Two weeks after that, the Russians came and Petro went away with them."

"How long did the Russians stay around there?"

"Not long. Only a couple weeks. And they were just passing through, first into Hungary and then back. When they came to our parish village, Smoliaruch showed up to meet them with a priest’s cross and talked to them in Russian. Then he invited their officers to his parish house, where they feasted and drank all day and all night. I was sick at heart to see the Russians believing such a traitor, so when I met one of their Cossacks I explained everything to him. And he went right after that priest. I don't know exactly what happened, but two days later it was Sunday and Smoliaruch showed up in church all bandaged up and his eyes swollen. When the Russian pastor reported to the Austrian police on which houses the Russians had stayed in and who they talked to. And there were a lot of people, including me, so here I am."

"Don't fret, Nikolai. We won't be here much longer, and then we'll go home," Herasim tried to cheer up the old man.

"You will go home, Herasim! You're still young and strong, but I won't return. I feel that my end is near. I'll die satisfied, for God has granted me one wish for. I saw the Russians in our mountains once again. And I saw them a second time. And I know that when they come a third time they will liberate our people forever and ever. You young people will get to see that."

Next day old Nikolai couldn't get up. Fever kept him in bed. The surprising thing was that normally people lost their memory from this typhoid fever, but Nikolai could remember everything and see everything around him right up to the moment he died.

"Do you know, Herasim that your Hania and Filipp's Seman have fallen in love?"

"This is the first time I've heard that," said a surprised Herasim.

"But I know," the old man chuckled weakly. "They're good kids. They'll be a match. You won't prevent them from marrying, will you Herasim?"

"God forbid! I couldn't ask for a better son-in-law. Seman is a reliable young man, neat, hard working, and the best friend of my son Petro. And he's a real craftsman, too. He can make anything he gets his hands on -- a wheel looks like a wheel, a plow like a plow, a sled like a sled. And everything looks so nice when it leaves his hands, it's a pleasure to look at."

Herasim was quite happy that his Hania had chosen Seman. He would have gone on praising his future son-in-law the old man, but Nikolai was no longer listening.

He had passed away quietly. His good, clean soul had spotted on its way to the Almighty, to the place where he could report all the troubles and wrongs that Nikolai Shcherba had suffered on this earth, and that were still being suffered by his downstream people.

The barracks hyenas sniffed around Nikolai's body. They found nothing but his thin, grey, old pipe. They didn't take that. Nor did they take off that old Lemko long cloak. There were no buyers for something like that around Talerhof. If there had been some fancy jacket, or breeches, or elegant boots, they would have stripped them off and sold them. They tossed his body onto a pile of others in his old native Lemko clothing exactly as he was when he was brought to Talerhof.

Each day the grave diggers, would shovel out a large pit 4-5 meters deep, into which naked bodies were thrown without any coffins. That's how the Germans buried all Slavs. Today the body of old Nikolai Shcherba was one of them. He was buried in the same pit as villagers from Sanok, Sambor, Przemysl, Stanislawow, L'wow, Buchach, and Kolomyia.

Thousands of them lie under the pines in the Alp Mountains -- Lemkos, Boykos, and Hutsuls. Eternal memory to them.

The End

Translated by: Dimitri Gallick
This is a hilly country, covered with forests, with sandy soil, not fertile, and the peaks of Magura and Kichera that reach 514 meters. The people who lived here were poor, and in order to make a living they had to show their necks to the nobility, or go outside to a foreign country or overseas. Despite that, they managed for centuries to preserve their faith, their speech, and their traditions, and to pass them on to coming generations.

Written references to the village of Ripnik, which today is part of the Wojaszuwska township in Krosno County, go back as far as the end of the 16th century. Most notable is a farmhouse, which today is part of the Wojaszuwska village in L'wow, and a gravestone of Petrusha Woła, on which there will be more later.

The parish priests here were members of the Bankowski family (1695-1733). After 1837 it was Ioann Humetski (father of Modest), from 1875 to 1931 it was decoan Teodor Merena, and after him came Evgeni Ustski.

The last one was Yaroslav Mirowna, who was evacuated to Zalishchik in Ukraine after the war in 1945. During the German occupation, he displayed an example of love for his fellow man by saving a Hebrew girl from death at the hands of the Nazis, and raising her. He did not abandon her even after the war but took her to Ukraine with his family. She got a higher education in L'wow, and settled in the Crimia with her husband.

The Lemko patriot Modest Humetski has performed great service in preserving our faith, speech, and traditions. He was a physician in Krosno who earned great prestige and was a publicist and wrote poems and scientific works on medicine. He went regularly to the church in Ripnik and was buried in the local cemetery where a grave stone still exists (4/3/1842-12/9/1899).

Others who acquired a higher education and became professors were Wasil Bik in Yaroslav, Mikola Kolodich in Krosno, and Mikhailo Kaplun in Tarnopol.

There was a one-class schoolhouse in Ripnik, and the teacher was Mikhailina Dziadosh. There was also a public hall, a co-operative reading room, and an arts group. Before the war there were 78 houses with 304 Lemkos.

In Petrusha Woła before the war there were 214 houses, which were occupied by 773 people, and in the Zawada area there was a one-class school where the teacher was the priest's widow Yulia Opatowska. Her daughter Danusia was married to Stefan Bandera at the age of 16, and her son Wolodimir was executed by the Nazis.

The German occupation was a great tragedy. In Zgabezi near Jaslo there was a camp for Soviet army prisoners, where death reigned with cold and starvation those who managed to escape would come at night to our village, because it was the closest and the people would feed them and provide clothing so they could get to their own homes. The Germans punished such acts severely.

On December 18, 1942, the Gestapo shot to death the Kashik family—mother Yustina, daughter Olena, and the children Mikhal and Dozia, who was five years old. They also burned down the house. In June of 1943, the same fate came to the Kobilasc family, four of whom were executed and the house burned down. Ignati Mudrak, Pawlo Pasie, Stefan Dashik, Wasił Mentus, and Maria Kiebass perished at the Oswiecim concentration camp. Pawlo Hashik, Marian Laniak, Stefan Bik, Marko Bik, and Andrii Wasik, who had joined the Soviet army, were killed at the Battle of Dukla Pass.

To be continued
Petro Kohut, Zahoroda #2, '03
Translated by Dimitri Galik

The Cooking Corner

Semolina Mold with Kisel
[Manni Puding s Kiselom]

2 ½ cups water or 1 cup water and 1 ½ cups milk
½ tsp salt
½ cup semolina
¼ cup sugar
1 tbsp butter
Kisel for Pouring*

Boil the water, or water and milk. Add the salt. Pour in the semolina, stirring fast to avoid lumps. Simmer for 8-10 minutes, then add sugar and butter. Cook a little longer, until it is really thick, then pour into a 3-cup mold, or small individual molds, rinsed out with cold water. When set, unmold and pour Kisel over before serving. 6 servings.

*Kisel for Pouring

2 cups sweetened Fruit Juice for Kisel*
1 ½ tbsp potato flour or corn flour
¼ cup water

Bring the fruit juice for Kisel to a boil. Mix the potato flour or corn flour with the water and add, stirring all the time. When boiled, take off the stove and use as required.

Fruit Juice for Kisel
For berries and fruit like black or red currants, cranberries, gooseberries, plums, sour cherries, etc., allow ¼ pound sugar to each 1 pound of fruit. For sweeter berries, use less sugar.

Wash the fruit or berries and remove any seeds. Crush with a wooden spoon. Add cold water, just covering the fruit, and simmer for about half an hour, until cooked. Strain thoroughly through a fine sieve, until the liquid is clear. Add the sugar and more water if necessary and bring to a boil, thickened according to requirements.

The annual meeting of the CRA Center will be held on October 15, beginning at 1:00 PM at the Polish Community Center, Yonkers Ave., Yonkers, NY. All members are requested to attend.

A poem by Mikhal Kowach, 1976
I am a wormy old oak, that who knows who that who knows when, somebody planted on this barren hill, so I could warm in the sun, drink from the clouds, frolic with the wind, and struggle

I am a wormy old oak, that today-tomorrow who knows who and who knows when will cut me off my stump, with the sharp teeth of time, right at ground level, and lower my willow head, along with my crumbling body, to the warm bosom of Mother Earth.

I don't know who will hack off my trunk nor how much of this trunk, disintegrating, will serve living people to some useful purpose.

But I hope at least some bit of good will come from all those many long years of my toil and trouble.

There may well be some heat from my branches, when winter takes hold, and hands are frostbitten, and, who knows, maybe hearts too will get a bit warmer.

From Besida, "approximated" into Lemko from language of Bachwan Rusnaks by Petro Murutanka, and from that into English by Dimitri Galik.

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the neighbors, both Poles and Rusnaks, discussed ways of helping Hershko, as good neighbors do. Some went looking for tracks of the horses, but it was very dry so that didn't do any good. Others advised him to go to the police. Gradually they all drifted away, leaving Hershko in his grief.

However, one Pole who lived farther away, a very religious man who sometimes even substituted for the priest, approached Hershko and said to him, "You know what I would advise you to do? You should make a donation to the church for a mass to find your horses."

"Ah, Felix, what are you prattling about?" Hershko responded, "You know very well that I am of a different faith, so what good will such a 'mass' do me? If I really have to do something, why not give to the other church?"

Felix patiently explained to Hershko that there was no sense in giving anything to that other church, because Rusnaks don't have all the saints the Catholics do; they don't have the saintly specialists for different problems. He described several saints, what they were best suited for, what their functions were, and what each of them could do to help. And while, Felix managed to convince Hershko to the point that he made an offering to St. Anthony to find his horses.

Hershko didn't go into the church while the mass was being celebrated but stood in the doorway listening and waiting for this St. Anthony to tell him where his horses were. He didn't have to wait long. In those days service in Catholic churches was conducted in Latin, so Hershko couldn't understand anything anyway. But when the priest sang out "Dominus vobiscum", Hershko jumped right up and ran as fast as he could to the mayor. As he ran he kept saying, over and over to himself, "It's good thing I gave something for that mass. St. Anthony certainly knows what he is doing, and this isn't the first time that Domino has put his hand to some thievery!"

I must explain here that one of the residents of that village was a certain Jacob Domin who was not above stealing something. When Hershko heard the priest pronounce that "Dominus vobiscum", he heard it as "Domino v Boisko" [Domino in the barn]. And when he and the mayor got to Domino's place, sure enough they found Hershko's horses in Domino's barn chewing on some hay. Domino was taken to jail by the police, and Hershko got his horses back.

After that, Hershko could often be heard saying something like, "Golly, it's worth tossing that St. Anthony a few pennies from time to time. He really did help me."

By Teodor Kozlak
Translated by: Dimitri Galik

CARPATHO-RUS

From Kozlak '99, Dimiri translated this story of the missing horses.

Dominus Vobiscum

In one of our villages there lived a rather poor Jew named Hershko Shliemer. He had a couple acres of land and kept two cows, several turkeys, a score or so of chickens, a pair of horses, and many children. Someone might ask why Hershko needed two horses, since one was more than enough for the size of his homestead. You should know that Hershko also worked as a wagoner, which nowadays would be called freighting of goods. Hershko didn't work much on his own land, doing just the most important jobs, such as plowing, threshing grain, bringing in the hay and the harvest. The rest of the work was done by Fridjalia and the children, while Hershko would hitch his horses to a big wagon and go out into the country.

Hershko's wagon was long and large. It had stake (ladder) sides and carried large wicker baskets. At the forward part of the wagon was a "seat", just a board set across from side to side on which was a coarse linen bed. Hershko would sit there tugging on the reins, waving a whip, and shouting "who" and "hup" to the horses. Hershko hauled various goods, mainly for Jews, but he didn't limit himself to that, for he did some trading on his own. Sometimes he went long distances, from village to village, from market to market, hauling whatever his trader friends had for him, usually eggs, chickens, geese, ducks, calves, hides, and such other things. He very seldom had to travel empty. When he hauled to the city a load of something bought in the villages, he would bring back goods for the grocery store, the tavern, or for "speculation". Since Hershko was honest and reliable, he would receive whatever he said. He never cheated anybody. How much did Hershko earn from all this? That's hard to say. It probably wasn't very much, however, because he never did show any display of wealth.

One morning Hershko got up quite early to feed his horses, because he intended to go to the market. When he went into the stable, there were no horses there. Somebody had stolen them during the night. Poles. He started to yell "Alzaw!" and Fradjalia came running to the stable, there were no horses there. Somebody had stolen them during the night. Poles. He started to yell "Alzaw!" and Fradjalia. She was a little girl of nine years old, who had stolen them during the night. Poles. He started to yell "Alzaw!" and Fradjalia. She was a little girl of nine years old, who shouted and crying out loud, "Horses! How will we live now, without our horses?"

Hershko was startled. He couldn't believe his ears. He couldn't believe his eyes. He couldn't believe anything he said. He never cheated anybody. How much did Hershko earn from all this? That's hard to say. It probably wasn't very much, however, because he never did show any display of wealth.

Fradjalia started running out of the house, with more than a dozen of her children, of various ages and sizes, following her. They all raised such a clamor and hubbub that neighbors came running over, wondering what had happened to Hershko Shliemer. He just stood there by the barn, pulling on his beard and his hair, walking and shouting.

"Yoo, good people! Fear the Lord! My horses are stolen! What can I do now without them, when I have no horses, I am I going to take care of my heap of children?" The tears rolled down Hershko's face, and the neighbors sympathized with him.

"I feel sorry for Hershko," said one of them. "He's a good Jew, yes, and is often better than any other people. Whatever you ask of him, he will help if he can. He never refuses." The village where Hershko lived had a mixed population. Although the majority of the residents were Rusnaks, more than a quarter were Poles. There were also a few Jews, a large number of Rusnak families and a few Gypsy families. The village had both an Eastern church and a Latin one. And so, while Hershko and his family were weeping and lamenting the loss of their horses,

Gorlice, Piermont Avenue, NJ

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Item #1: Karpato-Rus' Folk Songs: Eighteen folk songs from the Carpatho-Rus region. Recorded from 78 RPM discs recorded in 1910, this audio cassette tape presents wedding, christening and Christmas songs...the way our ancestors did them.

Item #2: Russian Balalaika and Polkas, Chardashes and Gypsy Eclectic: This audio cassette tape contains Russian polka and balalaika selections, Slavic chardashes and gypsy melodies. Several folk songs provided here were originally recorded in 1910 on 78 RPM discs.

Item #3: East European Folk Festival: Lemko Association sponsored many festivals in the past of East European dancing and singing. This video offers highlights of the 25th Festival held in 1993. It includes excerpts of an Orthodox Catholic prayer service and concert of Karpato-Rus', Ukrainian, Russian, and Sloven folk songs.

Item #4: Canonization of Father Maksym Sandovich; This video includes a biography of Saint Maksym, the first Orthodox Catholic saint of the Karpato-Rus'. The major dates and events of his glorification which occurred in Gorlice, Poland in September, 1994 are uniquely recorded.

Item #5: Video Recording of the Akafist Male Chamber Choir of Moscow and the Slavic Male Chorus of Washington, D.C.; Recorded at St. Luke's Serbian Orthodox Church in McLean, Virginia on March 12, 1992, this video includes classic liturgical songs and shows the interior and exterior of all Slavic Orthodox Catholic churches in the Washington, D.C. area.

Item #6: Canonization of Father Alexis Toth; St. Alexis' biography and canonization ceremony are preserved on this video which was filmed at St. Tikhon's Monastery.

Item #7: Folk Songs from the Uzhorod Region: "Muse Zakarpatskaia through 12 folk songs that were recorded in Soviet days in 1955.

Item #8: Lemko Wedding Music by Stephen Skimba in cassette; and Item #9: same as #8 in CD format.

We were fortunate in finding one of Steve Skimba's original 78 RPM records and this has been duplicated.

PRICES:

Item #1...$12.

Item #2...$12.

Item #3...$25.

Item #4...$20.

Item #5...$30.

Item #6...$20.

Item #7...$12.

Item #8...$12.

Item #9...$20.

All prices include shipping costs. Send check or money order made out to Lemko Association.

Mary Barker
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River Vale, NJ 07675

In Appreciation

We extend our thanks for help in producing this week's issue of Carpatho-Rus' to Ludmilla Marshovska.