

The Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford

The Photos of Henryk Gasiorowski, Ethnographer

by Lubow Wolynetz, Curator

Among the many archival photographs in our Library collection, there is one set that is especially fascinating, unique and quite rare. It consists of three albums of original photographs (numbering about 600), depicting views of the Hutsul region in the Carpathian mountains, rivers, meadows, as well as the various aspects of life and lore of the Hutsul people.

The photographs were taken in the years between 1928-1934 by Henryk Gasiorowski, who was born in 1878 in the town of Zalischyky and died in 1947 in Grudziadz. He was an ethnographer, a teacher, a photographer, and a Major in the Polish army. Having graduated from the Kolomya High School, he continued with his studies at the Lviv University where he majored in history and geography. After completing his studies, he became a teacher at the Kolomya High School. In addition to teaching, he was active in the Sokil sports society. He took part in the organization of the Pokuttia Museum and was also a collector of Hutsul folk art. In 1933-35 Henryk Gasiorowski published one of the best Guidebooks to Eastern Beskyds (a mountain range in the Ukrainian Carpathian Mountains) in 2 volumes which was issued in Lviv. Many of his photographs were published in the form of post cards, which now have become collector's items.

Hutsul maiden with bachelors



sheep from the farmers and take them for grazing to these meadows and stay there from early spring to late fall. There, from the sheep's milk they make famous cheeses, the bryndzia and budz.

The second volume is dedicated to religious culture. Here we have photographs of Hutsul church architecture, bell towers, roadside chapels, and crosses, church paintings, church

Trembita players lead a funeral procession and their trembitas are tied with white kerchiefs.



wood carvings, and cemeteries.

The third volume is devoted to vernacular architecture, household furniture, tools, and household implements, utensils, weaving looms, and other hand-made craft machinery, candelabra, folk costumes, and the types of work performed by the Hutsuls.

The one who snapped these photographs, as well as many others, considered the Hutsul region to be one of the most beautiful and exotic areas, where the ancient traditional style of life and lore was preserved to our days and untouched by modern-day influences up to the present.

Henryk Gasiorowski considered the Hutsuls to be the most fascinating ethnographic group of people not only in the Halychyna area, but in the whole of Europe. Their independent, stalwart character, and their steadfast adherence to the traditional way of life have always been admired and respected. Even in the aftermath of Stalin's purges, many people who returned after their sentence in the Gulag came back changed, different from the way they were before they left, but not the Hutsuls. We read in Valentyn Moroz's book *Boomerang* "...and so the man from Kosmach (a village in the Hutsul region) returned from Siberia. He came back a Hutsul. Even though he had to go through the nine pits of hell, he did not lose his traditions. He still sings the same songs, paints the same Easter eggs, and he has not forgotten the customs of a wedding ceremony... the great Stalinist plan of transforming human beings - with respect to the village of Kosmach - was not achieved... the man from Kosmach comes back a Hutsul."

Explore and Experience Our Past

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Roadside Cross



Hutsul with wedding tree

