

ENJOYING HISTORY

PROJECT 'KAMIENICA, STREAM OF STORIES'

Plan for a local chronicle of the history of Chromiec (Ludwigsdorf), Antoniów (Antoniwald), Międzyzlesie (Ramberg), Boza Góra (Gotthard mountain) and the Jizera Mountains (Isergebirge), gmina Stara Kamienica (Alt Kemnitz), Dolny Śląsk (Lower Silesia) in Poland as an example project for experiencing and enjoying the traces of history as source of European history.

Goals

1. Experiencing the village as memory space

- a. Collecting stories, pictures, documents about the Polish inhabitants after 1945 to today
- b. Interview with different Polish generations, new settlers, artists, youth
- c. Awareness and understanding of the identity and continuity of local Polish history.
- d. Promotion of the German and touristic interest in Polish local history

2. Experiencing the villages of space of myths and legends

- a. Collecting stories about Celts, Zobts, Sorbs, Walloons, Schwenckfelder, Putzkeller
- b. Collecting local legends connected with landscape and nature, e.g. sources, cultplaces, rocks, walls (Wolfgangsource, Kreuzstanne, Abendburg, Flins etc.)
- c. Promotion of initiatives to experience the mythical history

3. Experiencing the village as space of history

- a. Collecting stories about
 - i. Walloons, Mining and glassworks
 - ii. Peasant cultures and artisans, e.g. weavers, mills
 - iii. Development of cultural landscape
 - iv. Political and religious history (Piasts, Schaffgotsch, Duchy of Liegnitz and Jauer, Bohemia, Austria, Prussia, Germany, war and forced displacement, Polish settlers, communism, EU, modern era, local economy, threats from mining and other developments
- b. Evaluation and protection of local natural and cultural monuments and crafts
- c. Connection of local history with European history

Phases and products

1. Book, Exhibition, FB / website and event (Festival)
2. Hiking maps with historical theme hikes and Tourist Info
3. Tourist Promotion for local, ecological and cultural tourism
4. Historical educational programs for local schools
5. Exchange projects and internships for foreign students
6. Volunteer projects for cultural and landscape conservation and sustainable / ecological development

Why?

This region in the Jizera Mountains between Kopaniec (Seiferschau), Kwieciszowice (Blumendorf) and Szklarska Poręba (Schreiberhau), basin of the Kamienica river (Kemnitz) received, contrary to the Giant Mountains little attention from historians and culture researchers, even though the traces of the oldest glassworks, pagan worship places, the most beautiful half-timbered weaver houses and many natural and agricultural monuments are located here. Nowhere else is in immediate reach such a rich variety of nature, culture and landscape, in the heart of Europe, between Prague, Dresden and Wrocław. The special features of this region are originating from the 18th century, like traces of early cultivation (such as stone walls, terraces, millbrooks, fords and paths), which are mostly still intact. The richness of nature is unique. Plants that are already extinct in Western Europe, are still to be found here. Like many other border regions in Europe, this area runs into danger due to lack of care, growing wasteland and the threat of devastating mining projects. But it is also necessary to maintain the social structures and to raise awareness for the conservation, maintenance and restoration of old houses, cultural monuments and to implement careful modernization.

Editorial staff

The Polish Fundacja Nemo will coordinate the project and realize the products.

Editorial and supporting members are local people from the village, gathering in Swietlica Chromiec, the Silesian history and culture researcher Ullrich Junker, dr. Józef Zaprucki, mgr Robert Rzeszowski (Muzeum Karkonoskie) and the Nemo-staff. We also look for Polish and German historians, students and former residents.

Language: All texts will be translated and published in Polish, English and German.

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Planning

Preparation: 2015

Phase 1, 2, 3: 2016

Phase 4, 5, 6: 2017

Costs

The project and its implementation depends on the financial resources.

1. Without funding and financial assistance: Nemo can only organize and finance low-budget activities, eg volunteer work (what Nemo already performs for 16 years), only phase 1 and 2, with very simple, inexpensive brochures and hiking maps
2. With the help of Polish Partnerstwo Izerskie a lot more is possible; phase 1 with book and also Phase 2 and 3
3. With support from Germany and EU / Euroregion all phases are possible

The region

First traces of settlement in Silesia in the 2nd century date back to Celtic tribes, which were soon followed by the Vandals. They founded the Kingdom of Silinger to which perhaps the name 'Silesia' returns. Other interpretations lead to the Slavic name of Zobten, Slesa, Flinz. From the 6th century Slavonic traces can be found. At the time of founding the Polish state to 960, the area was Polish under the rule of the Silesian Piast Dukes. In Alt Kemnitz (Stara Kamienica) the ruins of a Piast castle bear witness to this time.

Since the 12th century the Silesian Dukes invited German to settle into the country, who also founded cities and villages in the Giants Mountains. Over the centuries the German language and culture prevailed. In the 14th century the Silesian Piasts – as dukes of Jauer- assumed the Bohemian Crown. By succession, the country fell to Austria in 1526. In 1741 Frederick the Great conquered the area and Silesia became Prussian. This brought first of all the Protestants religious freedom. Until 1945, the Giant Mountains, like the whole of Lower Silesia belonged to Germany. After the war, the German residents had to leave the area.

Most Poles who now settled there, came originally from the former Polish eastern territories (today parts of the Ukraine, Byelorussia and Lithuania) that were annexed by the Soviet Union; they too had to leave their ancestral home. For a long time because of the fear that Germany could reclaim the area again, they hardly invested in the region, in workplaces and (tourist) infrastructure. After the fall of communism, unemployment increased, since many industrial and agricultural enterprises had to close down. Therefore, the rural areas hardly benefit from the growing prosperity in the Polish cities. The unemployment problem is great and the social arrangements are inadequate. Tourism focuses on some big cities, the Giant Mountains and some spas; tourism in rural areas is very weak. The environment is badly damaged by the adjacent industries. Until recently, the area was known as the 'black triangle'. In the meantime, much has been invested into the renovation of the polluting factories and reforestation. Both Polish authorities and European Union agreed that the long-term development of the area must be a common goal; social, ecological and economic problems must be solved together. Long-term revival of tourism should be supported, through its incentive for creating natural and cultural preservation.