

## **Testimony of Indexing: “Taking the Bull by the Horns!”**

After 20+ years of doing family history and knowing that the Church was not going to do any more microfilming in Poland, I was heartbroken because I couldn't extend my family roots further back in time like most people with Western European roots by attending their local family history library and viewing microfilms. Previously, I had contacted the Church's Poland microfilm photographer in the early '90's who had photographed the only microfilms in Poland that covered my paternal village in Poland with. But unfortunately, he had committed some crimes right after he was helping me and is spending many years in jail in Poland and no longer available to help me. I realized then that if I wanted to do more original family history research it was going to take a miracle.

### **Take Advantage of Windows of Opportunity**

During this interim of 15+ years the 1990's disappointment, I did the best I could but no miracles were apparent. In 2009, circumstances changed by me networking with another genealogist and contacting an exceptional Polish genealogist and it was time to “Take the Bull by the Horns.” With faith, hope and determination, I arranged in 2009 to travel to Poland with my wife to visit the both the paternal and maternal villages of my ancestors which I had visited previously in 1996, 1998 and 2001. But this time, the fourth time was the charm because my newly hired Polish genealogist had the Gift of Tongues as we met each priest. Because of my sincere determination to learn more about my ancestors who were long-time members of these congregations and the Gift of Holy Ghost, we were able to convince the priests in these three villages to allow my genealogist to return back at a future date and take photos of every page of every book of birth, marriage and death records from the earliest dates of these churches into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and two of them to 2009. Simply stated, this was a miracle because the Catholic Church makes money on selling birth certificates etc. and the distrust of someone photographing their Church records and publishing them on the Internet with the images is a serious copyright infraction of the highest order. But again because I had been there in 1996, 1998 and 2001, the priests were a bit more reasonable that I was sincere. We prayed and fasted about this and a miracle in heaven occurred when my genealogists was granted permission in the winter of 2010.

### **Digitizing Entire Collections of Church Records**

In the quest of obtaining the images so that we could better trace our ancestry, these churches had records available for digitizing respectively from 1676 to 1940, 1735 to 2009 and 1785 to 2009. Getting permission was not easy because my genealogists traveled there in the middle of a rather cold winter during a very stormy week to meet with the first priest and was treated rather rudely. The priest asked him if he was a good Catholic and he said yes. Then he said go back 400 km and get a letter from his priests acknowledging that he was a good Catholic and then he returned back again to digitize their records. That sounds very easy if you have a car and if you have convenient bus or train transportation. But my genealogists had none of the above and knowing it was cold and snowy was very discouraging to him. But he did travel that distance and when he came back he was required to sign contracts which were also sent to me by fax in which all of us had to sign that the images belonged to the Catholic Church and that they were never to be published or my genealogists would be blackmailed professionally forever in Poland. And being a full-time Polish genealogist and citizen, that meant he would lose his career for the rest of his career and he was under the age of 40 at that time.

### **Challenging Decision After Digitizations Were Obtained?**

After two more years after receiving the images from my Polish genealogists in which I finally got clarification from the Church that I indeed owned the digital extractions that would be done in Excel but the images would still be the property and the copyright of the Catholic Church. While I was teaching in China for the 2012-2013 school year, I got the idea to hire several extractors to index every record in the birth, marriage and death records into Excel. Having the data was incredibly important but equally important, I had individual contracts from these priests that I had accomplished this impossible task legally. Now I could trace back both my direct lineage and extended relatives as well because we had access to every record and every book from 1676 to the 1930 and to 2009 for two of the churches. Another problem was that all church records were in Latin and the third problem was that the Polish alphabet had numerous additional letters that were very difficult to read whenever the cursive handwriting was sloppy. Here's how I solved this matter. First my wife had to learn Latin from scratch and we had to personally train each of our extractors from scratch and it was an amazing feat to see how we could assemble a team of extractors to do the work with long-term implications since it would take years to complete this work. To illustrate how we taught our extractors, go to the following website link at: <http://www.kuzmich4.com/Tadeusz/Training1b.mp4> and

<http://www.kuzmich4.com/Tadeusz/Training2b.mp4>. There you can view video tutorials that were created by my professional genealogists as taught my wife while in a hotel room together in rural Poland. And you will see the due process that was involved of learning how to extract manuscript from Polish records that were not easy to read and cursive because the handwriting was sloppy at times and very old going back several hundred years and it took a lot of effort but all the extractors were trained and we now had a team called **Team Kuzmich Extraction Project**. Note: my oldest son was the head referee extractor and was assisted by my wife to insure that all the extracting was reviewed twice before ever sending the extractors to my temple-submission extractor whose sole responsibility was to submit names to the temple after the referring was completed.

### **Surprise Opportunity to Join Forces with FamilySearch!**

Since 2012, we have been extracting and refereeing every record in these three churches and by February, 2020, we will have all three churches completely indexed and referred. In addition, two of the entire villages have been submitted to FamilySearch for temple work. But the story doesn't end there because in 2016 at the RootsTech 2016 Conference, I met a beta testing team for FamilySearch which has an indexing historical collections by using algorithms when they had complete collections of records in which every record has been indexed/extracted. Fortunately, I had chosen to extract every record instead of just extracting direct ancestors only which is what their beta testing projects required. Note: the future of long-term research in genealogy is to utilize algorithms with similar historical collections. Their purpose is to put extended families together when all the records are indexed utilizing algorithms software applications with computers. Then family trees can be produced more quickly and without tedious study. So by doing the digitization in 2010 and obtaining contracts for the digitizations of all images, the Church was able to accept my extractions for their beta testing projects. And best of all, I could legally submit the indexed records with the specific Church books and page references with every word translated to FamilySearch for temple ordinances in a wholesale fashion manner. These records represented hundreds of thousands names extracted correctly and refereed. In order to do this I hired six extractors and we have commenced since 2012 to diligently extract every word in every church record into Excel files.

### **Unique Family Technological Contributions**

But the story goes on, one of my sons is an electrical engineer and he created Excel macros to convert the Excel data files and convert them in seconds to GEDCOM files with no typos which meant we could send them to FamilySearch without having to reenter or retype the data twice. First time would be to extract and type into Excel spreadsheets and the second time would be to retype it into a family history program and have it convert the data into a GEDCOM file. But when he created the Excel macro conversion scripting, it eliminated the possibility of having to reenter every name and every word and every record and better yet they would be no typos and the files only had to be referred once.

But the story doesn't end there, another son was a cyber security engineer and he designed, created and managed a private cloud server in which all the six extractors whenever they saved the work on their computer between New York to California, it also was saved simultaneously over the Internet to the private cloud so that all the extractors could see the work that was being done by the other extractor to never duplicate their indexing. And better yet, there was no possibility that any files that were created and extracted would ever be lost because they would be multiple copies distributed simultaneously when saved to every extractor's computer in the project simultaneously plus their own computer. And this son managed this private cloud system and it proved to be an excellent security management tool for quality control so that the extractor's work was never lost or deleted accidentally.

A daughter guided me in establishing a family history blog at <https://kuzmichgenealogy.blogspot.com/> in which I could compile a centralized place for publishing my family history endeavors. And later, she guided on how to establish the Foothills Ward Facebook group for temple and family history which has literally explored as a prime research for sharing my 50 years as a genealogist.

### **Future Historical Collections on Family Tree at FamilySearch**

At some future date, my three villages will be posted as historical collections on family tree in family search so that anybody with ancestors originating from these three villages will be able find their relatives quickly because everything that has been digitized will be publicly published as historical collections on-line for others to search and locate their ancestors and at no charge.

## Summary Comments

Starting from a need to find more records for my direct lineage, I was able to go to Poland and do the negotiations with the priests with the help of a professional genealogist and we were able to photograph every record in three different churches. Resulting that we had church record images digitized for the extractors to extract from on their home computers 4,000 to 7,000 miles away from Poland because with extracted every record. In addition, we are legally able to share this data with the FamilySearch beta testing team as well as being able to submit all of these records FamilySearch for temple submissions on a regular basis. This in itself gives me a holistic view of doing genealogy of not just researching direct lineage is but for establishing extended families with uncles and aunts in an extended family tree because I had every record and every in each of the three churches. So living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has some real plus in that technology can come in and I'm able to manage six extractors in which I can submit all person indexed to the temple in a wholesale manner because we're extracting every word and every record and we can provide the information in us a succinct manner from Excel spreadsheets to GEDCOM files seamlessly.

If I had not taken "The Bull by the Horns," I'd be still traveling to Poland many times to attempt to add relatives in small increments because I would never have all the records available at my disposal to be indexed without the digitized copies. Technically I now have a fully stacked deck cards once I got the digitizations of all the images from my genealogist. And I'm presently digitizing three other villages in Poland and about to start doing the same in the Czech Republic.

### There's No Free Lunch!

Now there's no free lunch in this life. It took me many years to track down among the churches in Poland that had the records of my ancestors. It took me five trips to Eastern Europe to network with the priests and eventually hiring a full-time professional genealogist who has the Gift of Tongues whenever he met with Catholic priests. But subsequently, I've hired six extractors on a monthly salary since 2012 spend more money on my professional staff than I do on my home mortgage payments but the results are monumental as I have officially taken charge of my family history and the Lord has blessed my family exceedingly without any reservation especially when difficult times comes to our entire family such as temple marriages, the law of tithing, education, careers, unemployment, illnesses, travel safety, grandchildren born under the covenant, , etc., we have been blessed exceedingly. When more efforts are made for the Lord, more is given. For example in 1971, my patriarchal blessing clearly stated in four of the first five paragraphs that I was selected from out of my entire family lineage, the responsibility to undertake this huge family history responsibility. And now nearly 50 years later, I'm succeeding because I have gotten my entire family involved in the Team Kuzmich Extraction Project. And presently, I now have the two oldest grandchildren at 12 and 13 years of age already proficient in extracting records. And with two villages with extracted records to 2009, future generations will be able to continue the Team Kuzmich Extraction Project legacy with original family names through the year 2119 and beyond based on the 110 year rule the Church has established for submitting temple work.

### The Finishing Touches!

As the Foothills Ward Temple and Family History Leader, I can share my family history and temple experiences with the entire ward based on 50 years of personal experiences. Through the Facebook group, I am able to share the tricks, techniques and tools necessary to open up new avenues for success in your temple and family history endeavors. Perhaps your temple and family history successes may not be a dramatic or challenging as mine have been, but be aware that the Lord will guide you and success will come in due time for not only for you, but equally as important for your family and future generations for temple and family history.

And finally, here's the rest of my indexing testimony story. After names are submitted and processed for temple ordinances, the head extractor is able to take the individually processed FID tags for each ordinance completed and then reverse engineered them back into the original Excel data extraction file by another Excel macro that my engineering son has scripted so this process can be seamlessly accomplished. Resulting that the historical collections for each of these three villages thus far being extracted, will also include the temple's FID tags on FamilySearch's Family Tree making original research by others a rather painless experience because of the Team Kuzmich Extraction Project.

In closing, I bear you this testimony that if you sincerely do your family history you will be blessed far beyond the "Letter of the Law" but by the "Spirit of the Law." And I offer this testimony of indexing to you in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen!