



Foreword

In this book the author chronicles the history of a German-Polish family covering seven generations over two centuries. The Polish nation's fate, division, resistance, world wars, occupation and oppression, and flight and exile imposed by its neighboring countries are the backdrop of this epic family history.

After Poland won its freedom and independence within Europe, the author sought her heritage roots, which she found in the Polish and German nobility.

The marriage of a member of the German family of the Barons v. Richthofen to a Polish lady of the Objezierski family founded a new branch of the Richthofens in Poland, which joined great Polish families in the course of its history. The pros and cons of German origin and patriotic attachment to Poland is a major topic of this family saga.

Extensive archival research and assessment of the carefully collected and archived family documents allowed the author to draw a family portrait of great authenticity and tangibility for the reader. With empathetic understanding of the strengths and weaknesses, successes and failures, and happiness and suffering of her ancestors, she entrusts the reader her family's history.

Stanislaus v. Richthofen is a classic example of the turbulent life between the nations of the author's family. Stanislaus was born in Kraków but was educated and influenced by the Cadet

School of Wahlstatt and became a Prussian Major. He retired from his Prussian military career to protest against the German ban on children praying in the Polish language and lived thereafter a fulfilling life in Kraków. In 1945 he was expelled from Poland by the Communists and died later in Berlin.

The fate of Stanislaus unfortunately was not an isolated happening and was a reminder of another such person during the desperate uprising in Poland in 1830. The Poet August Count von Platen Hallermund – his family nowadays related to the family v. Richthofen - was highly committed to Poland and Polish emigrants after the uprising which is documented in his passionate, freedom-inspired Polish songs:

Wir ziehn von Weib und Kindern,	We draw from wife and children
Vermögen nicht zu hinder	assets not to hinder
Des Vaterlands Ruin.	the father's homeland ruin
Schon lechzt nach unserem Blute	Already thirsting for our blood
Die Petersburger Knute,	The whip of Petersburg
Die Fuchtel von Berlin.	The rod of Berlin.

(Aus: Nächtlicher Wechsel-Uebergang der flüchtigen Polen bei Krakau)

During a v. Richthofen family reunion, the author met for the first time the German extended family with whom she shares ancestors and encountered openness, tolerance, and curiosity. The free and modern Europe made understanding and reconciliation between the different nations possible.

For the whole family of the Barons v. Richthofen, this chronicle is a precious complement to its family history.

Karl-Friedrich v. Richthofen
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