

## Short History of Münchenthal (Muzyłowice) and the Roman Catholic Church

Compiled by ... Brian Lenius, Manitoba, Canada

The village of Muzyłowice was bestowed upon the brothers Herbert and Frydrysz Fullenstein on July 22, 1386. Muzyłowice remained in the hands of this family until the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. In 1604, Staniuslaw Stadnicki bequeathed Muzyłowice to a Jesuit collegiate in Lwow. Muzyłowice belonged to the parish of Bruchnal, but at the same time, it became an important economic, administrative, and religious centre of the Jesuit Society. The Jesuit chapel in Muzyłowice existed from at least 1649 and was found on the upper floor of the wooden Jesuit manor house. In 1761, a new chapel was built in front of the manor house. It was a small brick structure, covered with white roofing tile, decorated with a bell tower. The *Lwow Collegium* was officially closed by the Austrian Crown in 1773, and with it the Jesuit estate of Muzyłowice.

The first group of German colonists to Muzyłowice included families from *Mähren* (Moravia) who settled along a road called "*Mährisch Seite*." This name even today is still used by the Ukrainians in the village over 60 years after the last German family left! Austrian Emperor Josef II officially established a colony of German Roman Catholic settlers in 1783-1784 on the land of the former Jesuit estate. The new colony was officially called *Muzyłowice Kolonia*, but was always known as *Münchenthal* to the colonists. Including the original 10 families, it now totalled 40 families who were given land totalling 660 Joch or about 20 acres per family. In the first few years, a school and a Roman Catholic Church were erected with a German teacher and pastor.

Although the church in Muzyłowice belonged to the parish of Bruchnal, as of 1784 separate Roman Catholic registers were kept for Muzyłowice. In 1785 and 1787, two successive bishops devised separate plans to reorganize the diocese and establish Muzyłowice as a new parish, but neither plan was implemented at the time. Diocesan records from 1814 mention a brick church, still found in good condition. The Muzyłowice

place of worship under the invocation of St. Anthony of Padua was confirmed in 1846. Its modest furnishings consisted of: old altar, few paintings, baptismal font, pulpit, pews and a chalice originating from Jaworów.

In 1849, the present day church building was financed and erected by our ancestors and bore the invocation of "St. Anthony of Padua." The name was changed to the "Visitation of our Blessed Mary" during the consecration of the church building in 1854. The parishioners funded the altar in 1871. It was not until 1887 that the Muzyłowice chaplainry was finally transformed into a parish. The tower was repaired in 1891. Towards the end of 1914, the occupying Russian army plundered the church and the presbytery property. The priest had earlier hidden valuable church objects and documents. In the years 1916 and 1917, the bells were removed for the needs of the Austrian army. The colonists purchased two replacement bells in 1925. The roof was also repaired in the late 1920's. Visits from other surrounding

German Catholic colonies were commonplace. One of many examples was reported in the December 29, 1929 edition of *Deutsches Volksblatt für Galizien* newspaper (inset).

*"Many of our faith had come to Münchenthal from the neighbouring towns of Weißenberg, Ottenhausen, Burgthal, Brunndorf, Ebenau, and Vorderberg to participate in the prayer week and to gain strength and faith for their everyday lives."*

With very short notice, most of the German colonists left the village in January 1940 and were repatriated to central Poland. Those remaining left during the next few years. In 1943, the parish books were confiscated by the German authorities and delivered to the *Archivamt* in Lwów. In 1944, a small band of Ukrainian Insurgent Army (*UPA*) burnt the now Polish-only parish church and on April 15, 1945 the last pastor left the church for good. Ornaments of the church were deposited in the church at Rodatycze. After the war under the Soviet Regime, the church served as a warehouse for grain, and later as a depository of artificial fertilizers that contributed greatly to the deterioration the church building. Today, it has been transformed from a curiosity to a source of hope for the Ukrainian villagers that live there.