THE ROLE AND MEANING OF ACTIVITIES PERFORMED BY UPPER SILESIAN GENTRY FAMILIES AIMING AT POPULARIZATION OF HEALTH RESORT TREATMENT IN SILESIA IN THE 19TH CENTURY AND IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

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Annotation. The aim of this paper is to present the lifestyle of gentry residing in Upper Silesia. The paper will mostly deal with their contribution into the establishment of health resorts in this region in the 19th and in the first half of the 20th century. The paper will focus mainly on chosen noble families- mostly industrial tycoons, whose contribution into the development of Silesian resorts was, according to the author of the paper, the most significant. These were: The Ballestrem’s, the Schaffgotsch’s, the Hochberg’s, the Promnitz’s, the Anhalt’s, the Zawadzki’s and others. Their actions led to the foundation of many resorts in Czarków, Grabin, Kokoszycze, Trzebina, and to the development of the existing ones in Cieplice, Szczawnowsko-Zdrój, and Głucholazy. The Upper Silesia lands, which had been a part of Prussia since Prussian-Austrian war (1740-1763) were returned to Poland in 1815 (1816) and became a part of Opole Province which is now a part of Opole and Silesia Province.

Key words: gentry families, health resort, treatment.

Introduction

Gentry residing in Upper Silesia in the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century, was a social group with knightly and noble traditions. They also had their family coats of arms, but their lifestyle, family relations and financial position were different from typical noblemen. This term included both aristocracy and affluent noblemen who did not have any aristocratic titles, but whose lifestyle was very aristocratic. One of a distinguishing feature of this group was management. They employed hired hand workers, they had a qualified governing body and applied latest technologies. Another important feature was their right to poses their own property of about 50 hectare (Jasiewicz K., 1995).

Silesian feudal lords had been gaining profits from their own medical water springs since the 18th century. In most of the preserved records, gentry families are described as industrial tycoons. Among them there were: The Ballestrem’s, The Schaffgotsch’s, The Hochberg’s, The Promnitz’s, The Anhalt’s, The Zawadzki’s and others (Korzeniowska W., 1997). Their activities became a part of rules established in 1797 by a Prussian King Frederick Wilhelm for a health resort in Łądek (Kwaśni Z., 1965).

The rules were imposed on all resort owners. At first, this new idea required a significant expenditure on resort construction and furnishing, but later on it gained enormous profits. Many resorts became very popular. Among them Kokoszycze, on Franc von Zawadzki property, known also as “sulphur Łądek of Uppersilesians” (Wróbel A., 1991) or “Eastern Wörirschöfen” (Kutzner P., 1928) in Głucholazy.

The resorts had yielded most profits till the second half of the 19th century. However, some of them became popular in the second half of the 19th century. Some of the resorts lost their prestige because they were neither maintained properly nor reconstructed. Moreover resort modernization in the industrial era was seen as unprofitable.

The Aim of the Work

The aim of this paper is to present the lifestyle of gentry residing in Upper Silesia. The paper will mostly deal with their contribution into the establishment of health resorts in this region in the 19th and in the first half of the 20th century.

Results of work.

A very good example of this kind is resort in Czarków, the first health resort in Upper Silesia. Czarków used to be the poorest village in Pszczyna State Country and the discovery of springs of mineral water and their medical properties changed the status of the forgotten and unnoticed village. The distinguishing quality of the self-appearing water drew attention of Pszczyna prince Frederic Ferdinand Anhalt, who commissioned his court chemist to analyze the chemical properties of water. The analysis showed that the water had healing properties and in 1801 the Prince decided to ask the Prussian King for permission to open a physiotherapeutic resort in Czarków. After more precise inquiries carried out by a local physician, in 1802 Pszczyna Prince was given a permit to begin the construction of the resort (Włodarska T., 1982).

The Hochberg’s family, King John Henry V in particular, opened a European standard resort in Szczawnowsko-Zdrój. In 1815, the king decided to turn Górne Szczawnowo village into a resort equipped with all necessary devices. In the same year he employed a resort doctor August Zemplin, who made the resort very popular.
In 1816, the Prince took the initiative and built a pump room of mineral water, a theatre, band room, several hotels and inns (Falkiewicz A., Starzewska A., 1975). Prince John Henry V known also as a patron of art contributed to the reconstruction of Pszczyna Park into an English landscape park. It took place in the second half of the 19th century, and all elements of romantic architecture such as wide views, pools and ponds were used. Some architectonic elements like arch bridges, classic arbours, etc. were also characteristic of this place. King John Henry was said to have a "powerful obsession of constructing". Due to his efforts, an enormous sanatorium "Grand Hotel" was built in Szczawno-Zdrój in 1910 (Fürstin von Pless..., 1930).

Apart from enterprise, Upper Silesian noble families were also famous for being interested in traveling. Going to spring water resorts either in Upper Silesia or to neighbouring countries, became very fashionable. Cieplice property, which in the 14th century belonged to Schaffgotsch family was visited not only by Silesian gentry, but also by aristocratic families like Rzidiwil, Sapiecha, Czartoryski, Potocki (Kwaśny Z., 1965). The dynamic development of the resort took place in 1812, when Earl Leopold Gotard Schaffgotsch purchased monastery property. Another fashionable resort Pokój (Carlsruhe) in Opole Province was also very popular in the 19th century. It belonged to Prince von Württemberg-Oels properties and it was a magnate manor in a garden place, which was closer to a climatherapy resort.

Many health resort patients visited also mentioned above Kokoszyce and Czarków resorts as well as Grabin in Silesian Opole region, which at first was a part of Earl Edward Promnitz's properties. Later on, Grabin became a property of Earl Colonný-Walewski (Korzeniowska W., 1992).

Earl Franc Ballestrem from Plawniowice also contributed significantly to the development of Upper Silesian resorts. He shared Prince John Henry's passion for constructing (Ehren H., 1935). Due to his social and charity activities many residential settlements and working class settlements were built. They were constructed within Earl's industrial districts. The most important settlement was founded in Rokitnica village, now a quarter of Zabrze, which is famous for Medical Academy. Moreover, thanks to his efforts in Ruda a modern hospital, an orphanage and local school were opened (Neubach H., 1984).

In Głucholazy, the biggest resort in Silesian Opole in the 19th century, F. Ballestrem helped to construct two health holiday resorts: "Waldesruh"- for adults and "Waldschule" for children. They were both built in 1908, in a beautiful forest area, to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of the Ballestrem's. The buildings were very modern and they were equipped with central heating, electric light, a ballroom and a modern kitchen. Separate rooms for baths and inhalatorium were provided for asthma, tuberculosis and anaemia sufferers. The overall cost of the construction was about 500 marks. The resort covered the area of 11 hectares and it included a near forest, a pond and a field. In the summer they organized "Venice nights" with gondola trips and lanterns and in the wintertime the pond was turned into an ice ring. Miners were allowed to stay at "Waldesruh" with their families for two weeks. Moreover, the Earl paid for the costs of transport, housing, and medical aid. He even gave pocket money of 3 marks (Kowalski R., 1998).

When talking about the influence of gentry on the development of Upper Silesian resorts, one cannot forget Prince Gebhard Blücher von Wahlstatt, who owned Trzebina property located near Prudnik, and who was later a marshal of Prussian army and a leader who won battles with Napoleon and in Waterloo. Although Prince Gebhard Blücher von Wahlstatt wasn't a member of Upper Silesian families, the king expressed his gratitude for his bravery and in return for soldier's pay and equipage lost during a 7-year-war he gave this property to him. Thanks to it, Trzebina became a well known, almost historical place, which was visited by a Prussian national hero. The villagers believed that in Trzebina the Prince had made a plan, which later on he put into operation, to attack Napoleon and to free Prussia from a foreign rule (Otto C., 1909).

The influence of gentry on the development of the resorts was noticed mostly by health resort visitors, who willingly visited Upper Silesian resorts and waterling places. They were modern, well equipped, and they fulfilled sanitary standards and offered entertainment. They immediately gained prestige and approval abroad and they were competitive with bigger and more famous European resorts. The indirect evidence of this approval is an award which Vincenz Priessnitz, the founder of Gräfenberg resort in Austrian Silesia, received from Emperor Ferdynand Habsburg in 1846. It was a 1st Class Civil Gold Medal which was the highest civil award, and had never been received before. It expressed the government's gratitude for Priessnitz's contribution into the development of hydrotherapy, and for making the unknown resort famous all over the world (Grünner O., 1997).

It is noteworthy that almost all resorts built in the 19th century were modelled on Gräfenberg resort and thanks to it they were noticed and appreciated by tourists and patients who were looking for relief.

Conclusion

Another example worth mentioning is Empress Augusta Victoria, who offered Głucholazy help after the biggest flood in the history of this town. The total amount of the damage reached 800.000 marks and it was more serious than other floods in the 19th century. Nobody knows what the future of the town and resort would be without Empress's help. She visited Głucholazy on 10, August 1903 and he granted a substantial financial aid, which enabled the town to be quickly rebuilt and the resorts and watering places to continue their activities (Migała M., 2003).

Although neither Emperor Ferdinand Habsburg nor Empress Augusta Victoria was a member of Upper Silesian gentry, they appreciated the actions of Upper Silesian gentry families and they motivated others to invest in health resorts.
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