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War and Peace - It depends on where you live

Wednesday, August 28, 2013

The mountains of central and eastern Slovakia were battlegrounds near the end of WWII, but this village survived intact - probably because it's so high up, accessible only by a very narrow road and few people live here. Now tourists come to visit.



Unfortunately, the villages of both of my grandparents were not as lucky. Both were located in the path of advancing armies.

We visited the site of the Battle of Dukla Pass (Svidnik) where the Red Army fought the Nazis to liberate Slovakia.

"Udolie Smrti" is translated as "The Valley of Death"



Habura, mentioned below, was my Grandfather's village.

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brigades, as well as other units. After 51 days of exhausting fighting against effective German defences in mountainous conditions, the advancing forces penetrated into the interior of Slovakia some 40 – 110 km. They pushed the front lines south of the Dukla Pass, Habura, Ruské, Sobrance, Čop by the end of October 1944, while simultaneously liberating Sub-Carpatho-Ukraine and the peripheral parts of East Slovakia, with a total liberated area of 1,000 km².

In the course that Joe & I just completed (Slovak Language and Culture), I learned a song "Pravda Vitazi"
In the museum at Svidnik those words were on the flag carried by the combined forces of the Soviet and Czechoslovak troops.



Ironically, I learned the song in the context of the protest against the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

"Pravda Vitazi" means "Truth Will Win"

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DR1939

I've been thinking about this post and how it accurate it is.



Personal example: I was raised in the south although by, for Texas, decided unprejudiced parents. However, I still came away with an unacknowledged understanding that the American Civil War was entirely due to economic reasons and the need to control the supply of cotton. Once I moved north plus the burgeoning civil rights movement, I realized that that was a bunch of hooey.

We have traveled extensively in France and England and are amazed at the animosity that exists between the countries, to the point that our English friends call cappuccino "milky coffee" and a tisane an infusion. They are offended when we point out that we are talking about the same thing.

When we were in Hungary we visited the National Museum. In the display on WWII I was surprised to see all blame for their involvement shifted to the Germans. In Berlin we were told that the Allies destroyed the city without reason and that women and children were deliberately bombed. In Ireland we were told how horrid the British occupation, and that is what it was, was. Our English friends said it wasn't that bad. In Wales we stayed in the town of Llandudno where we were taught the proper pronunciation. Our English friends who recommended the B&B and had been vacationing in the area for over 20 years pronounced it as it is spelled in English. When we said that we were told it was Clandidno they said "oh, the Welsh, they are funny like that."

I could go on and on, but I'm sure you have examples of your own. One of the reasons I do not like to take tours is that one is shown sites and given interpretations that the guides think we want to hear. When we go on our own we can talk to people, visit the museums at our own pace, and find monuments with inscriptions or buildings with bullet holes in them and form our own understanding. Of course, we read extensively on the histories of the countries.

I reread what I wrote and want to make it clear that I do not believe the US is different from the rest of the world. We have our own perceptions of what occurred, and we are very resistant to change. Thanks for such a thought-provoking blog.

2845 days ago

MISCHAKEO

I always feel the sadness of conflict and war when I visit those places. We went to some Civil War sites last summer. I am enjoying your photos and the history.

2846 days ago





MARYJEANSL

This is so interesting. I think it is important to know about one's family's history. And of course I think history is important to learn about and study in general. For generations to come, your family will appreciate what you have researched.

2846 days ago



GINIEMIE

It does matter where you live and what you/your family lived through. We all have our own perspective, only the facts don't change. Thanks for taking us on your tour with you.



2847 days ago



DR1939

I love visiting small local museums. They give a much more personal perspective on the people's experiences.

2847 days ago



KELLIEBEAN

Interesting perspectives. It must be so powerful to see these places. Very moving.

2847 days ago



WATERMELLEN

Discrepant perspectives: we view history through our own lens always . . . and inevitably.

2847 days ago



ONEKIDSMOM

Where people are personally affected by armed conflict, the politics become a bit fuzzy, don't they?

2847 days ago



CD12146214

Hey glad to see you made it home safely!

Thanks for your blog as I didn't know any off those details.

2847 days ago



PMRUNNER

Pretty interesting walk through history, thanks for sharing!

2847 days ago



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