



# Gen Dobry!

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**\*\*\* WELCOME! \*\*\***

to the latest issue of *Gen Dobry!*, the e-zine of PolishRoots®. If you missed previous issues, you can find them here:

<<http://polishroots.org/GenDobry/tabid/60/Default.aspx>>

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### \*\*\* SOME TIPS ON DECIPHERING NAMES \*\*\*

by Fred Hoffman <[wfh@langline.com](mailto:wfh@langline.com)>

Jonathan D. Shea and I have been working quite a bit lately on the Latin volume of the *In Their Words* series of translation guides. Those words may cause rejoicing in the patient souls who've been waiting for this book for more than a decade. Don't get too happy—we still have a lot of work left to do. But we are making progress, and the end is in sight.

Jonathan suggested I write the initial translation and analysis of the sample documents, because I have more formal instruction in Latin than he does. He's focused more on assembling the documents, talking about the research aspects, and—very important!—proofreading and improving what I write. I confess, that makes me breathe easier. I find myself making the most horrendous mistakes as I type; it's a relief to know he won't let anything too brain-dead find its way into print.

Analyzing the sample documents is comparatively easy when it comes to grammar and standard vocabulary. The part that really makes me sweat is deciphering the proper names, that is, names of places and people. With the boilerplate text that appears in most of these records, an experienced researcher knows what facts will be covered, and that makes them easier to recognize. Proper names are a different matter. The astonishing variety of names for places and people in Central and Eastern Europe is enough to intimidate anyone.

I have the advantage of a fair amount of experience with these names, however, acquired mainly by making years of mistakes and slowly learning from them. I thought it might benefit some of you if I pass along a few of the tips I use to cope with names.

Perhaps the best advice is to get hold of at least one full page from the records in question, and if possible, more. A page or two before and after the one that interests you can make a huge difference. If all you have to work with is a single entry or paragraph, that minimizes your chances of success. The larger the sample of handwriting you can review, the better you will cope with it.

I also like to see the first two pages from a given sacramental register. It is not uncommon for the title page to spell out the names of the places covered and the period covered. On the second page, some registers list the priests who served at that parish during the period covered by the book. This information is usually written out more clearly and more completely than in the individual entries. A look at these pages can help you take the first step in recognizing how a particular priest wrote specific words and letters.

Before making an urgent effort to decipher the specific entries that matter to you, it's a good idea to simply sit back, look at the whole page, and take it all in. I know that on first sight, I often react by saying "I can't read a damn thing here!" But after a few minutes, I began to pick out a word here and there; if nothing else, that gives me confidence I may ultimately be able to figure it out.

I strongly advise not trying to plow your way through the whole thing on first sight. Pick out what words you can, then set the task aside for a day or two. When you come back to it and begin to study it again, you may be surprised how much more you can make out. What seemed impossible at first sight begins to be possible. You may not be up to reading it all yet; but you probably will string words together into phrases, and that's real progress. If possible, set it aside and come back to it once more. The third try is when you should make a determined push to figure it all out.

Some records were written in a format that called for each entry to have sequential numbers, place names, and surnames in the left margin. If you're lucky enough to have such a record, use that information for all it's worth. I can't tell you how many times a surname has seemed illegible when I first saw it in the entry I was trying to translate. But when I looked at other entries, I spotted the name written more legibly. After all, most of these parishes were relatively small places, and the number of different families living there was limited. By their very nature, these records will have the same place names and family names showing up again and again. That's why being able to work with a sizable sampling of the records comes in so handy.

I approach place names, first names, and surnames differently. Each category offers its own challenges; but each has also attracted the attention of researchers who toffer to help you with them.

## PLACE NAMES

With place names, for instance, you are dealing with a limited set of possibilities. Granted, the set may be large; but there are maps and atlases and gazetteers to aid you. Anything that helps you focus on one area and exclude others is valuable. If all you know is that this ancestor came from the German partition of Poland, at least you can disregard places in the Russian and Austrian partitions. That makes a big difference.

I always say "Oh, what the hell" and try to write down the name as best I can, then do a Google search for it. This often leads nowhere; but as you gain experience, you begin to realize that your instincts are right. Even if you say "That can't be the name," try looking for it. Your best guess may be closer than you realize.

A search of Wikipedia will often prove helpful, especially if you use the appropriate language. There are places not mentioned in the English version of Wikipedia that show up in the German or Polish versions, for instance. Even if you don't read a bit of German or Polish, you should try those versions. The search may bring up a page that has maps or links that will tell you whether or not you've found the right place.

For places in the German partition, Uwe Krickhahn's Kartenmeister site is especially valuable. It lets you search for places by their German names or their Polish names, and specify the *Kreis* or *Provinz* it was in, or the closest city. If you find the place you need, you can check to see if others have registered as researching that same place and compare notes. Whenever I think I may

be dealing with the name of a place that was once ruled by Germany, <<http://www.kartenmeister.com>> is where I go first.

Another valuable site is the JewishGen database formerly referred to as ShtetlSeeker, now called the JewishGen Gazetteer, at <<http://www.jewishgen.org/communities/loctown.asp>>. This searches over a million localities in 54 countries. You can narrow the search by country or region. You can also search using Beider-Morse Phonetic Matching, which focuses less on spelling and more on what the name sounds like; or you can specify a particular spelling.

## FIRST NAMES

First names are comparable to place names in that there is a limited set of possibilities, unlike surnames, where you're talking about literally hundreds of thousands of names to choose from. In fact, we find that our ancestors tended to select from perhaps a few dozen common given names. Oh, you get a smart aleck now and again who had to saddle his poor children with some bizarre names that would haunt them the rest of their lives. But priests were supposed to instruct parents they had to choose baptismal names from among the names of saints recognized by the Church; most of them took this duty seriously. As a result, if you can get the first two or three letters of the name, you stand a very good chance of being able to recognize it with a little work.

If I think I might know what the name is, I find Wikipedia very helpful. If you go to the Wikipedia for the specific language involved and begin typing in the name, a set of possible matches appears. Often you can simply choose from the one that works best. If that name seems unfamiliar, check the left side of the page to see if an equivalent English page exists. These days, a lot of German and Polish and Ukrainian names that seem rather obscure to most Americans have entries that discuss their meaning and history. If such pages exist only on the Polish or German or Ukrainian Wikipedia sites, with no corresponding English page, you can at least use Google translate to get a notion of what's said.

There are also numerous websites that give information on first names. One I frequently consult is <<http://www.behindthename.com>>. The information on derivation given there does not always coincide with the opinions of the best scholars. But that won't matter to you if all you're trying to do is identify a name and get some slight notion of what it meant and who used it. There are cases in which the specific form of the name tells you something about the ethnic identity of its bearer. It can be useful, for instance, to know that *Pylyp* is the distinctively Ruthenian or Ukrainian form of the name of Poles used in the form *Filip*, which we know as *Philip*. The specific pages listed under <<http://www.behindthename.com/usage.php>> can be helpful in this regard—though in all honesty, I must admit some of the pages are not impressive in terms of coverage and accuracy. The Polish one is respectable.

## SURNAMES

As for surnames ... well I've written a rather lengthy book on the subject of Polish surnames. If you're looking for someone to discuss the subject concisely, I'm probably not the right guy. But I can give you a few pointers.

If the surnames involved are probably Polish, you have to know about the two sites where you can search modern databases of surnames borne by Polish citizens. One is the Herby site at <<http://www.herby.com.pl/indexslo.html>>; the other is the Moikrewni site at <<http://www.moikrewni.pl/mapa/>>. The Herby site uses 1990 data that leaves something to be desired in terms of accuracy; but this site is comparatively simple to search. The Moikrewni site uses more accurate 2002 data, but is a bit more challenging to use and has a few quirks of its own; formatting inconsistencies in the original data source cause the algorithm to parse the data inaccurately sometimes. Each of the sites, therefore, has its pluses and minuses. I've written about them before in *Gen Dobry!*, so I won't abuse your patience by discussing them again. But if you're trying to recognize a name, they can help a lot.

Another really valuable source is Avotaynu's Consolidated Jewish Surname Index at <<http://www.avotaynu.com/csi/csi-home.htm>>. And please, don't say "I'm not Jewish!" While there are a number of distinctively Jewish surnames, a great many surnames were and are borne by Jews and Christians alike (including *Hoffman*, incidentally). This site is unquestionably more helpful for Jewish researchers; but non-Jews can benefit from it greatly, as well. The CJSI searches 42 databases using the Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex system, which focuses on phonetic similarities rather than spelling. The result is, you see the name not only with its "proper" spelling, but also in many plausible variations. You might never see most of those variations in Poland itself; but they may prove priceless in dealing with the kind of mutilation that immigrants' surnames were typically subjected to.

You might be surprised how often Googling a surname proves useful; and Facebook has lots of lots of pages for Poles, Ukrainians, Germans, and so forth. You never know who you might run into there!

For various historical reasons, many people classified as Poles often had their names written down in the Cyrillic alphabet. I know some folks are intimidated by that alphabet and flee in horror whenever they encounter it. But if you're made of sterner stuff, it's a good idea to try a Google search for a Cyrillic rendition of the name. This isn't necessarily hard to do. Steve Morse's website has, among its jillions of useful features, an app that lets you generate Cyrillic spellings of names. You just go to <<http://stevemorse.org/russian/eng2rus.html>> and type the name into the appropriate box. As you do so, the app generates variety of plausible Cyrillic forms. You can copy those, paste them into the Google search box, and have a grand old time trying to make sense of the results! But hey, you've got nothing better to do, right ;-)

## CONCLUSION

I can't say for sure how helpful these tips will be for most researchers. All I can say is that these are things I try all the time when attempting to make sense of a name I can't make out. If it works for me, it may work for you. I hope so—research is quite a challenge, and we can all use all the help we can get.

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**\*\*\* LETTERS TO THE EDITOR \*\*\***

Subject: Miracles Do Happen!

*Editor*—I thought this was worth sharing with you, and Mr. Mandeville kindly agreed to let me publish it.

Mr. Hoffman,

The best part of our trip (my brother and I) to Poland was finding my grandmother's 1890 baptismal book that was lost for decades. During our visit to St. Józef church in Tarnawiec, Poland, the pastor told us, without looking, as he had told thousands before us, that he did not have the baptismal book. Our guide, Magda, told him that we came thousands of miles to visit the place where my grandmother was born and that we would probably never return. Therefore, she wanted to go through the records so that she could look us in the eyes and tell us there was not a book in the church's archives. The priest argued with her in Polish for a while. I guess she wore him down and he agreed to let her look through all of church's records, under his watchful eyes. There, in a mislabeled box, were the baptismal records for 1867–1890. The book had my grandmother's record and all the related information about the baptism; names, date, places, grandparents. We could not believe it; some of us were in a daze, some crying, and some shaking. It was a very beautiful moment. Even the priest had tears in his eyes.

I was so happy, but kept thinking about the other people in the book and their families. The book had at least 50 pages with about 15 names per page. How many others have asked about someone in this book and told the book is not here, lost, or somewhere else? We were very blessed with having a stubborn tour guide with a sense of compassion. I hope the book is copied and put in the Catholic Archives in Przemyśl, for everyone to access.

My brother and I used Ancestral Attic Tours for our drivers, guides, and interpreters while in Poland. Thanks to you, Mr. Hoffman, for publishing an article about Ancestral Attic Tours last year. Some of my genealogy cousins have used them as city tour guides and were very pleased. Basically, Magda was our person in Warsaw and Częstochowa; she dropped us off in Kraków. Margaret was our person in Kraków and Zakopane; she dropped us off in Rzeszów. Again, Magda was our person in Rzeszów, Przemyśl, Brzyska Wola, and Łańcut.

Ancestral Attic Tours is an Eastern European & Poland Genealogy Research and Heritage Tour company. We worked with Elaine Bostwick to customize our two-week tour. She matched the tour guides to our personalities and the sights that we wanted to visit. They were with us all the time; they pick us up at the airport in Warsaw and dropped us off two weeks later at the Rzeszów-Jasionka Airport, and even stayed with us until we boarded to plane. We never felt safer in a foreign country. My brother and I agreed that this is the only way to tour a country. This was a fantastic decision.

<<http://ancestralattic.com>>

This proves that miracles do and can happen!

Thank you again & God Bless,

Larry Mandeville

*Editor*—I am, of course, delighted this worked out so well for you, and that you feel you can recommend Ancestral Attic Tours. I always like to share info about companies and organizations that have helped our readers, because there are so many who want to visit Poland and are looking for reliable people to work with ... As for copying the records and making them available at the Przemyśl Archdiocesan Archive, I hate to pour cold water on a project, but I don't think that would work. The man in charge there, Rev. Dr. Henryk Borcz, was hospitable to genealogists at one time; but that situation changed long ago. I don't want to bad-mouth him—I'm sure he has his reasons, and many priests are sick of being pestered by genealogists. But from what I hear, requests to search that archive's holdings are usually denied or ignored. If anybody can come up with an alternate idea, I'd love to hear it!

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Dear Editor,

I have been receiving the *Gen Dobry!* newsletter for considerable time now and thought that your readers might be interested in a book I have just had published. In much the same way as many of your readers, I had been keen on investigating my Polish Roots but found it difficult to know what really happened to my Polish father at the beginning of World War II.

The way I researched the information was to build a timeline of where my fathers' old photos and documents indicated he was and to build a story of what was happening in these places. Further evidence came from the occasional comments he had made when he was alive. This was surprisingly easy to do with Google translate and links taking me to the next part of the story and enabled me to develop what I have been told is a very emotional and moving story.

I named the story *An Ordinary Polish Boy: Journey to England* as it soon became evident that my father's life and his journey were similar to those of thousands of displaced Poles from this era.

My story is about a 14-year-old boy (my father) living in southeast Poland at the beginning of World War II. The small town he lives in becomes the site of battle involving thousands of soldiers from the German, Polish, and Russian armies. The story describes how the Germans took over the area, how they controlled the local population through murder and forced labour, and what happened when they built the first extermination camp near the boy's town. The story then follows his journey as he is rounded up and taken into forced labour to Berlin and then on to Italy, where he eventually joined up with the Polish Second Corps, and finally what happened when he arrived in England as a refugee.

Although I originally wrote the story as a legacy for my family, the end product was so well received by friends and the Polish Community in Bristol, England that I decided to publish it. Quite a few people are also trying to build timelines of what happened to their families during the war.

If anyone is interested the book is available on Amazon US and UK, Barnes and Noble as well as e-books - <[http://www.amazon.com/Ordinary-Polish-Boy-Journey-England/dp/1481782347/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1370027962&sr=1-1&keywords=ordinary+polish+boy](http://www.amazon.com/Ordinary-Polish-Boy-Journey-England/dp/1481782347/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1370027962&sr=1-1&keywords=ordinary+polish+boy)>.

Thanks,

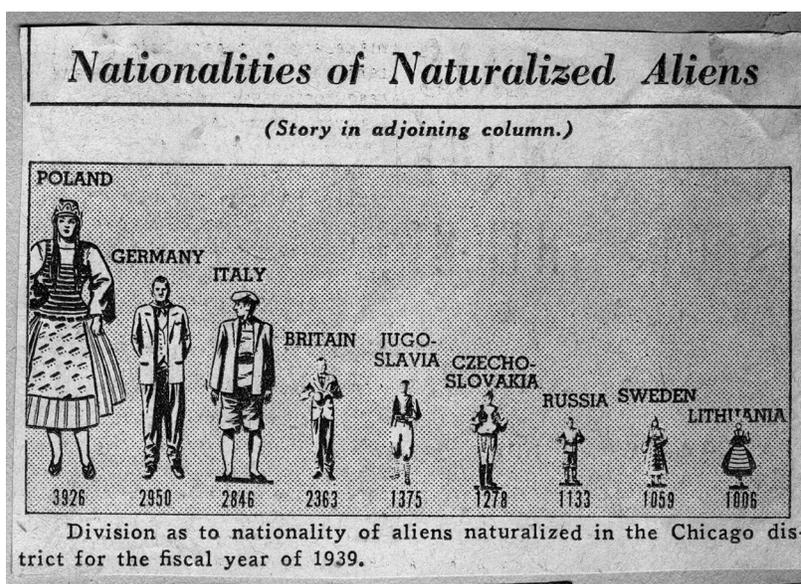
Brendan Redko

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**\*\*\* NATURALIZED POLES IN CHICAGO BY NUMBER - 1939 \*\*\***

by *Paul S. Valasek, DDS* <[paval56@aol.com](mailto:paval56@aol.com)>

This small newspaper clipping was recently unearthed within a scrapbook donated to the Czechoslovak Heritage Museum of Oakbrook, IL. It appears the scrapbook was originally compiled from the 1920s through the 1940s. Though the material is about 98% geared for Czech- and Slovak- Americans, this one chart caught my eye. It is from an English-language newspaper, most likely based in Chicago, and is dated to the year 1939. It gives totals



of naturalized aliens in the Chicago District (not sure what that encompasses—the district; city, county, ring counties?), for the fiscal year 1939. As you can see immediately, Poles are in the lead by a large distance. Not surprising as Chicago was and probably still is the second-largest city populated by Poles in the world outside of Warsaw. Though the clipping states the story is adjoining, there is no sign of such within the yearbook. So that narrows down the search to most likely a Chicago American based newspaper, for the “fiscal” year 1939. That could include the *Sun*, *Daily News*, *Herald American*, *Tribune*, and many other smaller newspapers. Has anyone seen this graphic before and can add to the story?

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**\*\*\* FEBRUARY 1917 CONNECTICUT MILITARY CENSUS \*\*\***

*by Tom Sadauskas*

A recent addition to Ancestry.com is the February 1917 Military Census that the State of Connecticut took with more than 400,000 men (age 16 and older) completing the form. Many of the males were Polish immigrants so you may be able to find a long lost ancestor in this database. I managed to find my grandmother uncle who was registered in completely unexpected town from what I had thought.

The three volume book set is also available online via Google books at:

[http://www.ebooksread.com/authors-eng/connecticut-commission-on-state-government-organizational-service-records--connecticut-men-and-women-in-the-armed-forces-of-the-united-st-iff.shtml](http://www.ebooksread.com/authors-eng/connecticut-commission-on-state-government-organizational-service-records--connecticut-men-and-women-in-the-armed-forces-of-the-united-states-if.shtml)>

The information is as follows:

Book info:

Author: Connecticut. Commission on State Government Organizational  
Title: Service records : Connecticut men and women in the armed forces of the United States during World War, 1917-1920 (Volume v.1)  
Publisher: Office of the Adjutant General, State Armory  
Subject (keywords, tags): World War, 1914-1918 -- Connecticut

Description:

Index by name is in vol. 3.; Other title: Connecticut service records; Other title: Connecticut roster 1917-1920; Other title: Service records, Connecticut World War I, 1917-1920

Contributor: Connecticut State Library

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**\*\*\* NEWS, CHANGES, AND A DEEP BREATH BEFORE THE TOURS SEASON STARTS \*\*\***

*Editor*—For those of you who don't subscribe to the PolishOrigins newsletter, here's the latest from Zenon and the team.

Spring took its time to arrive but now it's here and we enjoy this beautiful time in Poland. We have some news and information we would like to share with you.

First of all, we write proudly that PolishOrigins keeps improving and advancing in new ways to

provide you with more positive experience! This year we have officially become a **licensed tour operator**, which allows us to create new options for you, our dear guests!

That is why on our website you can now find three types of PolishOrigins Tours. In addition to our **Genealogy Tours**, we are now offering you Galicia Tour and our newest proposal for you: Family & Friends Tours.

### **Genealogy Tours**

Formerly known as our Forefathers Traces Tours, these are tailor-made genealogy trips to the towns and villages of your ancestors. We establish itineraries for each Tour, together with you, to meet your specific expectations.

Our goals are: to continue the research you were not able to complete because of a lack of access to records; to visit the places where your ancestors were born and lived; and sometimes even find your distant relatives. See more about this offer, blog and testimonials <[http://polishorigins.com/document/genealogy\\_tours](http://polishorigins.com/document/genealogy_tours)>.

### **Galicia Tour**

There are still openings available for our Galicia Tour in September and October 2013! It is a very beautiful time in Poland, so try not to miss this occasion to join us. During this tour we want to show you traces of the old life which have survived the centuries, and tell you stories about the life of your ancestors. We will also show you the present-day life in Poland, in which you can still notice many signs of the older times, in authentic architecture and traditional customs, cherished by people in their everyday life. Our goal is to enrich your understanding of your forefathers' life by visiting their Old Country what can give you something more meaningful and moving than just their names and dates from the old records. See the detailed itinerary and offer here:

<[http://polishorigins.com/document/galicia\\_tour](http://polishorigins.com/document/galicia_tour)>

### **Family and Friends Tours**

Have you already visited Poland to trace your ancestors? Is your curiosity still growing for more experiences? Are you tired of large groups and the dizzying pace of sightseeing tours? Do you like independence and flexibility during your travels? Do you want to show Poland to your closest relatives and friends? Do you have special wishes that do not fit any regular tour? Then this tour is designed especially for you! Please contact us and we will prepare the itinerary for you. Creating and preparing your itinerary does not entail any obligation on your part, and is free of charge. Any and all costs will apply to the services in Poland that we will provide. See more details:

<[http://polishorigins.com/document/family\\_and\\_friends](http://polishorigins.com/document/family_and_friends)>

Find out more about our all PolishOrigins Tours: <<http://tours.polishorigins.com>>.

In addition to the PolishOrigins Tours, there are many other interesting and informing topics happening online on our websites. Read the newest articles in our Blog:

<<http://blog.polishorigins.com/>>

### **Road Shrines in Poland**

They are made of concrete or wood. They are separate constructions or attached to trees. They are small like bird feeders or as big as a chapel. They have figures of saints or they are just crucifixes. They are road shrines.

Road shrines are something very common in Poland and we often do not pay much attention to them. They were always just part of the landscape. Only after visiting the Polish countryside with our guests did we realize that this is something that is not so usual. Read full article here:

<<http://blog.polishorigins.com/2013/04/04/road-shrines-in-poland>>

### **Louie's postcard**

Read also the entry about the amazing discovery of our forum members - Darek and Louis:

“When sorting through my parents’ memorabilia, I found the postal card, which indicated that a package was sent on 12 September 1946 by my father, Louis J. Wilne (...). Since I was just 5 and a half at the time, I have only a vague memory of my mother, Freda Philipsek Welna, packing such a box. I think peanut butter was one of the items. I knew this was not my dad’s handwriting on the card...”.

That is the beginning of this amazing and inspiring story that we have witnessed in our Forum not so long ago. An attempt to decipher the handwritten text finished beautifully with finding traces of Darek’s relatives! Read the full story about Louie’s Postcard here:

<<http://blog.polishorigins.com/2013/03/20/amazing-discovery-of-darek-and-louis/>>

Our Forum, as usual is bursting with fascinating stories and information. The work done every single day by our members is impressive and inspiring. See some of the new threads:

Do you have the feeling that you have come to a dead end with your family research? Please check the thread: What to do when Catholic parish in Poland has no info. Maybe it will give you a clue in your research...

Do you have ancestors from the Podhale region in Poland? Or maybe you might just be interested in this region’s rich culture? We invite you to check the section: Polish Gorals - Highlanders. There are plenty of interesting articles, movie, and book suggestions. It is a living community in our Forum!

To help you with planning your trip to Poland, we will be adding some short articles concerning places we believe are worth visiting, and we invite you to add your suggestions and recommendations to our forum, using these sections: Places worth seeing and Traveling to Poland - practical hints.

Now, as we are just a short step before summer and the holiday season, we are anxiously awaiting our dearest guests to come! We have been working hard during the winter and early spring, to prepare all of the details that are necessary to provide you with the trip of your dreams.

If you would like to be up to date with what we are doing about genealogy studies or just want the opportunity to meet our other members and to share our common passions, we invite you to our Forum.

If you're a Facebook user you will find PolishOrigins profile there as well!

<<https://www.facebook.com/PolishOrigins>>

If you want, please help to spread the news! We would appreciate if you forward our mail to anyone you think might be interested in the topic.

Greetings from Poland!

PolishOrigins Team

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**\*\*\* NGS PRESIDENT'S CITATION AWARDED TO JAN MEISELS ALLEN  
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*Editor*—I read this note posted by Hal Bookbinder to the JewishGen newsgroup on May 8. It tells of recognition granted to Jan Meisels Allen, a lady who has made great contributions to genealogy, especially in her defense of open records. I feel certain Mr. Bookbinder would like us to pass the word along, because her work deserves as much recognition and support as it can get!

Jan Meisels Allen, IAJGS Vice President and JGSCV President, was recognized at the opening session of the annual National Genealogy Society Conference in Las Vegas with the NGS President's Citation. The award recognizes her vigilance in support of records preservation and in defense of open access to public records.

She serves as the IAJGS representative on the Records Preservation and Access Committee (RPAC), a joint committee of NGS, FGS and IAJGS. The award cited her relentless efforts in tracking legislation and in strongly advocating with elected and appointed officials and their staffs to maintain open access to public records.

If you want to be kept informed of the latest legislative battles she and RPAC are waging on your behalf, consider subscribing to the Records Access Alert List by going to <<http://lists.iajgs.org/mailman/listinfo/records-access-alerts>> and following the sign-up instructions.

Congratulations and thank you, Jan!

Hal Bookbinder

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**\*\*\* UPCOMING EVENTS \*\*\***

*Note: see also <<http://www.eogn.com/calendar/>> for a large selection of upcoming events in the world of genealogy.*

**June 14–15, 2013**

**POLISH INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES IN AMERICA (PIASA)  
71st Annual Meeting: A Multi-disciplinary Conference on Polish Studies  
HYATT ARLINGTON HOTEL  
1325 Wilson Blvd.  
Arlington, VA 22209**

Guest speaker during Saturday night banquet: Maria Siemionow, MD, PhD, world renowned scientist and microsurgeon.

For more info: <<http://www.piasa.org/>>

*[Based on a note posted by William H. Szych to the Facebook Group “The Way Back -- Unknown Stories of WWII Poland”]*

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**June 16–21, 2013**

**GENEALOGY “SUMMER CAMP”  
Toronto Branch, Ontario Genealogical Society  
Toronto, CANADA**

Genealogy “Summer Camp” is a unique program that brings out-of-town family historians to Toronto for an intensive week of tutorials and hands-on research, with the guidance of local experts, at the many archives and reference libraries in Toronto. We take full advantage of Toronto’s great public transit system, and we keep the group small to allow lots of help from our local experts.

If you're from out-of-town, we encourage you to stay with the group. We have arranged economical university residence accommodation.

The 2013 Genealogy "Summer Camp" will be number 17! More than 135 participants from England, right across Canada and many US states have attended the 16 previous Summer Camps—some more than once! We've also welcomed many local participants as "day campers." It is an excellent way to get acquainted (or reacquainted) with the libraries and archives in our city. It is also a great excuse for a week of concentrated research.

**This year's Summer Camp is scheduled for June 16 to 21, 2013.** The Summer Camp fee for 2013 is \$240 (Cdn), which covers approximately 7 hours of lectures and tutorials, 25 hours of hands-on instruction and all worksheets and handouts.

For details as to venues, resources, tutorials and accommodation, and to download an application package, visit <[www.torontofamilyhistory.org/summercamp.html](http://www.torontofamilyhistory.org/summercamp.html)>, or contact Jane MacNamara at <[info@torontofamilyhistory.org](mailto:info@torontofamilyhistory.org)>.

Applications should be received by **16 May 2013**.

Gwyneth Pearce  
Secretary – Toronto Branch, Ontario Genealogical Society  
<[publicity@torontofamilyhistory.org](mailto:publicity@torontofamilyhistory.org)>  
Now on Facebook and Twitter @TOFamilyHistory

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**August 4 – 9, 2013**

### **33RD IAJGS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JEWISH GENEALOGY**

This annual event—which is almost always a magnificent success—will be held in 2013 in Boston on August 4 through 9. Learn more at <<http://www.iajgs2013.org/>>.

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**September 13 – 14, 2013**

**"UP AND RUNNING"**  
**POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA CONFERENCE**  
**Hilton Lisle, Naperville, Illinois**

The 35th Annual PGSA Conference will be held September 13–14 at the Hilton Lisle in Naperville, Illinois. This page on the PGSA website has more info: <<http://pgsa.org/#Anniversary>>.

We invite you to join us September 13 and 14 at our anniversary conference held at the Hilton

Hotel in Lisle and share in the fruits of the seeds our founders planted 35 years ago. The program is structured to satisfy the skilled researcher as well as the novice and to explain the use of some of the amazing tools that technology now offers. Speakers' topics and schedule are now on our website so you can review them and decide which subjects fulfill your needs: research in Poland—Thomas Nitsch, technological wonders—Thomas MacEntee, the impact of history on your ancestors' lives—Ola Heska or hands-on guidance in pursuing information on the internet—Ceil Jensen.

But the conference is not just what you can glean from lectures. It offers Ask Us, a question/answer panel, translation help and, possibly just as important, what you learn from the expertise of your fellow researchers. And don't forget the offerings of the Vendor room with material and representatives from: Fun Stuff for Genealogists, Michiana History Publication, The Polish Museum of America, CAGGNI, PhotoGraphics, Stitched For You and, of course PGSA and others. Then there is lunch with a choice of 3 entrées and the opportunity to share ideas and stories with table-mates. Finally, everyone's favorite wrap-up at lunch is the excitement generated by a colorful Polish dance troupe.

Sign up today or at least before August 2nd to take advantage of early bird pricing. Register at Eventbrite. Speakers' information, including biographies as well as specific conference detail and a printable mail-in registration form are on our website.

PGSA has spent 35 years "Growing Your Research Resources"! Take advantage of them at its 35th Anniversary conference.

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**October 11–12, 2013**

**POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF CONNECTICUT AND THE NORTHEAST  
CONFERENCE**

**Central Connecticut State University - Student Center  
1615 Stanley Street, New Britain, Connecticut**

There is an upcoming PGSCTNE Conference coming up 11-12 October 2013 at CCSU in New Britain CT. Scheduled speakers and topics are as follows:

**Matthew Bielawa and Jonathan Shea** – Introduction to Polish Research

**Dr. Mieczyslaw B. Biskupski** – Did A Polish Spy Create the European Union?

**Michael Buryk** – Uncover Your Roots in the Lemko Region of Southeast Poland

**Tim Firkowski** – Finding the Family: Problems, Successes and Rewards

**Aleksandra Kacprzak** – Polish Traditions, Customs and Superstitions *and* Additional, Lesser

Known Genealogical Resources in Poland: STATE and CHURCH ARCHIVES and Other Sources

**Dr. Shellee Morehead** – Finding and Using Alien Registration Files *and* Sex, DNA and Family History

**Thomas Sadauskas** – U.S. Military Records: What's There and How Do You Get Them? *and* Your Frequent Flyer Ancestors: Re-Emigration To and From Europe

**Dr. Paul S. Valasek** – Postcards and Genealogy: Much More Than Greetings! *and* Tracing the 20th Century Immigrant

The URL for the conference is <<http://pgsctne.org/EventsConferences.aspx>>. Visit that page to make appointments to consult with experts, select lectures, and register, and to get more info.

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**October 19, 2013**

**ANNUAL POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN SEMINAR**  
**American Polish Cultural Center**  
**2975 E. Maple Rd. and Dequindre Rd**

The 2013 Annual PGSM Seminar will be held 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. You can get detailed information from this page on the PGSM website: <<http://www.pgsm.org/seminarfeatured.htm>>.

The first Speaker will be **Ceil Wendt Jensen**, Certified Genealogist. She presents practical examples and suggestions on how to use records, databases, and archives to start or advance your genealogy research. She dispels the myth that records were destroyed during the World Wars and that language barriers make European research difficult. A lavishly illustrated workbook, *Sto Lat: A Modern Guide for Polish Genealogy*, offers a plan for researching at least one hundred years of family records, and is a compilation of techniques developed over thirty years of research and teaching. These are tried and true techniques used for clients and with patrons at the Polonica Americana Research Institute (PARI) on the campus of St. Mary's of Orchard Lake. Both traditional and digital research techniques are presented. Common research questions are answered and suggestions are offered to help novice and advanced researchers find ancestors in North America and Poland.

Lecture Titles:

**Now Boarding: Planning a Research Trip in Poland** - This session is based on over 30 years of travel experience leading overseas groups and research in Poland archives. Learn how to plan ahead, get the most for your dollar, travel light, and bring home the research you went for! This session includes examples and suggestions on how to prepare for a trip to Polish archives, parishes, and record repositories. This lecture covers techniques for finding Catholic, Lutheran and Jewish records. Learn to write effective email to ESL speakers and how to hire a photographer, researcher and / or guide.

### **Behind the Scenes at Polish Repositories — U.S. and Poland**

The lecture is based on interviews conducted on site with the directors of repositories in the U.S. and Poland. Learn about the unique materials held throughout Polonia, the regional archives in Poland, and the concentration camp museums of Stutthof and Auschwitz-Birkenau. Lecture outline/summary. Researchers will learn about records, maps, and ephemera held at repositories that go beyond vital records. Learn how to find unique ledgers, documents, and art work to enrich and advance your family history.

### **Archival Techniques for Family Historians**

A survey of current archival standards regarding the care and storage of paper, photographic and digital files which family historians need to know. Learn how to care for the records and ephemera you have collected. This session addresses how to care for the family records, photos and memorabilia you have collected. The use of archival storage materials will be discussed, as well as a workable cataloging system.

The second Speaker will be **Kris Rzepczynski**. Currently a Senior Archivist at the Archives of Michigan, Kris previously worked for 12 years at the Library of Michigan as the Michigan/ Genealogy Coordinator. He holds a Masters in Library and Information Science from Wayne State University, a Master of Arts in History from Western Michigan University, and a Bachelor of Arts in History from the University of Michigan. Kris has presented at national, state, and local conferences. In addition, he is an incoming member of the Board of Directors for the Federation of Genealogical Societies and a Past President of the Mid-Michigan Genealogical Society.

### **Topic: Researching Your Family History at the Archives of Michigan**

An introduction to the Archives of Michigan, this program will explore the genealogical collections available there, including both original source records and published resources, and how to best maximize your research time there. One of the larger family history collections in the United States, the Archives' holdings emphasize Michigan, the Great Lakes states, New England, the Mid-Atlantic region, as well as Ontario and Quebec. Notable collections include the J. William Gorski Collection of Polish genealogy and history and Michigan naturalization records.

*Seminar includes a continental breakfast and a delicious Polish lunch.*

The Seminar is held at the American Polish Cultural Center located at 2975 E. Maple Rd. and Dequindre Rd. Please send reservations and check by October 1, 2013 for \$65 and \$100 for couples (\$35 is tax deductible). This will include the Seminar, continental breakfast and a delicious Polish lunch. If you have questions, please contact Valerie Koselka, <[vkoselka.pgsm@gmail.com](mailto:vkoselka.pgsm@gmail.com)>.

PGSM, Burton Collection  
c/o Detroit Public Library  
5201 Woodward Ave.  
Detroit, MI 48202-4007

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**October 23 – 26, 2013**

**CZECHOSLOVAK GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL  
2013 GENEALOGICAL AND CULTURAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM**

The Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International (CGSI) will hold its 14th Genealogical and Cultural Conference at the Westin Lombard Hotel in Lombard, Illinois, October 23–26, 2013. Hotel reservations can now be made for the Conference at the Westin Lombard Hotel in Lombard, Illinois. Click on the Reserve icon when you get to the Hotel page.

The keynote speaker will be our own **Paul S. Valasek!** Other notable speakers are Lisa A. Alzo, Grace DuMelle, Leo Baca, Lou Szucs, and many more.

For more information on the program, see this Web page:

<<http://www.cgsi.org/content/2013-genealogical-and-cultural-conference-program>>

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**\*\*\* MORE USEFUL WEB ADDRESSES \*\*\***

<<http://www.hathitrust.org>>

Bronwyn Klimach posted a note to the OW-Preussen list about the possibility of having texts printed in the old Gothic print transformed into modern type. She suggested visiting the HathiTrust Digital Library and looking at some of the items there, which allow you to input text to be searched for. This is yet another amazing aspect of digital libraries, of which I am becoming a *big* fan!!

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<<http://www.cmentarze.lomza.pl/index.php/wyszukiwarka>>

On the PolandBorderSurnames mailing list, Barbara Karwowski gave this address for a searchable database of the cemetery in Łomża, Poland. According to the website, the database covers the Roman Catholic cemetery on ul. Mikołaja Kopernika (Nicholas Copernicus Street), former św. Mikołaja (St. Nicholas's), as well as the former Evangelical Augsburg Protestant and Orthodox cemeteries.

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<<http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/PolandBorderSurnames/2013-05/1367515483>>

There was an interesting thread on the PolandBorderSurnames list about vital records from the State Archives in Suwałki being online. Tina Ellis posted the original note, giving the search site as <[http://szukajwarchiwach.pl/o\\_serwisie](http://szukajwarchiwach.pl/o_serwisie)>. Various folks contributed posts with tips on what records are and are not available, and how to search them. I can't repeat the whole thread here; but if you have roots in the Suwałki area, you might want to visit the PBS archives and read these notes, beginning with the one for which I've given the URL above.

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<[http://www.isogg.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_DNA\\_testing\\_companies](http://www.isogg.org/wiki/List_of_DNA_testing_companies)>

A May 14th item from *Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter* [EOGN] gave this URL for a long list of companies that do genealogy DNA work, including info on their specialties. Eastman also spoke well of the information you can get about genetic genealogy on the ISGG site, <<http://www.isogg.org>>.

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<<http://goo.gl/8rlGj>>

A May 6th item in *EOGN* said there will be four genealogy series airing in the U.S. within the next year or so. Eastman gave the above link to a *Huffington Post* article by Megan Smolenyak about them. HBO's *Family Tree* has already premiered and runs through July 7th. *Who Do You Think You Are?* is returning to the air, now on TLC; and *Finding Your Roots* will return to PBS, although apparently not until next year. She also mentions *Genealogy Roadshow*, which another EOGN article <<http://eogn.com/wp/?p=25073>> says will air on PBS Mondays, September 23 through October 14, at 9 p.m. Eastern time.

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<<http://aschmann.net/AmEng/>>

Another EOGN article mentions this site, where a gentleman named Rich Aschmann has audio and video samples of speech from all over North America. As Eastman wrote, "While this is a hobby for Rick Aschmann, it also has serious uses for historians, genealogists, and others." I was kind of afraid to visit the site, for fear I'd get hooked and spend hours there exploring dialects when I should be doing work people will pay me for. I took a quick look, confirmed my worst fears, and fled. But I'm sure I'll be back, if only to listen to some of the clips (mostly YouTube videos) of speech in my original home state of Kansas, and my adopted home state of Texas.

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<<http://goo.gl/KCt9>>

The May 26 issue of *The Genealogy News* cited an article that led back to the story at this link. It says that according to a genetic survey, all Europeans are related if you go back just 1,000 years. I had read an article (also cited here) that says everyone with a European connection ends up being related to Charlemagne. The current article says now the evidence has been found, and includes a link to the findings of Peter Ralph and Graham Coop, "The Geography of Recent Genetic Ancestry across Europe," published in the open-access journal *PLOS Biology*.

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<<http://www.polbook.com>>

On the Herbarz mailing list, Leon Stevens told of two new Polish armorials. Jan Siwik's *Encyklopedia nazwisk i przydomkow szlacheckich* [Encyclopedia of Noble Surnames and Nickname-surnames] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo KASTOR) and Tadeusz Gajl's bilingual Polish-English edition of *Herbarz polski/Polish Armorial* (Gdańsk, L&L Firma Dystrybucyjno-Wydawnicza) are both available through the Polish Literary Bookstore and Publishing Co. in

New York. The URL for that company's website appears above. (I must add, however, that I could not find either book with their online search; maybe you have to buy them with a special order.)

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<<http://www.szukajwarchiwach.pl/59#tabZasoby>>

On the Polish Genius list, "Robert M" said he'd just learned that the Archive in Rzeszów has made scans of many metrical records available online, at the above URL. It takes a little patience and persistence to view the scans, but they're there.

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<[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/polish\\_genius/message/21437](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/polish_genius/message/21437)>

There was a very interesting thread on the Polish Genius list this month, "Ownership of Genealogical Information." The note at this URL is the first I noticed. You might want to read some of the ideas expressed about posting public family trees.

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<<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Polish-American-Journal/187665864604612>>

I learned of this when John Guzowski shared it with others in the Polish American Writers & Editors group on Facebook. It seems the *Polish American Journal* wants to make our elected representatives acquainted with what's happening in American Polonia. If you send the PAJ the e-mail address of your elected officials, from the local ward right on up to Washington), PAJ will send them a complimentary digital edition of the paper each month. You can send a message on PAJ's Facebook page at the above URL, or you can write editor Mark Kohan at <[editor@polamjournal.com](mailto:editor@polamjournal.com)>.

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