



Gen Dobry!

Gen Dobry! 31 May 2001

***** GEN DOBRY! *****

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*** WELCOME! ***

to the latest issue of GEN DOBRY!, the e-zine of PolishRoots(tm). If you missed previous issues, you can find them at <http://PolishRoots.org>.

I received a number of really good responses to the last issue, especially the article on the Ellis Island Website and misspelled Polish names. I'm including them in the "Letters to the Editor" section because I think you may find them interesting and helpful. Thanks to all who've taken the time to send me comments, suggestions, and contributions. If you have anything

you'd like to say, please E-mail me at <WFHoffman@prodigy.net>.

Some of you may be getting tired of the subject of mangled names, but it is a problem that frustrates many, many researchers. Not long ago I read a really good discussion by Bill Tarkulich of how to deal with mangled names and bad data in searches of the Ellis Island database. The note appeared originally on PolandBorderSurnames-L@rootsweb.com; and I wanted to print it in this issue of _Gen Dobry!_ for those of you who didn't see it, or who saw it but didn't have time to give it much attention. I asked Bill's permission to reprint it, and he agreed.

The reason I like it is that he uses a clear, analytical approach that you may wish to imitate. In my opinion, his approach can be applied in all kinds of searches, not just the Ellis Island database. The exact details of application may vary from one case to the next, but the basic logic behind his methodology is likely to yield results in almost any kind of search.

Remember to visit PolishRoots.org, the Website that brings you _Gen Dobry!_. It includes a link to the Website of the Polish American Historical Association, which can also be visited directly at this address:

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

*** MANIFEST ERRORS ***

by Bill Tarkulich <bill@iabsi.com>

Most people start off searching databases such as the Ellis Island one by entering their ancestor's last name (surname) and first name as it was known late in life. This most often results in zero or incorrect results. They then post their surname to a few bulletin boards and lists; when a week or two goes by, they abandon their efforts. One CANNOT assume, based upon this short exercise, that the name is not held in a database or not on a manifest. Good things in life don't come easy. Genealogical research takes much time to do it correctly. And with the Ellis Island AFIHC database, you have to compensate for its inherent errors, along with that of others throughout the process.

This section describes various reasons why the surname or first name (or both) may be erroneously recorded.

* In the Original Manifest *

- a. Most of our immigrants were illiterate and could not even spell their own name. This caused (b):
- b. The shipping company clerk put down what they "heard." This varied greatly due to the clerk's training and language background. This also varied based on the immigrant's dialect. Less-popular languages and dialects tended to be butchered more often.
- c. The shipping clerks often had poor penmanship.
- d. The shipping clerk could easily confuse the data of two passengers.

* Errors Introduced while Converting the Manifest to a Database *

The thousands of volunteers encoding the manifests into a database have introduced a second level of errors due to such factors as:

- d. Variation in training and transcription methods.
- e. Inability to properly recognize old-style script.
- f. Typographical (mis-keyed) data.

* Additional Errors Introduced by the Immigrant *

- g. Immigrant did not understand the question being asked and responded with the incorrect answer (i.e., "cousin" was given when "wife" was correct).
- h. Immigrant was concealing information, e. g., gave an incorrect age.

In my examination of several hundred manifests thus far, I have seen all of the above events. It is absolutely impossible to trust the data in the Ellis Island (AFIHC) database unless you can obtain corroborative evidence elsewhere. This is true of any data point, but especially true with the encoded AFIHC data. Don't try to construct a family tree based on the AFIHC data alone.

* Check Chronological Events *

A method I have found extremely useful is to construct a chronological table of events for your immigrant. Include in this table the information you find suspect. With all the data placed next to each other in chronological order, patterns begin to emerge. I include data about friends they may have traveled with also - immigrants often traveled with friends and relatives. For this exercise, you hope to be able to determine movement of immigrants. By showing who bootstrapped whom to this country, indirect research can yield surprising evidence.

* AFIHC Search Methodology *

Many folks are often surprised at how different their names appear on the

manifests. I recently found one individual looking for Gregory Alexander Krivchenia. When I finally located him, he was listed in the AFIHC database as Grigori Krimcsenia. People have asked, "How did you do that?" This will attempt to explain my methodology.

Here are some more tips on how to utilize the AFIHC (American Family Immigration History Center) database at the Ellis Island site:

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

These are my guidelines - there are exceptions to every rule here. Treat this advice as you would any generalization.

Here are two assumptions I often use:

1. Given Names were often changed by the immigrant AFTER arrival (after leaving Ellis Island) to an "American" version, i. e., Petrus = Peter, Gjorgy= George, Maria= Mary, etc. See this site:

http://www.rootsweb.com/~scoconee/foreign_names.txt

It is important to understand it was NOT the Immigration and Naturalization Service and NOT the officials at Ellis Island who changed their names. For more see this site:

<http://www.ins.usdoj.gov/graphics/aboutins/history/articles/NAMES.htm>

2. Surnames usually have the first letter correct, sometimes even the first two or three letters. After that, it's my experience that all bets are off.

So how do we get from Krivchenia to Krimcsenia?

Data known on Gregory Alexander Krivchenia: from naturalization papers he arrived in the USA through Ellis Island on Jan. 22, 1913. He was a 3rd-class passenger, lived in Werchi, Poland, Russia. Sailed from Glasgow, and from the date I believe the name of the ship was Caledonia.

Here's the plan:

- Conduct a partial text search. Go to the AFIHC search screen and enter:

First name = G

Last Name = Kri

The result will locate one record, someone with the surname "KRI".

- Now select "Close matches only". This feature gives you any surname that

begin with the "Last Name" you specified before. Now you find 1,232 matches. This is too many names to look at.

- Select "Passenger Search Profile, Name & Gender" - EDIT. At the bottom of the next screen, select "male" as a way to shorten the list. Close matches are now down to 978 names.

- Next, Select "Passenger Search Profile, Year of arrival" = EDIT. We are lucky. We believe we know the year of arrival (or at least a range). We enter "1913" for both begin and end year range. This results in 54 Close Matches. This is a manageable number to look through.

- Now look through each and every name shown for a last place of residence which looks or sounds like "Werchi" and was in Poland or Russia. Found one at item 18.

- Confirm that the first name is an equivalent of Gregory (this step is not critical).

- Confirm that surname listed is a phonetic equivalent (or close, given spelling errors) to "Werchi". You MUST verify all this information by looking at the original manifest. If the original manifest image is not online, go to the National Archives or an LDS Family History Center to verify. This is especially critical when the expected name is wildly different. Most often, you will find that the AFIHC transcriber did not correctly convert the handwriting to the proper letters.

* Still No Luck *

If you have no success with the method above, we now embark on an iterative process. I would redo the first search, leaving the First Name blank. It is possible that the given name was radically changed.

Second, I would begin to experiment with the second and third characters of the Last name (surname). It may not be a phonetic match you are looking for here, but a handwriting (or reading) error. "Kri" could be "Kn", "Kzi" or who knows what..

I try to get the subset of data down to 200 records or less and then begin the manual search process. 200 lines are 8 screen loads at 25 names per screen. This is my personal preference.

I ignore the "sailing from" and ship name information, as most often it is incorrect and extraneous information. You will only need this if you can't find the immigrant through the AFIHC database. You will need to know this information if you want to look up the manifest by locating on microfilm,

organized by date and ship.

* Wildcards *

I understand that the "%" character is a wildcard, where it may substitute for one or more unknown letters in a name. I have had varying degrees of success with this character.

The more useful and powerful wildcarding technique, is when a wildcard is embedded in the MIDDLE of a search string (entering 'T%RK' would yield TARK, TORK TNRK, TIRK and so on). I have had varying degrees of success with this method, mostly failure. I suspect that as they rework the search engine, it may become more effective.

Using these tips may help you do the impossible, i. e., find names that have been thoroughly mangled.

*** LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ***

Subject: Names and the new Ellis Island site

I ran into a real obvious obstacle while looking up names on the website. My great-grandmother and her two children (my grandfather and his sister) came over separately from her husband. I could not find the name until I used the female form -ska instead of -ski. Perhaps this little piece of info might help a few million frustrated individuals.

Greg Kirnie <greg@mds.acsol.net>

Subject: Misspellings at Ellis Island

Have been very delighted - as I can imagine the genealogical community is - about the new Ellis Island site. I think the article on common misspellings of Polish names should be very helpful. But you might want to let readers know it's not likely to stop there.

I listed off all the individuals with my grandmother's maiden name, since I know she had many cousins who came to the US both before and after she arrived in February of 1907. I printed out the list of both Pilecki and Pilecka names and was amazed to find the number of different ways her village name, Gwoznica Gorna, was rendered. Some were probably original misspellings, others may be misreads of old fashioned handwriting:

Grosmica
Gwoznicagorna (1 word)
G. Gwoznica
Goznice Gorna
Woznica
Gwomica
Gwormica
Gwoznice Gor

Any one looking for this village as a clue to narrowing down the list who had no inkling of possible transliteration errors would miss quite a few people!

Marge Wolan Sullivan <HJCS@aol.com>

[Marge sent another note with more specific examples:]

If you need another example, here are variants of my grandfather's village of Konieczkowa and the years the entry was made. Spelling seems to have gotten more accurate in later years--but not always! I'm pretty sure these are all the same village because they are all for my Szpiech and Smela relatives.

Koniecz Rowa 1898
Konieczkowa 1906
Konieczkova 1910
Konieczhowa 1913
Konieczkow 1907
Konieczkowa, Galicia, 1910
Konieczkova, Austria 1913
Kouieskowa, Austria 1907
Konieckowa, Galisia 1907
Kaniescakova, Galicy 1908
Komoczawa, Galicy 1905
Konieczkowa, Austria 1912

Marge Wolan Sullivan <HJCS@aol.com>

Subject: Misspelled names

I wanted to share with you that I tried to find an ancestor by the name of Stawowy. Found the male under Slawowy arriving in 1912. According the 1920 census, I knew his wife and 2 children arrived in 1913. I looked under 10 different spelling variations on and off for 2 weeks. Finally I looked at

all the names beginning with "Staw." There they were....under STAWOWA!

I knew about -ski and -ska, but I didn't think that a female Stawowy would be a Stawowa!

Mary Light <MALIGH@aol.com>

[Editor: You make a good point. We hear a lot about -ski/-ska, but it's very easy to overlook the names ending in -owy/-owa. The explanation is the same: grammatically speaking, names ending in -ski and names ending in -owy originated as adjectives. As such, they change endings depending on gender (and other grammatical considerations). STAWOWY means literally "of the _staw_" (usually referring to "body of water, pond," although _staw_ can mean other things). It takes a masculine ending -y when referring to a male; but when referring to a Mrs. or Miss Stawowy, you would indeed say Stawowa.

[This is completely apart from the practice of adding the suffix -owa to form married feminine versions of noun-derived surnames, e. g., a male is Nowak, but his wife is Nowakowa (in modern Polish this usage is becoming archaic).

[There are other kinds of names - names such as Wozny, Okopny, Koscielny - that originated as adjectives, and they do the same thing. Females of those families would be Wozna, Okopna, Koscielna, etc. The forms with -ski/-ska forms are the ones we run into all the time, so they're easier to recognize. But these others do the same thing... For that matter, not all names ending in -ski or -ska are adjectival; Laska can come from the noun _laska_, and in that case is not the feminine of an adjective Laski.

[The bottom line is, whenever you make a general statement, count on it: there will be exceptions. But the only way to proceed is to start with the general statement, then tackle the exceptions if need be.]

Subject: PAF Companion 5.0 - A BIG disappointment

I was very disappointed with PAF Companion 5.0. I was ready to switch to The Master Genealogist, after having used PAF 3.0 for 3 years. The LDS Family History Center in SLC, let me know that foreign scripts, such as Cyrillic, were in the offing.

Because the PAF program is so universal, being developed and used by many LDS people, I wanted to stick with that program, the program I cut my teeth on when I took up genealogical research 3 years ago.

The long-awaited day came and I received PAF 5.0. It permitted the use of

Cyrillic characters. But I found one problem with it: it would not print out Cyrillic characters that I had placed in the NOTES section.

This was upsetting. Even worse was when I received my PAF Companion 5.0 disc for \$13.50. I soon discovered that the beautiful charts it prints do not support Cyrillic fonts.

I tried installing my Word Perfect 9.0 and found out that Companion 5.0 only supports up to WP 8. This means that one must use the Wordpad word processor to print. And that means none of the Cyrillic fonts will print out. Instead, only upside down question marks are printed in place of my characters.

The LDS response to my complaint was: "When a new release of PAF Companion comes out a fix will be there to work with WordPerfect 9."

A user in the PAF 5.0 users group with Yahoo.com, who is more familiar with computers than I, looked into my complaint and e-mailed me this response: "Okay, as I suspected, PAF Companion 5.0 is not a Unicode application. It will neither display nor print Cyrillic. The only character sets that Companion supports are '8859-1' (western European languages) and '1252' (the Microsoft Windows 'superset' of 8859-1). So Companion only supports Western European languages. Ouch!"

Now, why make PAF 5.0 in Unicode to support other languages, and then issue a disk for PAF Companion 5.0 that does not support the languages of your new version of your genealogical program?

Ed Potereiko <epotereiko2@hotmail.com>

[Editor's Note: I'm afraid it's the same old crap -- if your ancestors didn't come from western Europe, they don't count. At least that's what a lot of genealogists and software makers seem to think. Maybe it's time more of us spoke up and let them know just how wrong they are!]

Subject: What is Correct?

Disregarding spelling errors, how does a genealogy researcher know when the data he finds is the right or correct answer pertaining to his relatives? If the data does not present a clear-cut correct answer, does one use a "gut" feeling or some type of mental probability analysis to evaluate the information? How much satisfactory information does one need to find in a genealogical discovery to accept the data as correct?

To illustrate my point, this example pertains to a 1907 ship passenger list entry. Most of the incorrectly spelled data in the entry was satisfactory to me, but the ship's name was incorrect and the entry indicated travel by the immigrant to a different part of the USA which I was never aware of after many years of research.

My grandfather's initial naturalization papers (Declaration of Intention) indicated he arrived in New York on March 16, 1907 from Hamburg on the Kaiser Wilhelm II. Research at the nearby Pittsfield, Massachusetts branch of the National Archives revealed that the ship line for the Kaiser Wilhelm II operated from Bremen, not Hamburg, and that this ship did not arrive in New York on any date close to March 16, 1907. However, I did find on the passenger list for the S.S. Patricia, which arrived in New York from Hamburg on March 16, 1907, a name spelled Franz Kuschinski, which is linguistically consistent with my grandfather's first and last name, Franciszek Kosinski. Also, his village of birth was entered, although spelled incorrectly as Nieczyki instead of Nieciki. His age, 18, and last place of residence in Poland, spelled Lomsa (Lomza), were also entered more or less correctly.

But the passenger list indicated that he was going to join his brother in Steubenville, Ohio. I had always thought that his life in the USA began in Massachusetts because the earliest record I could find of him was his local marriage record in 1911. Other later records I found never indicated he lived outside of Massachusetts. I could find no record of his life between 1907 and 1911.

Because of the ship's name being different than what was indicated on his naturalization papers, and the previously unknown information about his life in Ohio, would one accept this passenger list entry as my grandfather? I did, but I do have some doubts.

Richard Kosinski <rjkosinsk@worldnet.att.net>

[Editor: This is an excellent question! To date I have not had any brilliant revelations with which to answer it. While I'm waiting for insight to strike me, I thought I'd do the really smart thing and share the question with more than a thousand experienced researchers - the readers of _Gen Dobry!_. So folks, what do you say? I know many of you have faced this problem - what practical standards do you apply in deciding what is correct?]

*** UPCOMING EVENTS ***

June 21, 2001 - PGS-MA MEETING

On June 21, 2001 Thursday at 6:30 PM, the Polish Genealogical Society of MA will meet at Jones Library Lower Level Meeting Room, Amherst. The speaker will be Matthew Bielawa, who will speak on Researching Family Records of Ukrainians and Poles in Western Ukraine, and Eastern Galicia and focus on vital records, marriage records, cadastral maps and documents, land records for tax purposes with examples. Matthew has visited and worked at archives in Ukraine & Poland. Q&A. New acquisitions will be on display. Open to all. Free. Bring a friend. Directions: The library is at 43 Amity St. just off North Pleasant St. in the center of town. Strictly enforced public parking across from library at 25c per hour before 6 PM. Call (413) 586-1827 for more details.

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June 22-24, 2001

POLISH FEST - America's Largest Polish Festival

Maier Festival Park - Summerfest Grounds
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

For more information visit the Website:

<http://www.polishfest.org>

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September 2 - 15, 2001

TRIPS: JUST POLAND, or POLAND-ROME, or POLAND-LWOW

[Editor: Daniel J. Kij, who has led trips to Poland in the past, provided this information on this year's trip. If you're interested, more info is available; his snail and e-mail addresses are given at the end of the note]:

This is the first release as to dates, prices, cities, etc. on our POLAND 2001 TRIP. It's like "Three Trips in One 14-day Time Span": JUST POLAND, or POLAND-ROME, or POLAND-LWOW, all beginning with our flight from Toronto to Warsaw on Sunday, September 2, and concluding with our return from Warsaw to Toronto on Saturday, September 15, 2001.

A highlight of the trip will be the European premier of Peter Gorecki's "Cantata in Honor of St. Stanislaus," to be performed in Wroclaw in

conjunction with the 600th anniversary of the Church of St. Dorota. Mr. Gorecki, a composer/arranger/orchestrator/accompanist, has served as organist and choirmaster at the pioneer Polonia parish in New York State, St. Stanislaus BM Church in Buffalo. He has been Director of several WNY singing societies: Chopin, Paderewski, Kalina, Polish Singing Circle, and German Schwabenchor, and has recently been selected as National Choral Director of the Polish Singers Alliance of America.

If you're interested, contact me - soon! Seats are limited!

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September 12-15, 2001

THE 2001 FGS/QUAD CITIES CONFERENCE

"A Conference for the Nation's Genealogists"

The RiverCenter, Davenport, Iowa

For more info:

Our email: fgs-office@fgs.org

Our website: <http://www.fgs.org>

Register Online at:

<http://www.fgs.org/2001Conf/fgs-2001.htm>

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October 5 - 7, 2001

FEDERATION OF EAST EUROPEAN FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETIES
-- INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION 2001 --

Ramada Inn South Airport
6401 South 13th Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Conference details, as they become available, will be posted at:

<http://feefhs.org/conf/01mil/01mil-hp.html>

or by return mail from:

FEEFHS, PO Box 510898, Salt Lake City, UT 84151-0898

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October 6, 2001

MASS-CONN-ECTION II

Last year's first Mass-Conn-ection Polish Genealogical Conference was a big success, so a second one is planned for this year. Like the first, this conference is being sponsored jointly by the Polish Genealogical Societies of Massachusetts and of Connecticut/the Northeast. It will be held on Saturday, October 6, at General Jozef A. Haller PAV Post, Grove & Broad St., New Britain, CT. It will include a Beginners Workshop, and talks on Records in Poland, Polish Surnames, and Using the US National Archives. There will be a Polish lunch! The price is \$35. Register early by mail: PGSCT, c/o MASS-CONN, 8 Lyle Rd., New Britain, CT 06053-2104. Telephone: (860) 223-5596. Conferences on Polish genealogy are not often held in New England, so if you live in the area, this is one you want to attend! You can learn more by e-mailing PGS-CT/NE at: pgsne2@aol.com.

*** MORE USEFUL WEB ADDRESSES ***

<http://sites.netscape.net/stephenpmorse/ellis.html>

David Shapiro <legacydave@hotmail.com> recommended this site on Poland-Roots-L@rootsweb.com for those having trouble with the Ellis Island website. He said "It really works!"

<http://geoengine.nima.mil/>

Jan P. Rapalski <ripr@pipeline.com> posted a note about this site on PolandBorderSurnames-L@rootsweb.com. He explained it can be used to get overhead images of ancestral villages in Europe. "The U.S. Defense Department's National Imagery and Mapping Agency (NIMA) has provided on-line imagery from the French SPOT imaging satellite (circa 1997-98?) which covers all of Europe. The data is at 10 meter resolution which means that objects smaller than about 10 meters in diameter can not be clearly discerned. But what you will discover is an excellent view of the terrain, roads, buildings and other landmarks. Also it's only in black & white; but it's much better than a map.

"To use this data, go to the site and select the Tabs:

NIMA Coverage = Check DOI 10M

View = (Select one of the three, you can change this later)

"You then zoom-in by continually clicking on the map. Keep going until you get to the photos (wait for each image to load!); however the end-game - finding the right place on the photo mosaic - can be tricky. You can short-cut by directly entering the latitude/longitude; however, correlation assumes the figures you have are correct for the location... If the village is very small you may have to locate it by its proximity and direction from landmarks shown on the map and obvious from the photo."

<http://www.familysearch.org>

Of course you all know about this site, but in a note to PolandBorderSurnames-L@rootsweb.com, Rose Ingram <rosedon@sageserve.com> mentioned a new addition you might have missed. The complete transcription of the 1880 United States census can now be ordered on CD-ROMs from the LDS Website for \$49.00. From the home page click on "Order/Download products"; on the next screen click on "Software products." Of the options that appear on the next page, click on "Census and Vital Records." On the second page of the resulting list, the last item (at least as of now) is "#50168000, the 1880 US Census, complete record." Click on it for information. The set of CD's contains approximately 50 million names divided into seven regions and accompanied with a National Index.

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