



Gen Dobry!

Volume VIII, No. 1

31 January 2007

ISSN 1555-774X. Copyright © 2007, PolishRoots®, Inc.

Editor: William F. “Fred” Hoffman, E-mail: <wfh@langline.com>

CONTENTS

Welcome
What’s Convenience Worth to You?
Letters to the Editor
Humor: Odd Names
Edward Luft: In Print and On TV!
Megan Smolenyak: Ancestry.com’s Chief Family Historian
Ceil’s Jasło Finding Aid
Teach in Poland
Polish Trivia Questions
Upcoming Events
More Useful Web Addresses
You May Reprint Articles...

*** WELCOME! ***

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

http://www.polishroots.org/gendobry/gendobry_index.htm

If you’d like *Gen Dobry!* in PDF form, this issue is available for downloading here:

http://www.polishroots.org/gendobry/PDF/GenDobry_VIII_1.pdf

***** WHAT'S CONVENIENCE WORTH TO YOU? *****

by Fred Hoffman <wfh@langline.com>

As online services continue to provide more options for genealogists, it's a real challenge just keeping up with all the latest developments. I scan a number of mailing lists daily, subscribe to *Eastman's Online Genealogical Newsletter*, *RootsWeb Review*, and Avotaynu's free e-zine *Nu? What's New?* I'm sure the real pros would laugh and point out at least a dozen more sources of news one must read on a regular basis. But my head sometimes reels just trying to soak in what I read in those few items I keep up with.

I noticed one service that has made a splash recently is <http://www.footnote.com>. It's a commercial service offered in partnership with the U. S. National Archives and Records Administration. It makes NARA documents available online, for a fee. The charge varies, with a \$9.99 charge for a one-month subscription, or \$99.99 for a year's subscription. You can also purchase a single image at \$1.99 a pop. If you find search and find something you like, and click on it, up comes a page giving you these options (unless you're in one of the free collections).

What do you get? You get to see digitized versions of actual documents from NARA's collection—not extracts or summaries, but the real thing. Gary Mokotoff commented in *Nu? What's New?* (<http://www.avotaynu.com/nu/V08N01.htm>) that the thumbnails provided for some documents are large enough to read without a subscription. Still, I think you know how this goes: the one you want will always be too small to read unless you zoom in. And as I say, unless you're looking in one of the free collections, you have to sign up and put down your money to zoom in!

Some have already pointed out that these records can still be searched for free at NARA facilities. And that's what got me thinking. More and more of these for-pay services are coming online, and they tempt us with the same seductive lure that has become a staple of daily life in America since World War II: convenience! What's it worth to you, to be able to sit in your chair at home and see the documents you want right now? No wait, no delay, just whip out your credit card!

Of course, right now most Polish researchers have fairly slim pickings on this site. Still, naturalization records for various states are already accessible. And you have to figure the documents available will only continue to grow in number and attractiveness for researchers.

There was a time I was certain researchers would always have to get off their butts and go do research in person, digging through dusty records collections. "Oh," I thought, "sure, there's good stuff online—but a lot of what you really need to do quality research cannot be accessed remotely. You have to get up and go find it for yourself, in person!" I think that's still true.

But for how long? The FHL is digitizing its records and plans to make them available online. And I know already, on various mailing lists, I'm astonished when someone will say "Gee, I'm looking for Joe Blowski who came to the U.S. in 1898"—and five minutes later someone will post a note saying, "I checked on Ancestry.com, and here's a list of 7 people who fit the description." Often in the course of a single day a newbie goes from knowing nothing to having a good start on a family

tree, just because kind people with subscriptions to Ancestry.com go search the necessary databases (often using the aids offered by Steve Morse's site at www.stevemorse.org).

I suspect there may never come a day when *everything* is available online. The researcher willing and able to go dig around will always have an edge on the one who sits and expects the Internet to come pour its riches into his lap—if only because rooting around in person gives you insights and experience you can't get by doing things the "easy way." Still, the future's getting here faster than I expected; and who doesn't like doing things the easy way, when possible?

More and more these days—and you have to figure the trend will only accelerate—you have a choice: go dig it up for free, or pay to get it online. So each of you will have to make up your own mind: what's convenience worth to you?

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

Subject: *Genealogy of Zakopane Families*

Editor—In the last issue Stephanie Sweas <reallylooking@mail.com> asked if an English translation is available for the book Genealogy of Zakopane Families. I received one note that provided a little additional info:

I think this is the link for the Polish authors and publisher:

<http://www.krzeptowscy.zakopane.pl/>

Fred Zimnoch <zimnoch@crocker.com>

Editor—Yes, that appears to be the right Website; it has a list of publications and further info. I don't see anything about an English translation of any of these books. There is an e-mail address where one can contact the authors and ask: <krzeptowscy@poczta.onet.pl>. So far, that's the best anyone has been able to come up with. Thanks, Fred!

Subject: Translation software

Found this program, wonder have you tried it? It is available for a 7-day trial download. The program is Babylon 6 available at <http://www.babylon.com>.

It translates multiple languages, using a cut-and-paste method. This is the best of the Polish translators I have found to date. I think I have purchased them all, and I think it is the best.

Joseph Pasowicz Jr. <jjpaso@tds.net>

Editor—As I told Mr. Pasowicz, I don't need a translation program, so I don't really spend much time looking into them. But if he's tried them all and this is the one he likes best, I think it's worth mentioning to our readers. Some will surely want to check it out. Incidentally, there are some interesting online translation and pronunciation aids mentioned in the "More Useful Web Addresses" section at the end of this issue.

Subject: Text-to-Speech Demo

Editor—Armela Hammes forwarded this note to me:

This is amazing...!

<http://www.oddcast.com/home/demos/tts/frameset.php?frame1=talk>

When you move the mouse around on the picture, her eyes follow the pointer. When you type something in the left space and then click on "Say it," she says it! You can also change persons doing the talking and the language they speak. Technology, quite amazing!

(forwarded by) Armela Hammes <armelahammes@att.net>

Editor—It's fascinating, all right. I was particularly amazed to see that Polish is one of the languages it can accommodate. You can type in a Polish word or expression and hear it pronounced. The quality of the pronunciation varies; with some words it's right on, with others it could be better. But it's very interesting toy, and may help some pronounce Polish better.

***** HUMOR: ODD NAMES *****

If you're interested in odd names, the January 18, 2007 issue of *EOGN* has a brief article on some real beauties, along with great comments from readers and a link to a Website with even more odd names. You might stop and take a look:

http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy/2007/01/odd_names.html

It may not be any great help in your research—but we all need to relax and chuckle now and again.

***** EDWARD LUFT, IN PRINT AND ON TV! *****

Edward Luft <edwardluft@hotmail.com> has contributed a number of good articles to *Gen Dobry!* (and many other publications). I was fascinated when he sent me an article about him that appeared in the publication *ABC* in Leszno. It was in the January 9th issue; written by Mirosław Wlekły and entitled "Gen Dobry w Lesznie," it mentioned his contributions to *Gen Dobry!*, even explaining the pun in our e-zine's title! Unfortunately, I just searched for the article on their Website, and it is

apparently no longer available without searching the archives (which is often the case with newspaper articles; they “age” rapidly).

Edward also recently appeared on the television show “Tracing Your Family Roots,” explaining how he tracked down some members of his family tree through a combination of perseverance and ingenuity. You can see the show at <http://tracingroots.nova.org/>. Scroll down a little to where it says “Recent Shows” and look for Edward’s name, in blue and underlined, at the very start of the paragraph. Right now it’s the top entry in the list, although of course in time it will move down. Click on “View Now” at the right of the paragraph.

If you’d like to see a really good researcher explain his methods, take a look! It’s less than half an hour, and you just may learn a thing or two.

***** MEGAN SMOLENYAK: ANCESTRY.COM’S CHIEF FAMILY HISTORIAN *****

On 23 January 2007 Ancestry.com announced it had appointed Megan Smolenyak as Chief Family Historian. This is good news to hear, because Megan has made a name for herself as one of the best researchers and speakers in the field of genealogy. You can read more about the appointment here:

http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy/2007/01/ancestrycom_app.html

If you’d like to visit Megan’s Website, it’s here:

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

Also, If you’d like to read Megan’s blog, it’s available here:

<http://www.rootstelevision.com/blogs/megans-rootsworld.html>

If you’ll forgive me for being silly for a moment, I find it particularly fascinating that she goes by the name “Megan Smolenyak Smolenyak”! If I understand correctly, her maiden name is Smolenyak, and she married a man by the same name. I love this approach: if people find your name hard to deal with, use it twice! I get a little tired of people saying “Gee, I’m so sorry my name is so foreign and difficult.” Here’s a woman who knows how to take pride in her family and heritage!

In any case, if we want genealogy to grow and prosper, we need representatives who are experienced, savvy, and able to communicate. Megan’s success is good news for all of us, even if she’s not Polish! (But then, no one’s perfect).

CEIL’S JASŁO FINDING AID

Editor—Speaking of high-profile and effective communicators, Ceil Jensen
<cjensen@mipolonia.net> posted a note on several mailing lists explaining that she would like to

develop a finding aid for the Jaslo area. I'm pretty sure quite a few of our readers have roots in that area, and would like to know more about this. Here's the note she sent out:

Jaslo Parishes and Families

I would like to develop a finding aid for the Jaslo area. If your ancestors came from this area in Galicia I would like to know the following information:

Family names:

Given names:

Parish:

Are there church records available on microfilm or from the parish priest?

Village:

Date of emigration/ immigration:

Port of departure:

Port of arrival:

Residence in the US:

Parish in the US:

Occupation in the US:

Photos of immigrants of possible

Ceil Wendt Jensen, <cjensen@mipolonia.net>, 450 Apple Hill, Rochester Hills, MI 48306

*** TEACH IN POLAND ***

Editor—Rhoda Sostakowski <rhodarc@yaho.com> posted this note on the Poland-Roots list, and I thought some of our readers might be interested:

Subject: Check out this website if you want to go to Poland with a great group!

Please go to <http://www.americaneducatorsforpoland.org>. This will give you all the information you need to learn about going to Poland during the month of July for almost 4 weeks with a teaching group. You do ***not*** have to be a teacher. You pay your airfare, and room and board are provided. You pay only for your own personal expenses of your choice and a small administrative fee.

Jerry has been the director of this group for many years. I have gone 7 times with this group. We visit great tourist areas on the weekends and we do not pay for this.

Click on all the areas available on this site—lots of photos and important information are here. Perhaps you will decide to go with the group this summer and see a lot of Poland up close and personal: visit the homes of students, etc., and have fun helping the young people of Poland learn to speak better English. There are always all ages of volunteers—you are not too old to go! You can arrange to meet your relatives during off times.

The school is in southern Poland in Stary Sącz, a charming town dating to the 1300s. Jerry is preparing for the summer session now. Contact information is on the website.

***** POLISH TRIVIA QUESTIONS *****

Editor: In the last issue we gave 5 questions from a Polish trivia game PolishRoots Vice President Paul Valasek <paval56@aol.com> came across. The answers to those questions appear below, followed by this month's questions, the answers to which will appear in the next issue. We want to thank Tom Bratkowski for permission to reprint these.

Answers to the Questions in the December Issue:

Category: Geography

- Q. What country borders Poland on the south (1985)?
- A. Czechoslovakia

- Q. What Polish city did Jan Zamoyski found?
- A. Zamość

- Q. Who founded the city of Wilno?
- A. Grand Prince Giedymin of Lithuania

- Q. What city is the center of Polish textile industry?
- A. Łódź

- Q. What is the small desert in southcentral Poland called?
- A. The Błędowska Desert (Pustynia Błędowska)

New Questions for the January Issue

Category:

1. What is the stage name of Pol Am actress Stefania Federkiewicz?
2. With over 60 motion pictures in her acting career, how many Oscars did Gloria Swanson win?
3. What was the stage name of Pol Am singer Sophia Kalisz?
4. What Pol Am Hollywood magnate founded M.G.M.?
5. What Pol Am Hollywood movie director won an Academy Award in two successive years?

Reprinted with permission from Polish American Trivia & Quadrivia, Powstan, Inc. If interested in learning more, contact Paul Valasek <paval56@aol.com>.

***** UPCOMING EVENTS *****

POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA MEETING

February 11, 2007

Topic Title

The Unpolished Gems: The Cook County, Illinois Irregular Indexes

Short Description of Topic

Non-property records are “irregular” for the Cook County Recorder’s Office and are unpolished gems for genealogists. Beginning in 1871, the indexes include pre-1916 birth/death affidavits and change of surnames.

Short Bio

Jeanne Larzalere Bloom, CGSM is a full-time professional researcher specializing in Chicago and Cook County research, an author, and an editor. She has published articles in a number of journals including *the New York Genealogical & Biographical Society’s Quarterly*, and is the editor of the Chicago Genealogical Society’s newsletter. She is a member of NGS, APG, and a multi-year alumnus of IGHS at Samford and of NIGR.

CG, Certified Genealogist is a service mark of the Board for Certification of Genealogists, used under license by board-certified associates after periodic competency evaluations. The board name is registered USP&TO.

[From an e-mail sent out by Harry Kurek. The note doesn’t specify the time or meeting place, but usually PGSA meetings are held at the Polish Museum of America, 984 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, IL, starting at 2 p.m. If you’re interested and want to know more, you can write <pgsamerica@aol.com>.]

**27th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy
Sunday, July 15 - Friday, July 20, 2007**

Hilton Salt Lake City Center, Salt Lake City, Utah

Website: <http://www.slc2007.org> (online registration, all event details)

Contact: <information@slc2007.org>

Hosted by the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (<http://www.iajgs.org>), this year’s premiere Jewish genealogy event includes the following highlights:

- Networking with international researchers, experts and Eastern European archivists
- A film festival with Jewish and genealogical themes
- Breakfasts with Family History Library regional resource experts
- Popular computer training workshops in basic/advanced essential skills for researchers
- Special photographic exhibits
- Resource room with access to many specialized databases and other materials
- Special interest group meetings and luncheons
- Utilizing the FHL’s extensive resources
- Vendor room
- Tours and more.

The intensive 5½ day program of lectures, panels, tracks and workshops will cover the following research areas:

- Eastern/Central/Western Europe
- Israel (pre/post-1948)
- Genetics/DNA
- Holocaust
- Immigration/naturalization/migration
- Jewish history/sociology
- Methodology
- Sephardic/Mizrahi
- Non-European (e.g. India, China)
- Photograph/document preservation
- Rabbinic research
- Repositories
- South/Central America
- Technology/Internet resources
- U.S./North America (includes specific locales), and
- Yiddish theater/Jewish music.

For all event details, including easy online registration, go to the frequently updated website, <http://www.slc2007.org>.

[Based on information provided by Schelly Talalay Dardashti <publicity@slc2007.org.>]

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

<http://portalwiedzy.onet.pl/tlumacz.html>

In the never-ending search for good translation aids, I'm always glad to repeat anything I hear praising a site that offers help. On the PolandBorderSurnames list, Jim Presenkowski <jimpres1@mac.com> said "I use this site and it is very accurate."

<http://www.travlang.com/wordofday/>

On the Poland-Roots list, Debbie Greenlee mentioned several online sites with audio to help teach Polish. "This site gives a word of the day. The word or phrase, in English, is at the top of the page. Click on POLISH. You can have the word repeated by clicking the 'PLAY' button." She also mentioned this site from Lublin, which we have mentioned before:

<http://golem.umcs.lublin.pl/users/ppikuta/lessons/LESSIDX.HTM>

She said this site helps pronounce the individual Polish letters, which can help you sound out words:

<http://www.apronus.com/learnpolish/advpolishaudio.htm>

This site teaches audio according to the occasion:

<http://www.carla.umn.edu/LCTL/VAVA/audio/polish/>

Although you have to sign-in to this site, Meet Poland, it is free and you can request specific phrases:

<http://www.meetpoland.com/learnpolish/activate/>

<http://www.namethesaurus.com/Thesaurus/Search.aspx>

On the PolandBorderSurnames list Tina Ellis <vellis@jps.net> suggested a look at this Surname Thesaurus search page, saying “The first column seemed to be pretty good for my Polish surnames, as well as the last one. The second one using a soundex seemed to be a bit farfetched, but I like the soundex because it will pick up letters of the alphabet, which are read wrong by those who index the documents for computerized programs. As an example, sometimes you will have a name beginning with an R, which has faded on the old document, and the top part will be missing. This will make the letter look more like a K.”

<http://www.jewishgen.org/jri-pl/bizdir/bd1929.htm>

Also on PBS, Lucyna Artymiuk <lartymiuk@optusnet.com.au> loved this site, the 1929 Polish Business Directory, saying “It gives you an introduction to the locality and the names of the people running the businesses as well as their addresses.”

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries.asp>

On the soc.genealogy.jewish newsgroup Susan Pearlman mentioned this site, saying, “I found it by accident and was amazed at how much information can be gleaned from the few facts offered — in many cases maiden names of women, names of survivors, etc. For each listing, this is not a full obituary. Should you need more information than they begrudgingly offer, you are then on your own to purchase the full obit. from the listed newspaper. So far, I have not found that necessary.”

<http://worldroots.com/brigitte/occupat.htm>

Also on the soc.genealogy.jewish list, Joan Parker wrote “Now that the Hamburg lists are online, here is a place to go to get the translations into English of the various working occupations listed on the manifest. It also has professions and illnesses should one need that information at a later date.”

<http://www.findmypast.com/HomeServlet>

Joseph Martin sent out a note saying, “Just wanted to let you know that the UK Passenger Lists of ships departing from British ports is now available online for the years 1890 to 1899. Eventually the lists will be available from 1890 to 1960. Once you locate your passengers, there is a fee for the transcript or the actual image. Registration and payment are easy enough.”

<http://genealogy.wikia.com>

Vol. 7, No. 22 of *Nu? What's New?* mentioned this English-language Wikipedia site for genealogy, saying it has over 4,700 articles.

<http://www.sbc.katowice.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=1013>

On the soc.genealogy.jewish newsgroup Logan Kleinwaks <kleinwaks@alumni.princeton.edu> posted a note explaining that the Silesian Digital Library (<http://www.sbc.katowice.pl/dlibra>) recently added to its online resources scans of three volumes of *Księga pamiątkowa i adresowa wygnańców wojennych z Galicyi i Bukowiny 1914-1915 oraz Album pamiątkowe* (Memorial and Address Book of War Refugees from Galicia and Bukovina, 1914-1915, as well as a Photo Album). He added that the photos are of places and only very few people. The volume for Lwów is at the address given above. The Kraków volume is at:

<http://www.sbc.katowice.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=1021>

The volume for the rest (?) of Galicia and for Bukovina is at:

<http://www.sbc.katowice.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=929>

Logan added, “The Lwow and Krakow volumes are arranged alphabetically by surname. The other volume is divided into Galicia and Bukovina sections, the Galicia section being arranged, for people from large towns, alphabetically by town, then alphabetically by surname within each town, and, for people from ‘minor’ towns, alphabetically by surname. The Bukovina section (near the end) is arranged alphabetically by surname for Czernowitz, then alphabetically by surname for other towns. There might also be small sections falling outside of this arrangement scheme — I have not examined them carefully.

“When viewing these directories on the Silesian Digital Library website, it is possible to search them by clicking on the binoculars icon above the area in which images are displayed, although this is very slow. I will soon add full-text soundex, wildcard, etc. searching for these directories to www.kalter.org/search. If you are only interested in a particular town, it is already practical to search manually on the Silesian Digital Library website.

“To view a directory, after clicking on the appropriate link above, click on ‘Content’ on the left, under ‘Publication.’ Either the directory will open or you will be prompted to download a DjVu plugin for your web browser. If you have already installed the plugin, click on ‘Browse publication’ to open the directory. When the directory is open, you can use the pull-down menu near the top to select the image you want to view. Plugins for Windows, Mac OS X, and UNIX/Linux can be downloaded from

http://www.lizardtech.com/download/dl_options.php?page=plugins. (Note: Firefox users may experience difficulties with the DjVu plugin. Internet Explorer is recommended.)”

http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy/2007/01/downloadable_ge.html

The 5 January 2007 issued of *Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter*, available at this address, tells of a large number of genealogy charts and forms downloadable for free from various sites. This could be a handy tip, allowing you to save yourself a lot of time and trouble. Why reinvent the wheel?

http://www.leopolis.org.ua/leopolis/external/main/go/leo_home

On the Galicia_Poland-Ukraine list <vladis@mail.lviv.ua> explained that this site is an “archive is a hypertext information resource employed for university-level teaching and research in the realm of art and cultural studies, and neighboring fields of the humanities. The mission of Leopoldis is to trace a common cultural tradition of all regions of Ukraine — eastern, western, northern, southern, and central — which manifested itself through the ages in monuments of Ukrainian art.”

<http://kpbk.umk.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?from=directory&id=21780>

On the Herbarz list Krzysztof Dobrzyński gave this address for access to a digital copy of a work by Józef Krzepela entitled *Spis miejscowości i rodów ziemiańskich województwa pomorskiego* [List of Localities and Noble Clans of the Province of Pomerania] (Gebethner i Wolff - Krakow 1925). The digital version was prepared by Marcin Michał Wiszowaty. If you have family from the region of Pomerania (in what is now northwestern Poland), this could be worth a look

YOU MAY REPRINT articles from *Gen Dobry!*, PROVIDED: (1) the reprint is used for non-commercial, educational purposes; and (2) the following notice appears at the end of the article: Written by [author’s name, e-mail address, and URL, if given]. Previously published by *Gen Dobry!*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, 31 January 2007, PolishRoots®: <http://www.PolishRoots.org/>.

Copyright 2007 PolishRoots®, Inc. All rights reserved.