



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://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_8.pdf

*** DID ELLIS ISLAND CHANGE MY NAME? ***

by Paul S. Valasek <Hallersarmy@aol.com>

How many times have we heard, “Our name was XZYCHZCYT, but after Ellis Island it became XZYC”? Or better yet, AB. The blame has been put on Ellis Island for quite some time. After searching for thousands of names from ship manifests, let’s say, “Yes! They did change some names,” and “No! They didn’t.”

I was fortunate that all of my grandparents knew how to spell their names, spelled them consistently, and passed them on intact. Except for when my Czech grandfather spelled *Valasek* with the proper Czech spelling, but because he went with his Polish neighbor to file citizenship papers, he changed the spelling that one time to the Polish version of the name, *Walaszek*. His reasoning was, he would pass faster with a Polish name than a Czech name. Of course, when searching through Cook County naturalization papers, I couldn’t find him or my grandmother. I asked my dad at the time if he was sure they both became citizens. He said yes, emphatically, even telling me how they had a party for my grandmother’s naturalization in 1943, when my dad was 19 years old. It was not until later, after digging through what my aunt called “trash for the garbage,” that I found my grandfather’s papers and his second naturalization document, generated in 1972, when he petitioned the government to restore his name to its proper spelling of *Valasek*. This because he was taking out a passport to visit the homeland after leaving it 51 years earlier. Had I seen this paper (fortunately I saved it from my aunt’s trash bin) I would have found his original documents a lot sooner. But as it is, I found his originals and then found his corrected ones; so for my grandfather, he filed successfully to be a citizen twice, 40+ years apart.

Now comes the matter of the horror stories of Ellis Island. When most of our European relatives came to New York, they landed at the docks and the ship manifests landed with them. These documents were constructed at the time of sailing or during the sailing based on records provided **IN EUROPE**. Not at Ellis Island, nor even at the docks. So when a Polish or Ukrainian immigrant stood before the German or French or British shipping clerk, he said his name, with a thick foreign accent, and the clerk wrote it down as best he could. I would have to believe that if the clerk had trouble writing down the name, he may have had the immigrant write it down or correct it for him. But many immigrants were not very skilled at writing, and possibly could not write at all; so of course, they said the clerk’s version was just fine. Thus Ellis Island picks up the names from the manifests and continues on with the same spelling — *or* possibly created a slightly new one. The immigrant left the dock with his name, a similar one, or a newly created one — but my guess is, even in that case, it would be one very similar to the correct version. That, of course, was during the age of mass immigration, up to 1930.

Now comes the new horror story of the Ellis Island website, created less than 10 years ago. Have our ancestors received new names? You betcha! And some are horribly mangled. As I continue to work on my Haller’s Army database, I am now adding the ship manifests of the returning troops aboard U.S. troop ships as well as normal ocean liners. How do I do this? I have a number of names of troop ships, some with dates of arrivals. Using Dr. Morse’s excellent search engines, I can then search the entire ship/sailing for all names on board which were entered into the Ellis Island database by

volunteers working through the Family History Centers.

Now before this gets further, we are all indebted to their efforts, typing millions of names so that the rest of us can search instantly at the push of a button. No way around it: when millions of names are keyed in, there will be errors, no doubts, no excuses. These are due to the enormous quantity of data handled, and the limitations of even the best human typist. After all, an error rate of 1% means you got 99% right, and that will get you an A+ in any course you take in school. But if you key in 1,000 names and only mess up 1%, that's still 10 errors. We're talking millions of names; so of course there are more than a few mistakes.

I only wish they had tried harder to let volunteers familiar with a particular ethnic group transcribe those ships which had predominantly that ethnicity aboard. I would rather a Polish researcher handle the Haller army troopships than say, an Uzbek raised by immigrant Chinese parents. Not picking on Uzbeks nor Chinese, but I feel the Polish researcher will do better with the names, especially the first names, than someone who is not accustomed to the language. By the same logic, if a ship contained mostly immigrating Uzbeks and Chinese, my mythical Uzbek/Chinese transcriber would be infinitely preferable to a Polish one.

Let me demonstrate what I've come across after doing over 5,000 arrivals. Remember, I have information on all of these men from their recruitment papers before I ever take a look at the Ship Manifest. And sometimes this secondary information is the only way I can link a soldier to his recruitment papers.

There are those names which hit exactly on the head (and sometimes I just wonder how that was possible):

<i>Recruitment Papers</i>		<i>Ellis Island database</i>
Augustynowicz	=	Augustynowicz
Banasiuk	=	Banasiuk
Cieslewicz	=	Cieslewicz
Dziadul	=	Dziadul
Jasnopolski	=	Jasnopolski

Some names have minor differences which are easily understood and, to the average researcher, quite acceptable:

<i>Recruitment Papers</i>		<i>Ellis Island database</i>
Kaczor	=	Koczar
Kalinowski	=	Kalinouski
Konieczka	=	Koneczka
Konieczko	=	Konieczka
Krawczyk	=	Krafczyk

Then we have some names which start to stretch the imagination:

<i>Recruitment Papers</i>		<i>Ellis Island database</i>
Mieczynski	=	Omiencinski
Nartowski	=	Wartawski
Nowak	=	Mawak
Ohcz	=	Uchacz
Smukala	=	Snmtka

And then there are just some which don't make the grade at all. These are the most troubling, as you have to ask, how will anyone find these men if they don't have other aids?

<i>Recruitment Papers</i>		<i>Ellis Island database</i>
Gozdalski	=	Sasdalski (Soundex won't catch this one)
Drewniak	=	Guivmriak (No V in Polish — "iv" is really "w")
Osiecki	=	Quicki (No Q in Polish)
Radziwil	=	Gradz...l (At least the transcriber stated up front he/she can't read the name)
Szostek	=	Lsostck (All you can do is count the number of letters and look for a name the same size)
Swiechkowski, Wladyslaw	=	Musnicki, Jan (I've seen this a number of times. The transcriber listed one recruit twice and the second name was omitted)

Now, before everyone sends me nasty e-mails stating I should type them up myself, again, my argument is not with the transcribers. (Although taking a very common Polish first name such as Jan and making it Kon is frustrating, especially when one look shows you "Jan" is quite legible.) My argument is with the Ellis Island website. I have contacted them numerous times with corrections of both names and especially for my family, towns of origin. I know that foreign place names are strange to most folks; but when you reasonably can read "Blatnice" and Ellis Island has "Blainice" or "Blatonie," these could easily be corrected. So far, I have had none of my corrections put into place by Ellis Island.

So 5+ years later, anyone looking for Wladyslaw Swiechkowski had better expect to find his new name in America as Jan Musnicki. I bet Mr. Swiechkowski would be surprised!

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

Subject: Poland Millenium Medallion

This is a bit out of your line but perhaps you or one of your many friends can shed some light on a medallion I recently came across. It is about as large as a half-dollar coin and around the edge of the face it has the inscription "Poland's Millennium of Christianity" In the center is a cross. Under the left cross-bar is 966-1966. To the right is the Polish Eagle. The reverse has a picture of the Madonna and Child. Around the edge is "Polonia" and "Semper Fidelis." It was obviously minted for the

Polish Americans in 1966. Where and what group are the first two questions that pop into mind.

Thomas Bocek <tpbocek@bcpl.net>

Editor—I don't know, but I'm glad to put this question to our readers. Can anyone enlighten Tom?

Subject: Help with Research in the Philadelphia Area

My name is Stanley J. Glowacki. My family (back to my grandparents entering the U.S. about 1902-05) have always lived in the Philadelphia area. My mother's maiden name is Cieslak. Is there someone in this area who you can recommend who can help me trace my ancestry? What can I expect to pay for such a service?

Stan Glowacki <sjglow@comcast.net>

Editor—I don't know of anyone in the Philadelphia area who does such research. Of course, there may be someone, and I just don't happen to know about him or her. Over the years I've come into contact with many people doing serious Polish genealogical research; but it would be irresponsible of me to pretend I know them all.

You might try contacting the Polish Genealogical Society of Connecticut and the Northeast at <pgsctne@yahoo.com>. I know the Society has some members in Pennsylvania, and it is possible one of them could help you. Also, I'm printing this (with permission) so that any of our readers with good advice can contact you. I hope you get some help and find what you're looking for!

Subject: Availability of *Dom Polski: Dance Hall Days of Detroit's Polonia*

Editor—Our last issue featured a review of this film by Debbie Greenlee. That brought this response:

Tried to get it but ... not available in Canada — only selling in the US.

Julianne (Wójcik) Davidson\ Ottawa, ON CA <ottawacaper@sympatico.ca>

Editor—I'm sorry to hear that. I told Julianne perhaps she could contact Dave Obee at Genealogy Unlimited/Interlink Bookshop and see if there's any way he could carry this film for Canadian customers. If anyone else has an idea, please speak up. We don't want our Canadian readers feeling left out!

Subject: Thanks!

Editor—I'm usually reluctant to print letters from people thanking me for my assistance, though I find such letters highly gratifying. I think this one might be worth sharing, however, if only because it proves that you never know when someone might be able to give you that one bit of information that pays off in a big way. So don't give up, and keep asking!

Dear Mr. Hoffman,

I know you get numerous letters from people requesting information on your expertise regarding family searches. However, I am hoping that you might perhaps remember me because you were an incredible help to me. I initially contacted you on August 1, 2006, when I was baffled about three separate documents that I had acquired pertaining to my grandfather. I was a real rookie at genealogy research and I was at a loss as to where to turn. I sent three copies of information that I had obtained to you, each stating different birthplaces of my grandfather in Poland: (1) Ellis Island - Adamy, Austria; (2) ship manifest - Galicia; (3) lastly Polish registration copy - Karwistka. Long story short, you were able to recognize information on his legal papers that, in your estimation, indicated that my grandfather was from **Adamy**, which was part of the Austrian Empire 1815-1919 as a part of the Crownland of Galicia, and that the city written on my grandfather's registration paper appeared to be **Kamionka** and not Karwistka.

With all that said, your reply to me was, "This is not a sure thing by any means, and I hope I'm not sending you off on a wild goose chase." Well Mr. Hoffman, not only was it not a wild goose chase, I am meeting several family members from Poland in October when my husband and I travel there. I simply cannot believe that if not for you, I would still be searching aimlessly. How did you know?

Two years ago at the age of 51, I was in Kraków and Warsaw, Poland while on a tour. I mailed letters to anyone in those area phone books who shared my family name and believe it or not, I received one response. The events that have followed belong in a movie! I received an e-mail from a gentleman (Władysław Trojan) who is unbelievably wonderful. He greeted us last year, took off of work to accommodate us, and was determined to find my family roots before I set foot on that plane back to America. He literally flagged people down, taking us from village to village, introducing my husband and me to people, in their homes, no less, searching and searching for any clues to a family link. We shared a delightful dinner with his family at their home and they treated my husband and me like royalty. Władysław was successful; he located my family tree and that document I held on to all the way home from Poland. It dates back five generations. Can you believe it?

This warmhearted person spent every waking hour with us, and believe me when I say that it was extremely emotional when he took us to the airport in Kraków after the completion of "our" mission. Yes ... he even took us to the airport at 4:00 a.m. Władysław calls me from Poland every other week, and although we cannot find a genetic link to each other, he is more so family to me in my heart of hearts than anyone in this world. I have kept a journal of our first communication and I think someone out there may want movie rights!

Ironically, I am from Wisconsin and the only place that Mr. Władysław Trojan worked as an agricultural exchange student in 1978 was WISCONSIN!!! Family and friends say that he and I actually resemble each other. Take a guess as to who is driving us to the Ukraine in October to

witness the area where the village of Adamy once stood and my grandfather was born? Yes, it's Władysław! He also speaks fluent English. What can I do for him to show my gratefulness? Is anything good enough?

To everyone who becomes discouraged at times because they continue to hit “dead ends” with research, never give up the hope. I basically started with the name of my grandfather and the ONLY INFORMATION THAT I HAD WAS THAT HE SETTLED IN WISCONSIN. Am I blessed or what? In closing, again and again I thank you from the bottom of my heart. You found my family,

Nancy Sudoma <sudoma@aol.com>

P.S. The letters are flowing from my family in Poland. However, I cannot find anyone from Milwaukee or Chicago area to translate the letters. Is there anyone you know of who is willing to help? Thanks.

Editor—Władysław Trojan sounds like a real prince. That's the person you were lucky to find! I'm just glad I was able to give you a couple of ideas that pointed you in the right direction.

As for a translator in the Milwaukee or Chicago area, I suggested Ola Heska <ola@hwwd.com>, who lives near Chicago and has done some translations for customers who told me they were satisfied with her work and her prices. If anyone can recommend a translator in the Milwaukee area, let me know and I'll be glad to pass the info along.

Subject: Video of Polish Family Reunion

Google Alert sent me a Dabble Video Search link containing Mierzejewski videos. One is of a II Mierzejewski Family Reunion on YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Uax791a3Pk>

I had the audio translated and placed it here:

http://www.mierzejewski.org/video2ndfamilyreunion_eng.htm

My comments:

1. The video appears to have been on TV.
2. The family lives now in Western Poland, in the Piła area, “reclaimed territory” after World War II, not considered traditional Mierzejewski or Polish territory, but German/West Prussian.
3. The family “is a good family that originates from the eastern borderlands of the 2nd Republic of Poland [1921-1939]”. That area is in Belarus now. More correctly, the “family” applies only to a recent branch of the family because the Mierzejewskis originate from the Ostrołęka/Różan area,

going back 600 years. A reunion of all Mierzejewski family members would attract thousands of people and would probably result in a declared state of emergency.

Garret Mierzejewski <mierzejewski@verizon.net>

Editor—Fascinating! Thanks for making this available.

Subject: Who needs surnames?

Editor—After I posted a note on surnames on one mailing list, I got the following note:

When I was in Korea in 1951 I had gotten acquainted on the troop ship with a guy from Ohio. He was an assistant to the Forward Observer in the artillery, so once in a while we would cross paths in those hills. I would say “Hi, Ohio,” and he would reply, “Hi, California,” as we never knew each others’ name. So much for names.

Joe Tolosa <joetolosa@sbcglobal.net>

Editor—Sure. People are clever creatures; they find a way to get by! The thing is, some folks seem to have it in their heads that surnames are carved in stone, never changing, essential, blah-blah-blah. Yet our own daily experience tells us otherwise. People get names wrong all the time, but we still manage. And as your experience proves, who even needs a name?

Subject: Museum of Family History?

Editor—We have mentioned this online museum several times in recent issues; it’s at www.museumoffamilyhistory.com. The man behind the museum wrote to give additional information:

It’s always nice to see my website mentioned to others. There really is a good deal of information on my site that might be of use to your readers, so I hope they take a close look at my site. Perhaps you or someone you know might find some time to completely review what I have on my site so you can make known to your readers what might be of use to them. The best overview is via the Site Map page. It’s also advisable to check the “Recent Updates” page periodically to see what’s new at the Museum.

I am currently working on an exhibition about the photographic studios of Europe (pre-war) and have a good number of studio photos from pre-war Europe. I am trying to augment my collection of such photos, i.e., with the imprint of the studio/photographer on the photo front, and perhaps the imprint/advertisement of the studio on the reverse side. If you happen to know anyone who has any such studio photos and would care to e-mail them to me (front and back, if there is an imprint), that would be helpful. I am building up an archive so I can help others identify the studio names, locations, and perhaps help date their own photos. I’m only publishing a dozen or two of these

photos in my Studios exhibition, but the others will add nicely to my museum archive.

Also, I am always looking for others to write, etc., for my site, so if you come across anyone that might wish to do so for my site, please refer them to me.

Thanks again for your help.

Steve Lasky <steve@museumoffamilyhistory.com>

***** POLISH PRIESTS AND “DONATIONS” *****

by Alan J. Kania <ajkania@comcast.net>

Editor—There was a very interesting thread on the Poland-Roots list recently, under the general title “Donation versus Payment” (“versus” was mistyped and should have been “versus”). After a while the comments started to veer off-topic, and the moderator had to terminate the discussion. This was the posting I found most fascinating, and the author, Alan Kania, said he didn’t mind if I reprinted it here, for those of you who didn’t see it before. He starts by commenting on a post where a researcher described a really good relationship with a parish priest in Poland.

I wish I had the same kind of “spiritual” relationship with the parish priest in Buczkowice. I met with him when I visited my grandmother’s village and he was very gracious about letting me photograph the interior of the church while he sat and kept the rest of my party in good company. When I asked him if I could copy family records from the church books, he was a little reluctant, but agreed to pull out some of the records for my grandmother and her siblings. It took him no more than about 10-15 minutes total time.

I offered him a “donation” to the tune of 400 zlotys, which translates to about \$143 USD. I consider that a darned good contribution in any country. He waved it off initially and said something to the effect of “What would I do with that?” I told him that he could mention my family in his prayers during Mass (at which point he immediately accepted). Since his time was limited at that point, I hoped the contribution would make the relationships between us more conducive to future family history research.

I had a young member of my Polish family (and a member of the parish) contact him to inquire if she could do additional research. Her grandmother (and parish member) also talked with the same priest. He adamantly insisted that ONLY the priest could handle the church records and he didn’t have time to go through the entire family records.

I tried a different approach — considering the unemployment rate in the village is so bad (including among members of my family who are also parish members of that church). I suggested that I would be willing to pay a reasonable wage to help an unemployed member of the family AND make a contribution to the church as my expression of gratitude for the assistance of the parish priest.

Again, I received the same brusque response that only the priest was allowed to handle the records.

Last weekend I attended the Polish Festival in Denver and had the opportunity to talk to a young priest from Kraków and I mentioned this incident. He smiled a little and explained that it may have been a hold-over attitude from the Soviet days in southern Poland. At that time church records were kept in secret by the priest, according to the explanation the Kraków priest gave me. Members of “The Party” were not allowed to be members of the church, nor were they allowed to attend church. Should a family member be baptized in the church, the records could be found by the Party administrators and that individual could lose their job with the Party. So to protect the church members, even though they were atheistic Party members on the outside, the parish priests kept the church records hidden.

I reminded the Kraków priest that times have changed in Poland and the Soviets no longer control things with regard to worship. The priest smiled again and told me “perhaps the priest was expecting a bigger bribe.” (His words, not mine). I told him that I offered 40 złotych as a contribution, and the Kraków priest told me that some priests are used to living a good life and may have thought that an American could do better than that.

This experience has left me with a very sour taste for the sanctity of some of the priests who have an attitude like this. I don’t consider it holy, spiritual or anything but greedy and un-Christian. Perhaps the Kraków priest was more honest in describing it as a bribe instead of “donation” or “payment.”

I did have alternative secular success with the *gmina* in Buczkowice. I made an alternative request for assistance from them (again through the same Buczkowice relatives) and was sent a price list of what it would cost to have municipal records copied. Instead of asking for a few records at a time, they told me to send all my requests at once and explained what the cost would be (based upon how many records could be found and how many records were within the privacy laws of being older than 100 years.

I packed up a large box of Family Group forms (written in Polish and English), filled out all the information that I had, and left the rest of the form blank. I enclosed a copy of the family tree as I have it, and added a 2-lb. box of local candies from my home town.

I received word through the family that my package arrived and the *gmina* staff would address my request after the wedding season was over (because they were busy pulling records for brides/grooms-to-be). Within a month, I received my Family Group forms filled out as much as possible; plus some of the records, technically outside the 100-year privacy laws, were actually sketched onto my family tree charts in pencil. As a result, I was able to add two more branches of my family tree thanks to the kindness of the *gmina* staff. And they did it without sending me a bill for their services! To me, I found that kind of kindness to be spiritual, holy, and generous beyond expectations. My “bribe” was a simple gesture of thanks with a box of local candies.

I’m going to try a cut-and-paste letter to the archdiocese in Kraków to see if I can obtain any church records through their archives. It’s sad that I have to make these end-runs around a parish priest who

didn't have time to help me or his unemployed parishioners.

If anyone has suggestions on how to do research in southern Poland (where the LDS hasn't microfilmed church records — at least not in Buczkowice or Łodygowice), I welcome any assistance. Without a knowledge of the Polish language, trying to do research has been slow and difficult. The cut-and-paste letters are good, but I always want to ask a lot more questions in my letters.

Editor—It never occurred to me before that at one time a Polish priest might have a very good reason not to let Communist officials see the parish registers! But I see now at one time there was such reason, and that might still make some priests reluctant to cooperate with researchers. Old habits die hard.

It's very frustrating when a priest won't help you out; and let's face it, some priests are total jerks. Still, we have to remember: it's not their job to help researchers. Their job is to see to the spiritual needs of their parishioners. Anything that takes time away from that responsibility must wait. Remember, from the viewpoint of a devout Catholic, the priest's primary responsibility is to the welfare of his parishioners' souls — a concern even more important than life and death! We're talking eternal salvation or damnation here. Compared to that, genealogy is pretty trivial.

Now I don't want to make excuses for jerks, and as I said, some priests qualify. At one time I spent a year and a half in seminaries, with notions of getting ordained. I got to know a pretty good sampling of priest and future priests. Some were absolute bastards — I didn't know it at the time, but the rector of one seminary I attended was abusing some of my classmates sexually. (Thank God he didn't find me attractive!). But a lot of them were decent guys; and some were absolutely amazing. In other words, they're human beings, and you have to take the good with the bad.

My advice: try not to get angry with uncooperative priests, but don't give up, either. See if the records can be accessed some other way, as, for instance, via the local Civil Registrar. If that doesn't work, yes, write to the diocese. If need be, trump a priest with a bishop!

***** NEW BOOK CELEBRATES CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS POLONIA *****

submitted by Barbara Proko <bjproko@yahoo.com>

Editor—Barbara Proko sent us a copy of this press release, and as always, we're glad to share news of forthcoming books with our readers.

WORCESTER, Mass.—Polish Americans are one of Worcester County's largest ethnic groups, but their shared history in central Massachusetts has never been documented—until now. *Worcester County's Polish Community*, by Barbara Proko and Janice Baniukiewicz Stickles with Our Lady of Czestochowa Guild of Catholic Women, tells Polonia's story for the first time, in more than 225 vintage photographs, maps, and other illustrations.

A new release in Arcadia Publishing's "Images of America" series, this photo history broadens the scope of Proko and Stickles' first book, *The Polish Community of Worcester* (2003). It highlights

the seven Polish parish seats of the Worcester Diocese — Clinton, Dudley, Gardner, Southbridge, Webster, West Warren, and Worcester — and encompasses Gilbertville, South Grafton, Uxbridge, and other towns where Poles settled in substantial numbers.

About a hundred individuals, as well as Polish parishes, organizations, and archives, contributed photographs, documents, and memorabilia for this book. Rare images depict two uniformed members of the Krakow Guards, a Worcester society founded in 1896; a young women's sodality at St. Joseph's Parish, Webster, in 1897; the Webster and Worcester Polish bands circa 1910; a map of Thorndike mill workers' "Patch" housing in West Warren; and American Steel & Wire South Works mechanical department workers in 1927.

The book examines the full range of the Polish American experience in Worcester County. More than 700 people are identified by name in images of immigration and settlement, establishment of parishes, religious ceremonies and rites of passage, family life, work, education, sports, military service, and preservation of cultural heritage.

Images run the gamut from Douglas dairy farmer Konstanty Moczynski with his calves in 1936, to a 1958 Al Banx cartoon of Gardner football coach Walt Dubzinski Sr., to Miss Massachusetts Kathleen Sterczala with comedian Bob Hope in 1972. Photos recall key organizations such as the Polish Falcons, Polish National Alliance, Polish Roman Catholic Union, and Polish American Veterans of World War II. They honor the accomplishments of outstanding individuals from a variety of fields: bowling champion Stasia Czernicki, White House nurse Elizabeth Chapowicki, and musical composer/conductor Aleksander Marczewski, among others.

Polish settlement in Worcester County had humble beginnings: a small group of German Poles immigrated to Webster in the 1870s. Over the next decades, thousands of Russian and Austrian Poles, fleeing economic and political hardship, pinned their hopes for a better life on jobs in the burgeoning industries of central Massachusetts.

Hundreds more came as displaced persons in the wake of World War II, and others left communist-controlled Poland in the 1960s. Ongoing immigration brings new Poles who sustain this ethnic heritage. Today more than 51,500 persons of Polish ancestry call the county home. "Worcester County's Polish Community" is unique in synthesizing their shared history for the first time. Proko and Stickles are second-generation Polish Americans whose immigrant grandparents settled in Worcester nearly a century ago. They are alumnae of St. Mary's High School, New England's only Polish Catholic secondary school, and members of the Polish Genealogical Society of Massachusetts. Our Lady of Czestochowa Guild of Catholic Women, founded in 1965, provides support for Worcester's Polish parish and schools.

"Worcester County's Polish Community" will be sold as a guild fund-raiser at Our Lady of Czestochowa's annual fall festival Sept. 30-Oct. 1 at the parish hall in Worcester. Proko and Stickles have scheduled several additional book signings throughout the county this fall. Arcadia Publishing is the leading local history publisher in the United States, with more than 4,000 titles in print and hundreds of new titles released every year.

For more information, contact Barbara Proko at <bjproko@yahoo.com>.

Worcester County's Polish Community Book Signing Schedule

Saturday, Sept. 22, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Booklovers' Gourmet, 55 East Main St., Webster, 508-949-6232, <http://www.er3.com/book>

Saturday, Sept. 29, 10 a.m.-7 p.m., Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish fall festival, 34 Ward St., Worcester

Sunday, Sept. 30, 7:30 a.m.-2 p.m., Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish fall festival, 34 Ward St., Worcester

Saturday, Oct. 20, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., SCR Cafe, 210 Hamilton St., Southbridge, 508-765-5520, <http://www.sturbridgecoffeeroasters.com/>

Saturday, Oct. 20, 5-6:30 p.m., St. Joseph's Church, 358 Pleasant St., Gardner

Sunday, Oct. 21, 7-11:30 a.m., St. Joseph's Church, 358 Pleasant St., Gardner

Thursday, Oct. 25, 6:30 p.m. Polish Genealogical Society of Massachusetts meeting, Jones Library, 14 Amity St., Amherst

Saturday, Oct. 27, 1-3 p.m., Tatnuck Bookseller, 18 Lyman St., Westborough, 508-366-4959, <http://www.tatnuck.com>

Saturday, Nov. 3, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Uxbridge Free Public Library, Thayer Memorial Building, 15 North Main St., Uxbridge, 508-278-8624, <http://www.uxbridgelibrary.org>

Saturday, Nov. 10, 1-3 p.m., Barnes & Noble, The Shoppes at Blackstone Valley, 70 Worcester Providence Turnpike #533, Millbury, 508-865-2801

Saturday, Nov. 17, 1-3 p.m., Pilsudski Club, 61 Joslyn Rd., Gilbertville

Sunday, Nov. 25, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m., Polish Cultural Club Szopka Festival, Polish National Home, 60 Charter Oak Ave., Hartford, CT

Thursday, Nov. 29, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Webster House, Webster Square, Worcester, 508-757-7208, <http://www.websterhouseweb.com>

***** NEW BOOK ON BACK OF THE YARDS (CHICAGO AREA) *****

submitted by Jeanette Swist

Editor—Here's information on another book you might want to know about.

Back of the Yards highlights the colorful history of the neighborhood. This new photographic history book is written by local author Jeannette Swist. It is Swist's hope that the book "provides a way to see the interesting buildings, feel the excitement of the parades... and visit the homes and see into the lives of the neighborhood residents"

Highlights of *Back of the Yards*:

- Reveals some never before seen images of Chicago's Free Fair, 47th Street and Damen Avenue
- Features photos of former landmarks including People's Theatre, Drover's Bank and Goldblatt Brothers Department Store

- Addresses the importance of the immigration of eastern European immigrants
- Highlights a sociological study into an industrial neighborhood representing industry domination of an urban worker's life in Chicago

Available at area bookstores, independent retailers, and online retailers, or through Arcadia Publishing at (888)-313-2665 or <http://www.arcadiapublishing.com>.

Arcadia Publishing is the leading publisher of local and regional history in the United States. Our mission is to make history accessible and meaningful through the publication of books on the heritage of America's people and places. Have we done a book on your town? Visit <http://www.arcadiapublishing.com>.

Editor—The author adds: “Many folks have commented on how they have found a photo of a family member in the book and consider the book to be a genealogical gem when studying the eastern immigration pattern to the Chicago area ... By the way, while my maternal side is Lithuanian, my paternal side is Polish: Swist. While I have met with relatives in Lithuania, and have visited Kraków, I plan to locate relatives in Poland. My grandmother Theresa Gnat (parents: Gregorius Gnat and Maria Lis) from Galicia, part of the Austrian-Hungarian empire, the villages were Dulczawke and Zagorze near the main town called Pilzno. My grandmother married Albert Swist when she was 16, and part of a dowry arrangement – married at St. Barbara's (Chicago) on 9-9-13. (parents: Joannes Swist and Catherine Nalepa). My father John Swist was born in August 12, 1914 in Bridgeport, with 6 kids the family moved to Brighton Park. While my grandfather had no brothers, his sister Antonina married John Mroczek (a neighbor of the Swist family back in Poland) on 5-4-1910 at St. Mary of Perpetual Help. Sometime between the decade of 1970 – 1980, my grandfather Albert Swist returned to the village and gave his real estate holdings to relatives.”

***** REQUEST FOR PHOTOS OF MEMORIALS *****

submitted by Debbie Greenlee <daveg@airmail.net>

I know several people on this list will be going to Poland this year. I have a request.

No matter which villages you visit, parish or otherwise, please seek out any memorials which have the names of Polish victims from World War II and Akcja Wisła and take close-up photographs of all the names as well as one photo of the whole memorial.

When you return you can send me a scan of the photos and I will transcribe all the names and place them on Poland Gen Web under the section titled, “War Memorials.”

This is an important project because it publishes the names of the Poles who died during the wars, names which are only found in the individual villages of Poland. While the villagers have memorialized their dead, the names are confined to that one slab of granite. I think it is important that the rest of the world know the numbers of Poles killed.

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~polwgv/polandarchives.html>

I was recently contacted regarding names from the memorial in Niebieszczany. The grandson/son who lives in another part of Poland, wrote to ask for more information about this particular memorial as he was unaware of it! His father died in Lwów (Lviv), Ukraine in 1945, which tells me that somehow the village found out about the death because they memorialized the father's name on a monument just outside the cemetery in Niebieszczany.

I see this request for photos as a simple, painless way to give back to others for the help you've received in your research.

The memorials can be found in the *rynek* (village square), around or in the church or at the cemetery itself. If you ask, you will be shown the memorial.

Thanks

Debbie Greenlee <daveg@airmail.net>

THE POZNAŃ PROJECT: AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2007 UPDATE

Dear Friends of the Poznań Project,

The Project is progressing and we have currently reached 26% of all Catholic marriage records for the former Prussian Posen province (years 1835-84 taken into account) included into the database (still the percentage of Lutheran records is far smaller...). More than 150,000 records (Catholic and Protestant) can be searched right now. The concerted help and dedication of so many people has resulted in an exceptional tool to research the family history of the population of our region.

As usual, here is a list of new parishes that have appeared over the last two months on our list:

Roman Catholic:

Kościelec, Mieszków, Borzęciczki, Pałędzie Kościelne, Boruszyn, Słupia Kapitulna, Szkaradowo, Mielżyn, Sadki, Chomiąza Księża, Morzewo, Niepruszewo, Połajewo, Grodzisko (Pleszew), Domachowo, Grabowo (Września), Nowa Wieś Królewska, Wyganów, Ostrów, Benice, Polanowice

Lutheran:

Poznań-Św.Krzyż (Posen-Kreuzkirche), Środa (Schroda)

As a reminder, here is the address of the main search engine page:

<http://bindweed.man.poznan.pl/~bielecki/search.php>

A new functionality has been added to the search engine: when searching, the regular female forms of Polish surnames are treated as identical with male names. So far, when you searched for "Stachowski," you would get "Stachowska" females only as approximate results. Now they are among the exact hits. The same pertains to the Budny/Budna type. Not supported are obsolete and dialectal female forms (as: Wachowiak/Wachowiaczka, Olejniczak/Olejniczanka) and some rare (though regular) patterns. But at least in most typical cases, the inflected surnames will now be treated as the same surname, in line with the Polish grammar. This point used to confuse some users less accustomed to the Slavic inflection of names ("Why do I only get men when searching for my name?").

Thank you very much for all your help to the Project and I hope more and more people will be able to benefit from it.

Best regards

Łukasz Bielecki

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

Tuesday, September 11, 2007

7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Meeting of the Toronto Ukrainian Genealogy Group (TUGG)

St. Vladimir Institute, 620 Spadina Ave., Toronto

Jim Onyschuk will speak on "How to Research Using the TUGG Site"

Contact: (905)-841-6707

Saturday, September 22, 2007

The Polish Center, Franklin, (Milwaukee) Wisconsin

10:30 a.m.

Paul S. Valasek will give a talk on Haller's Polish Army in France at 10:30 a.m. A book signing will follow. If you need details, contact Paul at <Hallersarmy@aol.com>.

September 26-28, 2007

**POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA
ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE**

“BRIDGES TO THE PAST”

At the Schaumburg Marriott in Schaumburg, Illinois

Speakers will include:

- Steve Morse, speaking on the various tools at his One-Step site, www.stevemorse.org;
- Matthew Bielawa, Webmaster of www.halgai.com, speaking on these subjects: Finding Your Village, Gazetteers, Vital Records, and Repatriation and Resettlement of Ethnic Poles;
- Chita Hunter, speaking on the use of Photoshop Elements and Adobe Acrobat;
- Marg Nowaczyk, speaking on genetics and DNA studies, and diseases from *Libri Mortuorum* [death registers] as they pertain to our ancestors;
- Dirk Wales, speaking on Kazimierz Pułaski and Tadeusz Kościuszko, heroes of the American Revolution;
- and our own Paul S. Valasek, speaking on Haller’s Army.

Check the PGSA Website, <http://www.pgsa.org>, for details.

Sunday, September 30, 2007

POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF MASSACHUSETTS

The Eastern European Festival at 1-5 PM.

A celebration of Polish, Ukrainian and other Eastern European cultures with ethnic food, dancing, music, books and crafts, 17th-century Polish Knights. Polish Food. Polish Genealogy display with resources and live Internet/Web connection and Q&A. Admission \$5. Next to Memorial Hall Museum in Old Deerfield.

Saturday, October 6, 2007

Polish and East European Genealogy Workshop

Toledo-Lucas County Public Library

Toledo, Ohio

9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Paul S. Valasek, D.D.S., from Chicago, an experienced Polish-American genealogist, will present four lectures on tracing your family genealogy from Poland and Eastern Europe. The lectures are: Polish American Roots, Haller’s Polish Army in France, Tracing 20th Century Immigrant, and Czech and Slovak Research. Book signing will be presented after the final lecture. For more information, contact the Local History Dept. 419-259-5233.

(From the Website <http://www.toledolibrary.org/events/adenrich.asp>.)

October 20, 2007

PGS-MICHIGAN'S ANNUAL POLISH RESEARCH SEMINAR

American Polish Cultural Center -Hall #2
2975 E. Maple Rd. (15 Mile Rd)
Troy, Michigan 48083
(use Dequindre entrance)

Here are the speakers and their topics:

Ceil Jensen, "Detroit Polonia's Photo Studios and Finding Aid"

Paul S. Valasek, "Haller's Army, aka Polish Army in France" and "Tracing the 20th Century Immigrant"

Bill Gorski, "The J. William Gorski Collection at the Library of Michigan and Michigan State Archives and Slide Presentation of Southeastern Michigan Polish Churches"

Registration: 8:30 a.m., Seminar: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Includes a Delicious Polish-Style Lunch

**First 100 registrants receive a free workshop packet

Registration fee: \$50.00 before October 10 (after that date it's \$60.00)

For the registration form and more information visit this PGSM Website page:
http://www.pgsm.org/index_015.htm

Sunday, October 21, 2007

ON EAGLES WINGS GATHERING

Polish Combatants Hall
206 Beverley St.
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

All are invited to Toronto for our 3rd "On Eagles Wings" gathering of the generations. This English-language, family-oriented event will feature WW2 displays, memorabilia, militaria and survivors (both civilian and veteran). Polish WW2 experts will be on hand to help identify photos, documents, medals, etc.

Visit <http://OnEaglesWings0.tripod.com> for more information. Feel free to e-mail me with any questions <hsokol@sympatico.ca>.

As a special treat for Polish Air Force fans, our President is a former PAF tail gunner and bomber pilot and recipient of the Virtuti Militari. We also have the full dress uniform of a PAF crewman in our museum as well as a few items of PAF memorabilia.

Henry Sokolowski
Polish Combatants Association
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

[From a note posted by Lucyna Artymiuk <lucyna.artymiuk@bigpond.com> to the PolandBorderSurnames mailing list.]

THURSDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2007

POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF MASSACHUSETTS

Jones Library
14 Amity Street
Amherst, Massachusetts
6:30 PM.

Joe Parzych will speak on *“Writing a Polish Family History using Print-On-Demand.”* Mr. Parzych is the author of *Jep’s Place: Hope, Faith and Other Disasters*, remembrances of growing up in a family of 13 children of Polish immigrants. He is a very interesting person and a splendid raconteur. He grew up in a hardscrabble Polish family during the Depression and expended great effort to shape a successful life and do some publishing on the side in *Yankee*, and some other national magazines.

Our interest is in his story *Jep’s Place* and how he used POD to publish it. For those of members and guests who want to produce a hard-copy family history, he’ll have some valuable experiences to share. He will discuss his experiences of producing this book and using the POD firm Booklocker.com, Inc. **FREE**. Bring a friend.

Location: Jones Library Lower Level Meeting Room at 14 Amity Street, Amherst just off North Pleasant Street in the center of town. Public parking across from the library at 25¢ per hour before 6 PM. Call (413) 586-1827 for more details, or visit WEB site.

Editor—POD, or Print on Demand, is a great option for those who want to publish books that big publishers won’t touch because there’s no profit in it for them. This is definitely a good topic for researchers to know something about.

Friday and Saturday, October 3-4, 2008 [note the date: 2008]

PGSCTNE 2008 POLISH GENEALOGY CONFERENCE

Central Connecticut State University, New Britain, Connecticut

Sponsored by the Polish and Polish American Studies Program, Central Connecticut State University. We will be featuring **Dr. Stephen Morse**, who will be lecturing on “Searching the Ellis Island Database on the One-Step Website.”

There will also be a Polish history lecture by **Dr. Mieczysław Biskupski** and a Beginner’s Workshop.

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

<http://the-hermeneutic-of-continuity.blogspot.com/>

On the Polish Genius mailing list, Ray Marshall <raymarsh@mninter.net> mentioned the August 25th entry for this blog, about Poles who have moved to Scotland. Andrew Babicz <andrew@babicz.com> followed up with this site, which has an interesting article about Poles settling in Scotland and Scots settling in Poland (and links to more articles on the subject):

<http://www.scotland.org/about/history-tradition-and-roots/features/culture/1576.html>

I know over the years I’ve heard from a number of people interested in ties between Poles and Scots, so I think some readers may want to take a look at these sites.

<http://www.bagnowka.com>

The August 26 issue of *Nu? What’s New*, available at <http://www.avotaynu.com/nu/v08n16.htm>, mentioned this site, with more than 35,000 pictures of pre-World War II Poland. The site was developed by Tomasz Wiśniewski, “a professional researcher and tour guide who lives in Białystok ... The simplest way to access information about an ancestral town is to use the Search engine at the lower right of the home page.”

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/pp/pphome.html>

In a post to the soc.genealogy.jewish newsgroup, Ann Rabinowitz mentioned this site. “A special resource for tracing your ancestors who came to America and which is available free of charge is The Library of Congress Photo Collection, 1840 - 2000.”

http://www.harlessgenealogy.com/images/german_script/alphabet_chart.htm

Also on that newsgroup, Bob Kosovsky recommended the chart here, calling it “a very nice and useful rendering of multiple possibilities for German letters, many of which form ligatures in particular combinations.” I know trying to read old German handwriting gives many researchers fits,

and I'm always glad to mention any resource that might make the task a bit easier.

<http://www.sbc.org.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=1048&from=&dirids=1>

On several mailing lists Roman Kaluzniacki informed us that the book *Cmentarz Stryjski we Lwowie* (The Stryj Cemetery in Lwów) is available in the Silesian digital library at this address. “Written in Polish, it discusses a large number of notables buried there and adds some interesting historical perspectives about the cemetery. Additionally it contains a partial, yet substantial, alphabetical index of people buried there (with birth and death years).” Those with roots in Lwów may find relatives mentioned in it.

<http://www.brozbar16.webpark.pl/galicja.html>

On the Galicia_Poland-Ukraine mailing list, Lavrentiy said this site was useful because it offers maps of Galicia which include district borders. There are a number of Websites with maps of Galicia; if you have roots in that region, you can't have too many good maps to choose from.

<http://geogreif.uni-greifswald.de/geogreif/?cat=31>

While we're talking about maps, Ken Neumann posted a note on the Posen mailing list about this page, which offers three options: “1) an overview of the maps for the northern part of Poland (including former places such as Pommern, West and East Prussia, northern Posen); 2) an overview of the maps for the southern part of Poland and former Silesia; and 3) the page to ‘retrieve maps’ (it even describes the contents of each map). This latter is the key page of course. If you know the maps and geography well enough, you probably don't need to use the overview maps ... When you get to this page, simply look at the right-hand column of the page, and the 3 choices I mentioned (much of it is in German, but the key parts have English translations). The option listing the maps is the top-most option. Just click on the desired page, and you should find what is described.” These are very detailed maps, and I don't think I'd ever seen them before.

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