Gen Dobry!

Volume VII, No. 11   **30 November 2006**

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CONTENTS

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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_VII_11.pdf

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*** + KAZIMIERZ RYMUT 1935 – 2006 + ***

by Fred Hoffman <*wfh@langline.com*>

On November 15, 2006 I received news I'd been dreading for some time: that the Polish linguist and expert on names Professor Kazimierz Rymut, who had long been in poor health, had finally succumbed to illness. Urszula Bijak, one of his colleagues in Kraków at the Instytut Języka Polskiego PAN [Polish Language Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences], graciously took the time to send me a note informing me he had died on the 14th. She included a link to an obituary posted on the IJP's Website (in Polish, naturally):

> http://www.ijp-pan.krakow.pl/polski/polski/00/01/rymut.pdf

I don't mind saying the news hit me pretty hard. I'd been corresponding with Prof. Rymut for years, and I felt I knew the man. He invited me several times to come visit him in Kraków. I would have loved to do so; but my intense loathing for travel made it awfully hard to face the thought of making that trip, much as I would have enjoyed myself once I got there. I kept hoping I'd be able to talk myself into doing it. Now it's too late.

I was very pleased, however, to see that I was only one of many who mourned his passing. He received a lot of attention on the Genpol Website, for instance. The Webmaster, Tomasz Nitsch, posted notes about Prof. Rymut's death and funeral:

> http://www.genpol.com/displayarticle276.html
> http://www.genpol.com/displayarticle277.html

The first of those two pages actually allows you to watch brief video excerpts of a Polish television program on which Prof. Rymut appeared. I already felt I knew the man, but it was a bittersweet pleasure to see what he was like in person. It was obvious his great scholarship did not keep him from being a really good, likable person, a teacher with a sense of humor. I'm grateful to Tomasz Nitsch for making those clips available to those of us who couldn't be there.

I wondered how best to pay tribute to Prof. Rymut, and I remembered I'd been intending for some time to update an article I wrote for *Gen Dobry!* that appeared in Volume III, No. 8, August 2002. It was entitled "The *Słownik nazwisk* Is Online," and while much of it is still correct, there are a few points that should be modified. I also know a lot of our readers have joined us since 2002, and probably have not seen this article. Updating it seemed a reasonable way to remember Prof. Rymut, because I know he was surprised, and really pleased, to learn that his scholarly work had proven enormously helpful to people of Polish descent living outside Poland. This database has been used by untold numbers of people, to find out how common surnames are in Poland, and in what part of the country they appear most often. On an even more basic level, many researchers have used it to investigate spellings of their surnames, and to establish what the correct (or at least most common) spellings are. The database is a beautiful example of how a scholar, doing his scholarly work, can end up helping people in ways he never foresaw. This "Rymut database" is probably the way most of you would know of him.

So allow me to bring it to your attention again, along with a few changes to update information.

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THE *SŁOWNIK NAZWISK* IS STILL ONLINE!

If you've ever read anything I've written on the subject of Polish surnames, you've surely seen me refer to the *Słownik nazwisk współcześnie w Polsce używanych*, literally "Dictionary of Surnames Currently Used in Poland." This work, edited by Professor Kazimierz Rymut, was a wonderful development for those deeply interested in Polish names, because it was the first comprehensive compilation of surnames used by citizens of Poland. It was compiled from a 1990 database maintained by a Polish government agency, with data on about 93% of the population of Poland as of that year. It gave a total of all Poles by each name, along with a breakdown of where they lived by province.

So if you wanted to know what names were borne by Poles, and where those names were most common, this 10-volume set told you. It ran over 6,000 pages and covered over 800,000 surnames (a huge number of which, however, were either misspelled versions of other names, or extremely rare; the actual number of "real" names is considerably smaller). It was not exactly light reading; but for someone seriously interested in Polish research, it definitely had its uses.

When I cited data from this work, people often asked "Where can I get hold of this book?" They usually lost interest once I told them it was 10 volumes, in Polish, cost $200, and could only be bought from the publisher in Poland, the Instytut Języka Polskiego PAN in Kraków. Still, some organizations, and some intrepid individuals, shelled out the money and bought copies.

But for some time now the data from this 10-volume set has been available online as a searchable database. If you want to consult this source for yourself, go to this page: http://www.herby.com.pl/herby/indexslo.html. But before you check it out, let me explain a few things that may make it easier for you to take full advantage of it.

Uh, OK, I've Got It -- What Is It?

When I learned that this searchable database was online, I chuckled as I thought, "Oh, boy, wait till people start trying to make sense of this!" It didn't take long. Soon the Polish mailing lists were full of people saying "How do I use this?" and "What do all these numbers mean?" and "How can I get addresses for the people with this name?"

These are all legitimate questions, and I'm going to talk a little about each of them. I want people to use this site—it means they won't be bothering me. ;-)

But please have just a little bit of patience. Some folks seem convinced all they have to do is type in the right URL, and a little Polish elf will jump out of their computer and tell them everything they need to know. Folks, it's not going to happen! With this site, as with anything worth doing, you're going to have to invest a little time and effort. Not a lot, mind you, and the results can be worth it. But magic it ain't.

How Do I Use This?

You can go directly to the Surname Dictionary page at http://www.herby.com.pl/herby/indexslo.html; if you want to do that, skip the next few paragraphs, down to where it says "Let's Search for a

Surname!" But if you're patient and aren't terrified by the thought of navigating through a little Polish, I recommend starting at the home page of the Center that provides this service:

http://www.herby.com.pl/

First off, the top of the page reads "Ośrodek Dokumentacji Wychodźstwa Polskiego przy Domu Polonii w Pułtusku" — "Polish Emigration Documentation Center at the Polonia House in Pułtusk." This is the official name of the center that put these materials online. It's headquartered at the Dom Polonii [The Polonia House] in the town of Pułtusk, north of Warsaw. This is a splendid complex that includes a hotel, restaurants, conference center, etc. (For more information on the Dom Polonii itself, see its Website: http://www.dompolonii.pultusk.pl/]; you can click on the Union Jack to get the English version of the page).

Back to the home page http://www.herby.com.pl/. The second line reads "Serwis heraldyczno-genealogiczny," which is, of course, "Heraldic/genealogical service." (Who says Polish is hard?) Next comes a line for choosing the different pages available:

- Strona główna — Main Page
- Genealogia, czyli jak szukać — Genealogy, or how to search
- Zasady heraldyczne, czyli z czego składa się herb — The Basics of Heraldry, or What a Coat of Arms Consists Of
- Wyszukiwarka herbów — Coat of Arms Search
- Słownik nazwisk — Surname Dictionary

At the moment we are mainly concerned with the last option. When you have a little time, though, you might want to take a look at the others. They're all in Polish, of course, but if you're patient and don't mind wandering about a Website, you just might find a thing or two that will interest you. Those who'd like to know more about Polish heraldry and coats of arms, for instance, certainly ought to take a look at options 3 and 4. At the worst, you lose a few minutes. At the best, you might find Ultimate Truth! Well, probably not. But you never know….

From the main page, click on "Słownik nazwisk" and you'll end up at the same place as if you had gone directly to the first address I gave (http://www.herby.com.pl/herby/indexslo.html). That's where you access and search the "Rymut database," as some people call it.

Let's Search for a Surname!

Look at the box below where it says "Proszę wprowadzić nazwisko." That's where you enter the name you're looking for.

Now, here's where you need a little instruction. Finding names isn't as easy as you might think. **This database uses proper Polish spelling**. If that includes one of those characters used in Polish but not in English, you must include that character. Thus a search for *Gorzynski* will not find *Gorzyński;* searching for *Dembinski* will not find *Dembiński* or *Dębiński*. I have often seen notes posted online where researchers got the wrong data because they didn't account for those Polish characters—for instance, finding the 378 Polish citizens under *Wisniewski* and missing the 104,418 under *Wiśniewski*!

Are you out of luck if you don't know how to use the Polish characters? Not at all! The database allows you to search using the "wild card" characters * and ?. The symbol * substitutes for any letters and any number of letters; the ? substitutes for any one letter. So a search for GORZY* will bring up all names beginning *Gorzy-*. Or a search for ZIELI?SKI will bring up *Zieliński* (as well as *Zieliłski* and *Zieliżski*, as well as *Zielinski* without the accent—presumably all misspellings made when clerks keyed in the original data).

I personally recommend sidestepping the Polish characters by using the wild cards * and ?—it's just easier. If you prefer, you can find the appropriate letter in the rest of the text on that page, highlight it, then copy and paste it into the search box. For the accented n or accented z, however you may have to search around on other pages at the site; I don't see them on the database search page.

If you know how to use Multilanguage support in Windows to input Polish characters, you can do that, too. The point is, there's more than one way to skin this cat!

What Do All These Numbers Mean?

The data that comes up gives the total number of Polish citizens bearing the name in question as of 1990, followed by a breakdown of where they lived by province (under "Rozmieszczenie"). Abbreviations are used for the provinces.

Let me stress: the database from which this material was compiled was ***not*** comprehensive. It covered about 93% of the population of Poland as of 1990. Complete data was unavailable for some areas; here are the provinces in question and an estimate of how many people were not included:

Białystok: 66,300	Opole: 220,800
Bielsko-Biała: 99,400	Piotrków: 303,100
Ciechanów: 30,600	Przemyśl: 102,600
Katowice: 703,000	Rzeszów: 283,300
Kraków: 27,200	Siedlce: 141,500
Krosno: 254,600	Sieradz: 46,900
Łomża: 31,200	Suwałki: 48,500
Nowy Sącz: 325,300	Szczecin: 76,800
Olsztyn: 60,700	Wałbrzych: 146,900

93% is a lot better than nothing; but do keep in mind that a sizable chunk of the population was not included.

Now, back to the abbreviations for the provinces. To see what they stand for, from the search page, click on the place below the search box that says "Tutaj znajdują się objaśnienia skrotów." It brings up a little window with the abbreviations. It includes the instruction "Zobacz mapę," which means "See the map." Clicking on that will bring up a map of Poland with the abbreviations. Clicking on "Zamknij mapę" closes the map. On the abbreviations page, "Zamknij wykaz" closes that window.

In case you have trouble using the box that gives the province abbreviations, you might want to save this list somewhere you can find it easily:

Wa: Warsaw	Kr: Kraków	Rz: Rzeszów
BP: Biała Podlaska	Ks: Krosno	Sd: Siedlce
Bs: Białystok	Lg: Legnica	Sr: Sieradz
BB: Bielsko-Biała	Ls: Leszno	Sk: Skierniewice
By: Bydgoszcz	Lu: Lublin	Sł: Słupsk
Ch: Chełm	Ło: Łomża	Su: Suwałki
Ci: Ciechanów	Łd: Łódź	Sz: Szczecin
Cz: Częstochowa	NS: Nowy Sącz	Tb: Tarnobrzeg
El: Elbląg	Ol: Olsztyn	Ta: Tarnów
Gd: Gdańsk	Op: Opole	To: Toruń
Go: Gorzów Wielkopolski	Os: Ostrołęka	Wb: Wałbrzych
JG: Jelenia Góra	Pl: Piła	Wł: Włocławek
Kl: Kalisz	Pt: Piotrków Trybunalski	Wr: Wrocław
Ka: Katowice	Pł: Płock	Za: Zamość
Ki: Kielce	Po: Poznań	ZG: Zielona Góra
Kn: Konin	Pr: Przemyśl	
Ko: Koszalin	Ra: Radom	

Note that in the breakdown by province, the number for *Wa,* Warsaw, always comes first—unless no one by the particular surname in question lived in Warsaw province. Any province with no citizens bearing the surname in question is simply omitted.

Note also that after *Wa,* Warsaw, the abbreviations are in alphabetical order as figured by the **names of the towns**: *Lu,* Lublin, comes before *Ło,* Łomża, because plain L precedes Ł. In turn, *Ło,* Łomża, should come before *Łd,* Łódź, because plain o precedes ó. Similarly, *Tb,* Tarnobrzeg, should come before *Ta*, Tarnów (again, plain o before ó).

Often you can ignore the diacritical marks, but they are crucial in distinguishing *Pl,* Piła, from *Pł,* Płock. I can't tell you how many times I've confused those two!

A Sample Name: Jaworski

So, let's say you key in JAWORSKI, and you click on "Szukaj," Search. You get this:

> Jaworski: 44104. Wa:4814, BP:217, Bs:171, BB:826, By:1276, Ch:290, Ci:699, Cz:622, El:767, Gd:1220, Go:652, JG:917, Kl:548, Ka:2709, Ki:1847, Kn:818, Ko:634, Kr:1232, Ks:278, Lg:737, Ls:198, Lu:1228, Ło:71, Łd:1543, NS:228, Ol:779, Op:697, Os:479, Pl:707, Pt:336, Pł:839, Po:1090, Pr:138, Ra:2267, Rz:400, Sd:818, Sr:611, Sk:748, Sł:461, Su:173, Sz:1196, Tb:838, Ta:482, To:1587, Wb:832, Wł:853, Wr:1867, Za:470, ZG:894

This means there were a total of 44,104 Polish citizens named Jaworski as of 1990 (but since 7% of the population was not included, there were surely more). The data after that is a breakdown of where those Jaworski's lived by province. What more is there to say?

Well, from my experience, there are a few comments in order. For one thing, you may ask—you **should** ask—what do the numbers mean, and where did they come from?

They indicate the number of Polish citizens who bore that particular surname as of 1990, according to the database maintained by the PESEL Government Information Center. PESEL is a Polish government agency that assigns a unique 11-digit identification number to every citizen at least 18 years old. (Thanks to Dr. Zbigniew A. Wielogorski of Warsaw University for sending me this information. See also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PESEL). In practical terms, it's a lot like the Social Security number for U. S. citizens.

OK, so does the data above tell us 4,814 Poles named Jaworski lived in Warsaw? NO!!!! It means that many Jaworski's lived in the **_province_** of Warsaw. People often miss this point. The figures for provinces include all the towns and villages in that province, not just the main city which served as its administrative center. We have no access to data on who lived in what town or village—just a total for the province in question.

Also, the provinces given were the ones in force when the data was collected in 1990—the 49 provinces that existed under the setup from 1975 to 1998. Beginning in 1999, all that changed. If you want to figure out how those provinces correspond to the current ones, you need to visit one of the sites online that compare them. Here are two good ones:

> http://www.polishroots.com/geo_maps.htm
> http://www.rootsweb.com/~polwgw/49provs.html

Another point: do the numbers for _Jaworski_ include _Jaworska_? Yes, they do. For surnames ending in _-ski/-ska, -cki/-cka,_ and _-zki/-zka_, you can safely assume that the figure for the standard masculine form includes the feminine form as well. Thus _Grabowski_ includes _Grabowska_, _Zawadzki_ includes _Zawadzka_, _Nowacki_ includes _Nowacka_, and so on.

But they dropped the ball on some of the less common adjectival names, such as those ending in _-y_ and _-a_. For instance, they list _Gumienna_ borne by 756 Poles, and _Gumienny_ by 865. To be consistent, they should have combined them into one entry, since _Gumienna_ is just the feminine form of _Gumienny_. But someone overlooked this. With names ending in _-y_ and _-a_, therefore, keep your eyes open!

How Can I Get Addresses?

OK, so now you know what you've got. Now the big question: how do you get addresses?

The short answer is, you don't. The long answer is, you get them the same way you would have if this database had never been put online: by research. Polish privacy laws do a pretty good job of keeping names and addresses, well, private.

In most cases, the question doesn't arise anyway. One of the things you quickly learn from looking at this data is that the vast majority of Polish surnames are not concentrated in any one place. Getting this data usually doesn't tell you a thing about where your family came from. Surnames

developed centuries ago, and with all that's happened since then, there's been plenty of time for people to move around. Even surnames that clearly refer to a specific, unique place name usually turn out to be scattered over much of the country.

And besides, if your name is *Jaworski* and you think your ancestors came from Warsaw, what good does it do you to know there were 4,814 Jaworski's in Warsaw province as of 1990. Even if you had their addresses, are you going to write them all? I don't think so.

Still, having said all this, I must admit sometimes this data **does** indicate a concentration in one area. In such a case it would be great to have some way of getting an address. The hard way—the way you'll usually have to do it—is to dig and dig till you trace your ancestors back to a specific area, then try to make contact with a priest or other person in that area who'll help you get addresses.

Is there ever a short cut? Sometimes. If you find a name is highly concentrated in one area, or you know the exact area they came from, you have a better shot at getting addresses than if you just say, "Duh, my ancestors came from Poland." One source that might be worth a look was mentioned in the July 2000 issue of the *Polish-American Journal*. In that issue the PAJ Answerman suggested one can find individuals or families "by contacting the one office in Poland that has on file the addresses of all people currently living in Poland: Centralne Biuro Adresowe, ul. Kazimierzowska 60, 02-543 Warsaw, POLAND."

I have heard from people who have contacted this Central Address Bureau; so it can sometimes work. It's kind of pointless for surnames that are common, especially if you have no way to focus on a specific area. But in instances where a name is highly concentrated in one area, or you know exactly where to concentrate your focus, that changes things. If this Central Address Bureau does provide you with addresses for folks with your ancestral name in your ancestral area, chances are decent those addresses belong to relatives. It's worth a try.

Also possibly worth a try is the Polish telephone directory online at this site:

http://www.wirtualnafrancja.com/telefony/

The problem with this is, you have to specify surname, town, and province. So it's not much good for fishing around if you have just a name or a place, but not both. Please notice that this site also demands correct spellings with Polish letters. It won't let you use wildcards. And with the address it only gives street names, not individual residence numbers. Still, some researchers have found leads by searching there. Besides, in most villages and small towns, the street name is all you need. The mail carrier knows who lives where, and will probably deliver your letter. Or you can try calling the phone number given, if you speak Polish or have a friend who can interpret for you.

I should add that Websites offering directories for individuals tend to come and go quickly. Perhaps they run afoul of Polish privacy laws; or perhaps someone's cornered the market on this data and won't share. I'm really not sure why—but it seems every time I mention an online "White Pages" directory for Poland in *Gen Dobry!*, the next time I look it's gone. I can't promise this one will stay

around for long. But as of right now, it was the only one I could find that was up and running. And it does list several people I know in Poland.

SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS

The publication of the *Słownik nazwisk* books, and later the online access to the database, caught people's attention and made them aware that this could be quite a helpful resource. As I said earlier, even if it didn't tell you where your ancestors came from, it could help you spell the name right, which is certainly a step in the right direction. And some surnames are concentrated in specific areas, to the point that frequency and distribution data can give you a real lead.

The Genpol Website subsequently developed a particularly nice resource to help you make the most of the database. If you search for a specific surname and then copy the data in the "Rozmieszczenie" column (for instance, in Windows you highlight the data and hit Ctrl-C), Genpol has an applet that generates a map illustrating the data:

http://www.genpol.com/Mapa+main.html

You just paste the data into the big box (for instance, with Ctrl-V in Windows); type in the name in question in the little box underneath, by where it says "Generuj mapkę dla nazwiska"; and click on "Pokaż mapę" down near the bottom of the page. This opens up a new window with a map showing in which provinces the name appears and illustrating the frequency in darker and lighter shades of green. You can save this map as a BMP file to your computer, or print it out. You also get a table ranking the provinces by the frequency of the name—but that's separate material, not part of the map. Again, highlight it, hit Ctrl-C, and you can save it as a text file or import it into a word processor.

When students write me to say they need info on their name for a school report, I always recommend they use this resource. A nice map like this can add a lot to a report. And it probably impresses most teachers! As for those of us no longer in school, a map of this sort can also add a lot to a family tree! So using the Genpol page may require a little practice, a little effort to figure it out. But it's probably worth it.

The second major development after the publication of the *Słownik nazwisk* was Rymut's decision to publish an updated version on CD-ROM, ***Dictionary of Surnames in Current Use in Poland at the Beginning of the 21st Century***. Over the years Rymut recognized that the 1990 data was full of errors and omissions; and he also wanted to reflect the administrative changes that went into effect in 1999, dividing Poland into 16 provinces rather than the previous 49. He realized that printing another set of books would be very expensive. When I wrote and asked if he'd consider putting out a new version on CD-ROM, he told me he'd already discussed doing so with his colleagues. The PGSA helped provide financing, and in 2002 the CD was published—the Polish-language version by the Polish Language Institute, and the English version by the Polish Genealogical Society of America.

This new version used data from the PESEL database as of September 2002, and from working with it I'm convinced it's much "cleaner," with far fewer misspellings and bad data. It also breaks

name distribution figures down not just by *województwo* (province) but also by *powiat* (county). If you'd like more information on this edition's benefits, and tips on how to use it, you can read my review here:

http://www.pgsa.org/SurnameReview.pdf

Bless his heart, Prof. Rymut gave me credit for the idea of doing a revised version as a CD. But I'm pretty sure he and his colleagues had already recognized the value of doing it this way. Financial considerations alone would have been enough to encourage an edition on one inexpensive, easy-to-handle CD, rather than 10 massive books, expensive to print and ship.

I think it is only fair to say that the CD version is not for everyone. If you just want some decent general data on a few names, the online version will do the job. The CD is invaluable for those who really get into some serious research, and need to look up lots of names and visualize where they are located. In which connection I should mention that the Genpol site I just talked about can generate a map with data from either version, the 1990 online database or the 2002 CD. The CD is not expensive—$25 for PGSA members, $35 for non-members (see http://www.pgsa.org/Books/cdorders.htm)—but you may find the sheer size and scope of the data overwhelming, unless you're a hard-core names freak like me! It's nice to know you have options, however. The CD exists, if you think you want that kind of detailed information. If not, the online database will probably suit you just fine.

Conclusion

It's odd to think that until 1992, no one really knew how many Polish surnames there were, or how common they were, or where they were concentrated. Professor Rymut changed all that. He did it for Polish scholars researching Polish surnames; he had no idea how much he would be helping folks in other countries who don't speak Polish and aren't even linguists! But over time he came to realize what a difference his work had made; and he was delighted to know he'd helped so many people, including those seeking the way back to the home of their ancestors.

Cześć jego pamięci. Niech spoczywa w pokoju — All honor to his memory. May he rest in peace!

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*** LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ***

Subject: Translation services

I have used a free on line service, http://www.Poltran.com. Individuals I write to say they can understand my letters pretty well. I think it is because in ( ) there are other forms of words which help with meaning.

They sell software but the ones I have bought before were very expensive and a total waste of money. I once paid $254.00 and the free service online was much better…

I have thought about looking into the software provided by PolTran since the free service is pretty good. Of course it does not have a full complete dictionary; but it's not too bad. Also, you can translate back and forth from Polish to English and vice versa.

Susan Masten <*blueabyss@sbcglobal.net*>

Editor— A service like Poltran.com can be very useful, as long as you understand its limitations and figure out how best to use it. It helps if you keep your sentences simple and straightforward, and avoid slang or idiomatic expressions. I've heard from others who understood how to use it properly and had pretty good results.
I must say, I've never yet heard of software that did a better job, at least not enough better to justify spending the money. I keep hoping someone will tell me better software has come out, so I can recommend it to people who ask me. But so far, my honest advice is "Keep your money; nothing out there is worth it."
I appreciate your taking the time to respond and share your experiences with our readers.

Subject: The Poznań Project

Editor—Marv Pozdol posted the following note on the Poland-Roots mailing list, and he also sent me a personal note saying essentially the same thing:

The latest *Gen Dobry!* had an update on the Poznań Project. I put in my great-grandfather's name, Sniegowski, and guess what? He was listed as "Sniegoski" but I am sure it is him! He was from the district of Wągrowiec and the parish is in Łopienno. I will need to check with LDS to see if that film is available. The Poznań Project has completed over 50K marriage record in that area. I had hints that my grandfather was from the Poznań area. Now I hope to learn more about him.

Thank you, William Hoffman, for having that in the latest edition of *Gen Dobry!*

Editor—I was very pleased to hear this info helped Marv. Actually I debated whether I should include that latest update, because I'd had one in the last issue and I wasn't sure our readers want to keep hearing about it. But I decided it certainly wouldn't do any harm to print it, and you never know—it just might be the key to someone's making a breakthrough. It's gratifying to know I made the right decision!
When I posted my reply to Marv's note on the mailing list, I wrote as follows:

"I should add that Marv asked me a question that might interest others as well:

> P.S.. Is there something similar for the Warsaw area?

Actually, there is. As Lukasz explains on the Poznań Project page of the Discovering Roots site (http://www.discovering-roots.pl/poznan_project/project.htm), other parts of Poland are covered by a similar project:

http://www.przodkowie.com/metryki/en.php

That site includes focus on the Russian partition, which includes the Warsaw area. So you may be in luck. I hope so!

Next thing I knew, this note was posted in response by Jay Orbik <JORBIK@aol.com>:

Wow, Fred, I just pick up this email traffic and tried the website and there is a lot more on it than I thought. I solved some longstanding mysteries just now that I might not have found otherwise. Thanks for the lead.

I've got to admit, I was pretty tickled to read this. Some days I wonder if I'm doing any good at all. It's gratifying to hear twice in 24 hours that info I shared turned out to do someone some good!

Subject: Soldiers dying in Łowicz in 1846?

I am forwarding you a note I received from someone I work with professionally. You can see he is doing some work on Polish records... but in his last paragraph he poses a thought, question, and I wondered if you knew anything about this?

> Well I am plodding along with indexing death records from my
> Grandma's church in Łowicz and I am into 1846 right now.
> This is very slow tedious work but interesting. Every so often
> I run into a relative and add to my family data. I see a lot of names
> recurring and am starting to feel like I know these families.
>
>... clip ...
>
>One thing I am trying to figure out is why all of a sudden a large
> number of *soldiers* are appearing in the 1846 Łowicz death records.
Apparently there was a Russian garrison or military hospital in the
> town, but were the soldiers dying from some battle action or
> some epidemic? I haven't found any mention of battles being fought
> in that year. I know there were Polish uprisings in 1830 and 1863…

I hope you can shed some light on this... you seem to be so aware of so much in Poland... and who knows maybe some on the *Gen Dobry!* list will find the info interesting...

Sue Masten <*blueabyss@sbcglobal.net*>

Editor—I told Sue I couldn't come up with anything. If any of you have some idea what would account for this, you can write Sue and she'll pass the word along; or you can write me and I'll forward the info to Sue.

Subject: Online language dictionaries

I noticed that you made reference to a list of dying words (!) in *Gen Dobry!* Thought you might like to know which language dictionaries I use over the Net:

Polish: http://www.dict.pl/plen

This dictionary seems to be getting better and better. I especially like the fact that a search for partial words or roots is successful. Other features are also useful.

Latin: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/resolveform?lang=Latin

Though the Perseus Project normally deals with the Classics and is a bit tedious to figure out at first, it seems to offer the best source of Latin words.

> Roman Kaluzniacki <*romanka@comcast.net*>

> *Editor—I'm always delighted to get tips and recommendations for good dictionaries. Thanks for sharing this info!*

Subject: NGS Polish Forum

I recently learned that a Polish Forum had been formed in the NGS, and immediately joined up. I'm glad that the NGS has formed a forum for Polish American genealogical research. Besides NGS, I'm a ten-year+ member of the PGSA, the St. Louis Genealogical Society, and Sacramento German Genealogy Society.

During that time, I've been tracing my ancestors on my father's side (Jakubczak/Wielich) from Buffalo, NY, through Schenectady, NY, Ellis Island, to Ostrowas, Poland (Russian Partition) and Szadlowice (Prussian Partition) to about 1800, so far; and on my mother's side (Polek/Spiewak) to Kolbuszowa (Austrian Partition) to about the same time. Luckily, the Mormons' FHL has microfilms of the church records from the Polish towns of interest to me.

Also, I've published several articles, mostly reviews of books, in PGSA's *Rodziny*. While continuing my data gathering (after relearning Polish and Latin, and learning Russian), I'm beginning to think about making my findings public in some "work-in-progress" form.

I hope that we can get others to join the Forum, ASAP.

> Len Jakubczak, Ph.D. <*LJAKUB@worldnet.att.net*>

> *Editor—I've been corresponding with Len for years, and he's a classic example of a "serious" researcher, one who wants to make real progress and isn't afraid to tackle a challenge. I don't know that much about the FGS Polish Forum, but if Len thinks it's worth joining, I'll bet it is!*

If you want to join, go here: http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/forums/poland/index.cfm. *Note that you don't have to join NGS to join the forum. Note also that the Moderator of the NGS Polish Forum is Ceil Jensen <cjensen@mipolonia.net>, and I'm sure many of you have met her and heard her speak on Polish genealogical research. Her serving as Moderator should give this Forum added presence and credibility.*

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*** REVIEW OF *HALLER'S POLISH ARMY IN FRANCE* ***

by Debbie Greenlee <daveg@airmail.net>

Reviewed: *Haller's Polish Army in France* by Paul S. Valasek, ISBN 0-9779757-0-3, 2006: 432 pages, soft-cover, 7 x 10, perfect bound. Price: $35 plus p&h ($5.00 for one copy mailed to an address in the U.S.A. by Media Mail, or $8.00 by Parcel Post). For more information, or for orders overseas, e-mail the author at <hallersarmy@aol.com>, or send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Dr. Paul S. Valasek, 2643 W. 51st Street, Chicago IL 60632-1559, USA.

This book should establish Dr. Paul Valasek as an expert on Haller's Army. Valasek has compiled many of the available records and photographs into one easy-to-follow 425 page book. Most of the material was written by contemporary participants during the time of the army's existence.

Valasek's work presents, for the first time in English, a comprehensive history of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Polish regiments from America in a comprehensible order. In easily understood terms, Valasek goes into detail about the difficulties encountered in organizing all the patriotic Poles who wanted to fight for their fatherland's freedom. This book explains where the members of those regiments came from in North America and how they were transformed from being members of an American fraternal order into trained soldiers prepared to join Haller's Army in France.

Valasek follows each U.S. regiment to France near the end of World War I, their eventual incorporation into other regiments, and then continues with them through two more wars and the repatriation of the survivors. The author also presents the importance of Polish relief work at Niagara, the YMCA and the women of the YMCA, and includes Haller's biography, which has generally been ignored in other English-language books on World War I.

The book includes telegrams, many historical photographs, doctors' instructions for medical exams, lists and lists of names, lists of recruitment centers, names of ships which took troops to and from Europe, diary excerpts and a great index. This is all presented in a logical order enabling the reader to follow the path of an "act that had its inception in Pennsylvania and blossomed into an independent Poland in 1919."

The book itself looks great. It's obvious that Valasek even put thought into the colors used on the covers: blue, as in the Blue Army, plus adding red and white to signify the U.S., Canada, Poland and France.

In the Forward, Valasek explains how he became interested in these World War I Polish soldiers and the importance his grandfather played in this interest turned obsession. In an effort to continue

his research, Valasek has established a database of 32,000 potential Haller's Army recruits from North America and welcomes communication from anyone who had or thinks he had a relative who served in the Blue Army.

Though a dentist and not a professional writer, Dr. Valasek has put together a book that is clear and easy to follow. Polish and World War I history buffs and researchers will certainly enjoy the details. (Who knew that the first trainees from Pennsylvania volunteered to fight the Mexican War in 1914?) This book has the potential of finally alerting the world to the importance of Polish soldiers in World War I, the Russo-Polish War, and in the Polish-Soviet War.

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*** PSA [POLISH STATE ARCHIVES] TERMINATES AGREEMENTS WITH JRI-POLAND ***

*Editor—Quite a few of our readers are researching Jewish ancestry, and they need to know of the events outlined in this announcement from Stanley Diamond, Executive Director of Jewish Records Indexing – Poland (*http://www.jri-poland.org/*). Mr. Diamond's note has appeared on numerous mailing lists, but deserves as much attention as it can get. The action taken by the new Director of the Polish State Archive system directly affects Jewish researchers, and does not seem promising for others with roots in Poland.*

Date: Monday, 27 Nov 2006

Dear Fellow Polish Researchers:

On September 26, 2006, Dr. Sławomir Radoń, the former Director of the Polish State Archives in Kraków, was appointed as General Director of the entire Polish State Archive (PSA) system. On November 9, 2006, Jewish Records Indexing - Poland was notified of the unilateral termination of two Agreements that had previously been concluded with the PSA and signed by Dr. Radoń's predecessor.

Effective November 30, 2006, after more than nine years of cooperation, Director Radoń has chosen to terminate the Indexing Project that covered the indexing of all Jewish records not previously microfilmed by the LDS Church that are in the possession of the PSA and are more than 100 years old.

Effective November 17, 2006, after more than three years of operation, the JRI-Poland online ordering system has been terminated. The online ordering system handled orders for all records indexed under the Indexing Project.

It is with great disappointment that we must report these decisions concerning this aspect of JRI-Poland's widespread activity. The JRI-Poland Board is taking every step possible to address this situation. We will continue to provide service to the Polish Jewish Genealogical community. The online database will continue to operate providing a finding aid and tool for researchers to identify records of interest.

If you have a question on the status of any Archive indexing project, please send your messages to <*questions@jri-poland.org*>.

Other JRI-Poland projects to index records from other sources, including the LDS Microfilms of Polish Jewish records, will continue.

If you have a question on the order processing system, please contact Mark Halpern, Order Processing Coordinator, at <*willie46@comcast.net*>. Mark will soon have a follow-up announcement explaining how to order records in the JRI-Poland database that were not microfilmed by the LDS Church.

Up until the end of the month, JRI-Poland will continue to index records from some Archives and Branches. Along with our existing backlog of new data, researchers will continue to see additions to the JRI-Poland database. JRI-Poland, in our normal course of business, continues to explore and acquire new sources of genealogical data to help you in your research.

On behalf of the Board of JRI-Poland,

Stanley Diamond
Executive Director

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*** 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 October Issue:

Category: Bonus

— Q. Who led the defense of Olsztyn Castle?
— A. Mikołaj Kopernik (aka Nicolaus Copernicus)

— Q. By legend who was blind as a child and gained his vision at his hair cutting?
— A. Mieszko I

— Q. What was Kościuszko's full name?
— A. Tadeusz Andrzej Bonawentura Kościuszko

— Q. Where did Kazimierz Pułaski go on leaving Poland in 1772?
— A. Turkey

— Q. Of what two territories did Polish King Kazimierz the Great's father tell him never to lose control?
— A. Śląsk and Pomorze (English names: Silesia and Pomerania)

New Questions for the November Issue

Category: Traditions

1. What is placed in the corners of the room in the Polish Christmas *Wigilia*?

2. What does the *Gwiazdor* carry in a traditional Polish Christmas caroling group?

3. What is the traditional Polish *Szopka*?

4. What day marks the end of the Polish Christmas season?

5. By tradition, on what day do people in some parts of Poland wash with money?

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

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*** UPCOMING EVENTS ***

December 23, 2006

Meeting of the Toronto Ukrainian Genealogy Group

Tuesday, December 23, 2006, 7:30 - 9:30 pm
St. Vladimir Institute, 620 Spadina Avenue, Toronto

Tips for researchers making their trip to the Mormon Family History Library to research Ukrainian Parish records and paid genealogy programs.

This is the evening of our Christmas party, so please bring a dish to share with others.

        Editor—This information was posted by Sonia van Heerden <soniavanheerden@hotmail.com> on a number of genealogical mailing lists.

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*** MORE USEFUL WEB ADDRESSES ***

http://www.ballinstadt.de/en/index.php
        Ceil Jensen <*cjensen@mipolonia.net*> sent out a note discussing a partnership between Ancestry.com and Link to Your Roots in Hamburg, Germany. If you want to know more about this ambitious project, "BallinStadt: Port of Dreams," this is the address of its Website.

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http://przemysl.blogspot.com

Arieh Mayer posted a note to the soc.genealogy.jewish newsgroup, describing this as "a new and interesting site for Przemyśl." It's entitled "The Jewish Przemyśl Blog," but there's plenty here to interest non-Jews, including a link to a BBC article (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6151420.stm) about Poles discovering their Jewish roots. It focuses on a Polish ex-skinhead who hated Jews, blacks and Gypsies, and who was, therefore, rather dumbfounded when he found out his ancestors were Jewish….

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http://www.slic.org.au/Language/LLL_index.swf

On the LithuanianGenealogy mailing list Ray Winskus <*ray@winskus.com*> recommended this site in response to a request for info on materials for learning the Lithuanian language. "These are Lithuanian language lessons developed by the Sydney, Australia Lithuanian Information Centre. The online interactive lessons are free, with pictures, words and audio in English and Lithuanian. Numbers, greetings, conversations. If you really like it or need a Christmas gift, you can buy it on CD for $30 USD." I think we've mentioned this before in *Gen Dobry!*, but I visited the site and ran through the first few lessons, and thoroughly enjoyed them. Many Poles have Lithuanian roots, and could benefit from picking up a little Lithuanian; but trying to learn it can be even more intimidating than studying Polish! I think free online sites such as this should be used and appreciated.

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http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy/2006/11/our_name_in_his.html

This is a link to a page from *Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter* that discusses a series of books called *Our Name in History. The _ Name*, where you fill in the blank with your own surname. Eastman explains how past books of this sort were usually to be avoided. As a rule, they were overpriced compilations of data you could find for yourself at little or no cost, manufactured "on the cheap" and containing pages lifted straight from phone books and generic material where they just filled in the blank with your name, with no attempt whatsoever to establish whether that info was relevant to your family. Eastman discusses how these new books, offered through Ancestry.com, differ from them. He concludes that they can be worth buying, especially as gifts for non-genealogists or people who don't want to invest a lot of time researching their families.

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http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy/2006/11/free_online_sto.html

This is another item from *EOGN*, which gives details on http://www.dropboks.com/, a service offering free online storage of files, which could include genealogical databases, family history, and so on. Each user gets one gigabyte of memory, and no individual file can be over 50 meg. If you'd like to store copies of your data somewhere safe, so you can recover them if your computer bites the dust, it might be worth a look. Eastman gives details that may help you decide if this is worth a closer look.

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http://www.bbc.co.uk/legacies/immig_emig/scotland/strathclyde/article_1.shtml

On the LithuanianGenealogy mailing list, Diane Rooney <*DianeRoone@aol.com*> mentioned an article in the latest issue of *Lithuanian Heritage* on Lithuanian immigrants to Scotland. She also gave this URL, to a BBC article on the same subject. Given that some of our

readers have Lithuanian ancestry, and others have Polish relatives who emigrated to Scotland, I thought some of you might be interested in learning more about this, even if it's not directly related to Polish genealogy.

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http://www.familysearch.org/eng/search/rg/guide/WLPolish18.asp#1

On the PolandBorderSurnames list, Tina Ellis <*vellis@jps.net*> posted this URL for the FHL Guide to Polish Genealogical Words. She also gave the URL for the German Word List, http://www.familysearch.org/eng/search/rg/guide/WLGerman18.asp#1. I'm sure we've mentioned these before in *Gen Dobry!,* but this is the sort of basic material that should be mentioned again and again, especially for the benefit of new readers looking for help getting started.

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http://www.ihff.at/indexstarte.htm

On the Galicia_Poland-Ukraine list, Lavrentiy Krupniak <*Lkrupnak@erols.com*> gave this URL for "the Institute of Historical Family History Research," which includes free access to "Felix Gundacker's Gazetteer for Galicia and Bukowina" (click on "gazetteer and picture cards"). The use of the list is free, but of course the owner of the Website wants to encourage you to buy materials he offers for sale. I see no problem with that, as long as you know what you're getting up front. Incidentally, the same site, headquartered in Austria, also links to a page on the genealogy of Senator John Kerry, http://www.johnkerry.at/. Am I missing something here!?

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http://www.redcross.org/services/intl/holotrace/index.html

Also on that list, Lavrentiy gave this URL for the Red Cross Holocaust and War Victims Tracing Center. I'm not sure we've ever mentioned it before, and it could prove a valuable resource for many researchers with Polish roots. He also mentioned the International Tracing Service at http://www.its-arolsen.org/. The November 19 issue of *Nu? What's New* also mentioned an article on ITS, available at http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15791203/from/ET/.

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http://tinyurl.com/ymzsbw

Lavrentiy also posted this URL for access to the Family History Library's 1848, 1895, and 1900 L'viv directories of Greek Catholic clergy. There aren't a lot of Greek Catholics left in Poland now, but things used to be different, back in the days when Lwów was part of Poland….

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http://www.ptg.gda.pl/

On the Posen mailing list, Diana Grzelak Needham <*carsonneedham@adelphia.net*> mentioned this site for index of birth, marriage, and death in Pommern (Pomerania). "Look under *Bazy Danych* [Databases]. There is a drop-down for marriages *(małżeństw),* christenings *(chrztów)* and deaths *(zgonów). Imię* is first name, *nazwisko* is last name, *ojciec* is father, *matka* is mother." (There's also a cemetery database under *Baza cmentarzy*.)

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http://www.litera-ru.ru/e_index.html

On the soc.genealogy.jewish newsgroup, Jules Levin posted a note mentioning this Russian Website, which offers services for those trying to do Russian genealogical research. I have no idea

whether these people are legit and competent; but Russian research can be pretty challenging, and I figure any possible option is worth bringing to your attention.

Incidentally, in another note posted to that newsgroup, Joel Ratner mentioned that this Website has a searchable index of names in 58 Russian business directories. The search engine is available only on the Russian home page at http://surname.litera-ru.ru/. "For those who can read Russian, there are also links to another site which allows the same search and also provides access to Vsia Moskva 1906 and 1916 as well as Ves Petersburg." To search for a surname you have to be able to enter it in Cyrillic. Ratner suggested, "One way of doing this is to employ Steve Morse's OneStep Tool. Steve's site is located at http://www.stevemorse.org. Once you've converted the surname to Cyrillic, copy and paste it into the query box at the Russian site mentioned above and search. The search engine will return a list of directories which contain your surname of interest. The results will be in Cyrillic however, these results may be copied and pasted back into Steve's Russian-English tool and converted."

I noticed that among the sources available are "memorial books" for the *gubernias* of Warsaw (1913), Vilna (1915), Radom (1914), Podolia (1885), Minsk (1915), Grodno (1910), Suwałki (1910), Kalisz (1912), Płock (1909), Siedlce (1910), and Łomża (1914). These materials won't be easy to use, perhaps; but they may contain info you won't find anywhere else!

There are other little gems hidden on the site, but hard to access if you don't read Russian. For instance, there is a rather good map of the "Privislinskiy krai" (Land on the Vistula, the official Russian name for the Kingdom of Poland) here: http://maps.litera-ru.ru/data/karty/pic/m_polsha.jpg. It's rather handy if you need to see what the old Russian names were of various towns in Poland!

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