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*** WELCOME! ***

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

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

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*** CAN’T FIND YOUR FAMILY’S HISTORY? WHY NOT BUY SOMEONE ELSE’S? ***

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

All of my life, I’ve been a collector. Bugs, butterflies, moving on up to stamps, coins, postcards, baseball cards, records, etc. So, looking and digging for “treasures” is a fairly common scenario for me.

I love antique markets, flea markets, swap meets, antique stores and malls, garage sales, and especially, what we in Chicago call house sales—some may call them estate sales, others name them tag sales. An estate is up for sale, a dealer comes in ahead of time, sorts out what is in the house, prices it, and waits for the big day. At a given time, a thundering herd of buyers, some waiting for hours outside the door with numbers in hand, stampedes the portal, digging, scratching, and desperately looking for great treasures, bargains, and that “I must have it at any cost!” item.

The great advantage of these sales is that the material is still in place where it may have laid for decades. No one has already purchased the item, and set it up on a table for someone else to look at and bargain over. What a great scenario! Some houses are neat as a pin, others look like the shows on TV where 100 cats inhabit, or the owner hasn’t seen the floor in the bedroom from the bags of garbage in years. Whatever takes place, these are adventures of a kind, intimately looking into one’s life, in many cases, including clothes, shoes, wedding dresses, and even underwear (more than I need to know about the previous owner.)

But lately, I’ve come across a number of sales that both please me and frustrate me. I cheer and then I shake my head in disbelief. Some of these sales appear to the visitor as if the owner simply stepped out to go to the store and never returned. Everything is in place as if one is expected to return at any time. Even food is still in the cabinets—and yes, sometimes it’s for sale, if it’s sealed or preserved.

The situations that bother me the most are when I start finding incredibly important papers, photos, and documents of the owners, still in desks, drawers, and usually put in a large box or basket, all priced for the consumers. Now I often ask myself, where is the family? Where is the spouse? Where are the grandchildren? Why doesn’t anyone want some of these items which, let’s face it, should mean the most to the family they originated from?

Now some estates sales are held for those individuals who are the final family member, the sole survivor. OK, in that case, there is no family to pass things on to; but someone should have been selected to take possession of important papers. I have seen wills, bank statements, trust agreements, vital records as birth, marriage, and death certificates, naturalization papers, baptismal papers, and recently, passports and divorce decrees. All there for a dollar or two if you should want them. Are these people really THAT alone?

Let me talk about two cases of recent history.
Case #1

A lady, Czech ancestry (I do this for 50% of my tree), appears to no longer be in her house. The house appears to have more items for a woman, clothes and such, and really no men’s apparel. Of course, if the owner was a widow for 20 years, how much men’s material would still be around? The usual items are there. Dishes, china, glasses, sewing paraphernalia, clothes, perfumes and jewelry, and the like. What caught my eye in the ad was “Cunard memorabilia.” Well, heck! Now my interest is way up. I looked online and there were photos of a basket with two Cunard “wallets” (thin canvas wallets made for the tickets and given out by the travel agents for important papers on one’s journey). These were nice as they were from Cunard, had a colored logo printed on the canvas, and had the Cunard offices for both Chicago and Prague written on front and back. Very nice stuff. I also saw in the photo, a card of the Mauretania, sister ship of the Lusitania, lying behind these wallets.

Well, the drive to get up at dawn and stand in line for hours in the cold spring weather, plus the hustle and bustle of the crowds, are things I do not miss anymore; so I showed up about three hours after the sale began and took my chances. Well, I found the basket that held the wallets, and yes, they were gone, confirmed by the staff running the sale. But, lo and behold, there was the card from the Mauretania, still in the bundle of papers. I scooped it up and found out it was not a postcard of the ship, but rather an Abstract of Log, a card given to the passengers upon completion of the voyage with details as to how far they traveled in a given day, when they made port, what the weather was like, etc. That is far better than simply a postcard. I felt pleased, but wondered why the buyer of the wallets did not also take this card.

I dug a bit deeper and found other material related to the voyage—as it turns out, a student trip to Czechoslovakia in 1929 for a small group of high school students from Harrison and Morton High Schools. I know this because in the paperwork was the itinerary, the schedule of events, the advertisement for the trip in the first place, the lady’s travel diary, photos of people who went with, names of people who went with, a musical program, issued by Cunard for one evening on board where the owner sung a song for musical entertainment, beer coasters (yes, we are in Czechoslovakia where no better beer exists), and each of the three coasters are signed by all in attendance, as well as a large bundle of postcards. This is far better historical material than a couple of wallets, though I now may assume the tickets and maybe baggage checks were still inside.

The postcards were a treat as they were from many places, with a date written on each card in pencil by the owner detailing exactly when they were at a given location. I could resurrect the trip simply from her material and her conscientious notes. I also found a draft and final copy of a speech she made at one of these functions stating that she had the pleasure to return to the village from whence her father was born and left for America. Now, how many of us have such great material in our possession for our own family? Oh yes, I also know the lady’s name, date of birth, residence, her photo and the like as her passport was also sold amidst the paperwork. Very nice! I will admit, I did not buy her graduation diploma from grammar school as well as high school, as I still like to be able to see the floor in my bedroom; and hopefully, my cats (love them all) are not planning to bring in any more cousins in the near future.
**Case #2**

I went to a house sale where all material was clean, no foul smells, higher-end items—the owners, to put it simply, had brains. One can tell this by the books, records, and artifacts they left behind. In this case, it was a house with Czech, Polish, Jewish, and Croatian items. Well, that all works for me. Living room with French provincial furniture, and again, no man’s clothing, but a lot of women’s designer clothes, hats, and shoes, as well as some very nice foreign pieces of fabrics, ethnic dress and fashion accessories. Now before you ask, none of these clothes can fit any of the women in my family, as 2012 bodies are a lot larger than 1950s bodies.

I walked through the house and in the kitchen on a table was the basket of paperwork and photos. Some rolled up panoramic photos of Czech organizations (these I took for a future Czech reference center which I will provide details about in a future *Gen Dobry!*), many family photos, a large group of papers, and what was called at the time, photostatic copies of documents. This was from a time when the ever-present photocopier had not yet been invented. These were actually photos of a kind taken of a document and reprinted. They are usually seen for military discharge papers from World War II. Yes, I did get the man of the house’s U.S. military discharge papers, as well as his self-written resume, a detailed history of his medical training in Vienna, the location of his town of birth in Poland, Poczajow, (on another document, Potshajow, Russia), and his application to Michael Reese Hospital to serve on the staff of the Otolaryngology department (Eye, ears, nose, and throat). [Editor’s note—Poles call this town Poczajów; it was in Poland at one time, but now it’s Почаїв, Pochaiv, Ukraine.] As my father was an optometrist, I have a good working knowledge of the eye (I chose teeth instead), and was quite surprised to see a lensometer for sale. This device can read the prescription of any pair of eyeglasses quick and simple. I would have to assume that in today’s technology, there are similar devices that can do it faster; but these older devices work well. (I still have my dad’s.)

Looking at the paperwork, again, I saw papers that should not be in a sale, but should have remained in the family (if there was one—I cannot say). Photos of all kinds were evident and by repetition, I know what the lady who lived there looked like, but cannot say the same for the man of the house. (He was most likely behind the camera.) There were even photos of the lady in outfits which now hung on a rack in her bedroom for sale. This couple had intellectual taste as told by the travel books, multiple foreign language dictionaries, and about 35 slide carousels of travel photos (60 to 80 slides per carousel). Now we’re talking ancient memories, slide carousels; but let’s face it, in the 1970s, digital cameras were still being developed, Kodak was running full steam ahead, and Polaroids were still popular. I took the six boxes of slides from Prague and Czechoslovakia, as my first visit was in 1974 and I had a limited supply of film—many of these slides were of places I had visited but failed to capture on film. Now I have them for the memories in my head. But again, where are the family members looking to preserve their grandparents’, parents’, or aunt and uncle’s world travels? Nowhere to be seen or heard from!

Some of the group of papers in the kitchen basket dealt with aspects of the ophthalmic department as well as other medical departments at Michael Reese and the following names were listed as members of the “Senate.” It didn’t take long to recognize this was a heavily Jewish organization/staff, and I’m hoping to connect with some of these men’s descendants. So let me give the info here.
Michael Reese Hospital and Medical Center  
February 25, 1964

From: Dr. Abraham Gelperin  
Medical Director

To: Members of the SENATE

In re: Composition of the SENATE – Total No. 95

The following is a list of members of the SENATE of the Medical Staff of Michael Reese Hospital and Medical Center:

Abramson, Dr. David I.  
Berry, Dr. Leonidas H.  
Binswanger, Dr. Herbert F.  
Bolglá, Dr. Julius E.  
Bornstein, Dr. Johann S.  
Bramer, Dr. Max  
Brams, Dr. William A.  
Buchbinder, Dr. William C.  
Buchholz, Dr. Alexander  
Buxbaum, Dr. Henry  
Calvin, Dr. Joseph C.  
Cohn, Dr. Clarence  
Cowen, Dr. Jack  
Crohn, Dr. Nathan N.  
Ehrlich, Dr. Norman  
Eisenstein, Dr. Milton  
Epsteen, Dr. Casper M.  
Elfenbaum, Dr. Arthur  
Elfenbaum, Dr. Hyman  
Falstein, Dr. Eugene  
Finder, Dr. Jerome G.  
Frankenthal, Dr. Lester E.  
Gelperin, Dr. Abraham (Med. Dir.)  
Gitelson, Dr. Maxwell  
Glassman, Dr. Frank  
Goldberg, Dr. Samuel L.  
Golden, Dr. Jacob S.  
Gordon, Dr. Edward E.  
Greenhill, Dr. J.P.  
Grinker Sr., Dr. Roy R.  

Grove, Dr. Jack S.  
Halpern, Dr. Louis J.  
Hirsch, Dr. Walter J.  
Horner, Dr. Imre  
Isaacs, Dr. Harry J.  
Isaacs, Dr. Raphael  
Katz, Dr. Louis N.  
Keinigsberg, Dr. Aaron  
Kepecs, Dr. Joseph G.  
Klein, Dr. Reuben I.  
Kirshen, Dr. Martin M.  
Kunstadter, Dr. Ralph  
Lash, Dr. Abraham F.  
Lawrence, Dr. Charles H. (President, Medical Staff)  
Leshin, Dr. Arno  
Leshin, Dr. Norman  
Lieberthal, Dr. Eugene P.  
Leventhal, Dr. Michael  
Lederer, Dr. Francis L.  
Leichenger, Dr. Harry  
Levin, Dr. Bertram  
Lev, Dr. Morris W.  
Levy, Dr. Robert C.  
Levy, Dr. Saul  
Matheson, Dr. Abe  
Meyer, Dr. Samuel J.  
Menaker, Dr. Gerald J. (Secretary, Medical Staff)  
Mosko, Dr. Milton M.
So, what can we take away from this story?

1. Make sure your family is aware of possessions which matter the most to the family.
2. Pass them on while you are alive so there is no guessing afterwards as to what a paper or photo was about.
3. If no family, see if a historical society or genealogy society would like your material. Possibly a local museum. A researcher!
4. Share your memories with others. Don’t let them get tossed away in the dumpster.
5. Not the best answer, but if worst comes to worst, sell them to others who appreciate them more. Again, not a good idea, but seeing that I am the beneficiary via this route, I shouldn’t complain too much.
6. Don’t let them get tossed out with the old food and waste!

One closing thought. I have envisioned the day that my estate may be handled in some matter. If I was to simply walk away from it now, and no family was present (they are), I can only imagine what the buyers would say after looking through my collection: “This guy’s family must have been HUGE and had family in every part of the world.” That needs to be explained!

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*** LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ***

Subject: Need info on PPS (Polish Socialist Party)
Editor—This is a note sent to me back in January that I somehow managed to mislay. I apologize to Karen, and I hope one of our readers can assist her, so that she will not have waited all this time in vain! If you have any ideas for Karen, please send them to me at <wfh@langline.com> and I’ll forward them on to her.

I have been trying to research and verify a story that has been discovered in my family history. I believe my great grandfather may have been a part of the PPS (Polish Socialist Party) and possibly even the combat organization of it due to some letters an aunt of mine had translated. It’s possible that he might have been involved in attacks against the Russians that were occupying Poland from 1904–1905, but it is difficult to find a way to confirm this. The letters were written in 1935 to my great grandfather asking him to confirm his actions and the actions of people he had “trained,” and to name others that he was with. The letters were asking for his confirmation so that several named men who were in Poland could be freed from a political prison. However, the letters sounded suspicious, to the point that I could imagine someone from an opposing faction trying to get him to confess to tasks he performed. It is unknown if my great-grandfather ever replied to these requests. I only know that at least two letters were sent months apart, begging for him to respond. A “certificate” (really a statement) was included with one, in which all he had to do was sign his confirmation and mail it back. This was the suspicious part of one letter. The actions listed in the letters included training a group of men how to make explosives and training them in other guerilla-type techniques. Some of the claims referenced the men that he had trained, who later blew up a bridge and a safe in a train station. These acts are along the lines of the combat organization of the PPS, which I believe was led by Piłsudski at the time.

I am looking for any recommendations for places to search for more information on this group? Most of the information I found on the organization was through Wikipedia. The only other information I have is the story from family that my great-grandfather fled Poland to the United States to get away from the Bolsheviks, which I found to be a rival political party of the PPS. I understand that this time in Poland, at the beginning of 1900s, was a hard time, since the country was basically occupied by several other kingdoms, with the Russians being one of the most brutal.

My family was very tight-lipped about any of this, and only through diligent research on my part was I able to piece any of this together. Although these events involved my great-grandfather, my grandfather was still adamant on his death bed that he would not tell anything about his father’s actions, nor about what happened when the whole family went back to Poland for two years around 1925. Unfortunately, it leaves a lot of questions unanswered, and of course, me being careful about asking for information. :) My grandfather was still convinced that people might have been looking for the family, which of course, only makes me more curious. And of course, if he was so cautious, this means that other people are probably tight-lipped too.

I appreciate any help you can give.

Karen Corrigan

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Subject: Yellow acetate sheets make images clearer

Editor—Actually, this isn’t a note sent to me, but posted on the Polish Genius mailing list by Denise Ney, who passed along a tip she got from a worker at a Family History Center.

She gave me a tip to make images more crisp I will share with you all. Lighten/brighten the image as much as possible, then view it through yellow acetate. I suppose you can get that at an office supply store.

Denise Ney

Editor—I don’t recall having heard of this before. But others, including “PolishDragon,” confirmed it, saying “READING microfilm projected onto yellow anything helps. I’ve used acetate and plain yellow copy paper. Blue works also.” A Google search for “yellow acetate” shows that there are companies selling these sheets as overlays, which make black print look darker and easier to read. So I figure this tip is worth passing along, just in case it might help someone.

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Subject: A book on the immigrant experience

I just finished reading an incredible book that describes the immigration process better than I’ve ever heard. Hunky: The Immigrant Experience, by Nicholas Stevensson Kara.

Nick documents two sides of his Rusnak family in an epic story spanning several generations, including back and forth passage from “the Old Country” to America. It’s a must read for any of us curious about our ancestors’ journey to the new world.

Marg Zientarski Putzke

Editor—Marg sent this note to PolishRoots Webmaster Don Szumowski, among others. Don checked on Amazon and saw the book is listed there. I see 10 reviewers give it an average of 4.8 out of five stars. The paperback is $25.56, but the Kindle version is $3.49. Guess which one I’m getting ... Incidentally, when you look at one book, Amazon suggests others you might like. Looking at Hunky brought up another book called The Linden and the Oak, by Mark Wansa, got 12 reviews, all with five stars. One reviewer called it “THE great Rusyn-American novel.” Sounds intriguing.

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*** ONCE AGAIN, A PRESIDENT OFFENDS THE POLES... ***

I still remember the fuss when Jimmy Carter visited Poland during his presidency, and proceeded
to get egg on his face when his translator mangled his remarks. You may recall, the way his statement came out, it sounded as if he wanted to have sex with everybody in Poland, among other things. The Poles were understanding about it, but it’s embarrassing when our president puts his foot in his mouth that way, especially when dealing with a people that have been such firm allies of the United States.

I’m sorry to say President Obama now has made a statement that is causing a furor. On Tuesday, May 29th, he was presenting Jan Karski, posthumously, with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. But in his remarks, he made the terrible mistake of saying Mr. Karski got himself smuggled into a “Polish death camp” to see if the rumors about the mass murder of Jews were true. You can read an account here:


Now Poland’s Prime Minister, Donald Tusk, is demanding an apology. Granted, the President had the best intentions in the world; I think the last thing he meant to do was insult Poles. He probably was not aware he was playing with dynamite. The phrase “Polish death camp” has been used so often, in the New York Times and other media outlets, that it has gained a great deal of currency. Only recently have Polish and Polish-Americans finally succeeded in getting others to understand that the very term is a ghastly slander—those death camps were built by Germans on Polish territory, and it is a terrible injustice to imply in any way that Poles bore any responsibility for them ... And yet, all that said, we simply have to hold our leaders to a higher standard than this!

I devoutly hope that by the time you read this, the President will have realized that he made a bad mistake, even though it was unintentional, and will have told the world he messed up and he’s sorry. If so, good may come from bad—a mistake this high-profile may get the attention of many who have still not gotten the word that those death camps were NOT Polish...

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*** A LOOK AT THE 2012 UPGS CONFERENCE ***

Deena Butta kindly posted 191 photos from the UPGS Conference in April to this public Picasa album:

<https://picasaweb.google.com/107824562009088229435/SaltLakeCityUPGSConference>

The photos feature shots from the Conference, as well as a number of photos of Salt Lake City, including Temple Square. If you were there, you’ll enjoy the mementoes. If you weren’t there, these photos will make you wonder why not.

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Gen Dobry!, Vol. XIII, No. 5, May 2012 — 9
We are hearing more and more these days about a Polish Web site with a name meaning literally “search in the archives”:

<http://szukajwarchiwach.pl/>

I noticed Albert Muth has posted notes on some of the resources available there on the Posen and PBS mailing lists. Logan Kleinwaks posted a note to the JewishGen newsgroup on this site. Gary Mokotoff referred to Logan’s posting in the most recent issue of *Nu? What’s New?* It’s very promising site, and it’s time we bring it to your attention.

If you go to the URL shown above, you’ll see that near the top, it has the icon of the Union Jack, which means you click on it for English. I’m afraid very little of the info is in English so far, however. In time, that will probably change—this site is clearly marked “Beta version,” so it is a work in progress. I believe its value will only grow as time passes and more becomes available.

In short, this is the portal for the Polish State Archives’ Integrated Archival Information System. As Albert Muth pointed out, the Polish name is Zintegrowany System Informacji Archiwalnej, or “baza ZoSIA” for short. It’s a clever name, easy for Poles to remember, because Zosia is a popular nickname for the feminine given name Zofia (Sophie).

Right off the bat, notice the “search archives” box near the top. That’s where you input what you want to search for—and I’m afraid the Polish spelling is required, complete with diacritical marks. But they’ve had mercy on us: there’s an icon for a keyboard, and when you click on it, a virtual keyboard comes up. The default option is the “Polish Prog[rammer’s]” keyboard, which has all the letters we expect; but when you click on the Alt key, it shows you all the Polish letters with diacritical marks. Click on Alt again to go back to the keys we’re used to.

As of 30 May 2012, when I checked, the number of scans in the system was 3,219,219. It’s impressive, but it’s only the beginning. As you notice, the choice of archives is limited to the following:

2 – Archiwum Akt Nowych
35 – Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie [State Archives in Lublin]
36 – Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie Oddział w Chełmie [Lublin branch in Chełm]
37 – Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie Oddział w Kraśniku [Lublin branch in Kraśnik]
38 – Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie Oddział w Radzyniu Podlaskim [Lublin branch in Radzyń Podlaski]
53 – Archiwum Państwowe w Poznaniu [State Archives in Poznań]
54 – Archiwum Państwowe w Poznaniu. Oddział w Koninie [Poznań branch in Konin]
55 – Archiwum Państwowe w Poznaniu Oddział w Piła [Poznań branch in Piła]
72 – Archiwum Państwowe m. st. Warszawy [State Archives in the Capital City of Warsaw]
92 – Archiwum Państwowe w Poznaniu Oddział w Gnieźnie [Poznań branch in Gniezno]
800 – Archiwum Instytutu Hoovera [Hoover Institute Archives]
According to Logan Kleinwaks, the “advanced options” below the search box is the one to use to search only for archival items with images available. He wrote “Check ‘search only fonds/units with digital copies’ under ‘Search Preferences ... To view images, you need to click the ‘Digital Copies’ tab on the item description and, sometimes, first click the ‘Units’ tab to select an item.”

In *Nu? What’s New?,* Gary Mokotoff stressed, “You must use the correct Polish spelling, including diacritic marks. There are only 58 results for ‘Warsaw’ but 926 results for ‘Warszawa.’” So spelling counts!

As is often true of new sources, there is obviously a learning curve associated with this site. It will surely get easier to use in time, but I was dreading spending the time needed to learn how to use it. But then I got smart, used Google, and found a useful discussion on, where else, one of the forums of PolishOrigins. Click here:


Read as Gilberto tries to figure out how to use this site, aided by Zenon (that’s Zenon Znamirowski, PolishOrigins Team Leader) and Jozefs of Włocławek—I’m afraid I don’t know him, but he gives a nice step-by-step illustration. There’s nothing more helpful than watching as someone who knows what he’s doing takes you through the process, complete with pictures!

As I say, this site clearly has a ways to go before it’s easy to use, and before it covers lots and lots of the records we want to find. I’m glad Zenon says he will consider adding ZoSIA to the PolishOrigins Databases; that would be a big help. But for those who wish to explore this source now, we already have fine people like Albert Muth, Zenon Znamirowski, and Logan Kleinwaks helping us learn how to “search in the archives.”

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*** UPCOMING EVENTS ***

**June 15 – 17, 2012**

Polish Fest
Milwaukee, WI

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

[Brought to my attention by a note posted by “Raven Fan” to the Polish Genius mailing list.]

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**June 25 – August 17, 2012**

INTENSIVE ELEMENTARY POLISH FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES

*Gen Dobry!,* Vol. XIII, No. 5, May 2012 — 11
Loyola University, Chicago

The Polish Studies Program at Loyola University Chicago, through generous support by American Council of Learned Societies, is pleased to announce that it will be offering Intensive Elementary Polish for Research Purposes in Summer 2012. The course is designed for students (graduate and undergraduate) specializing in a host of disciplines in which Poland and/or Polish plays a part. Intensive Elementary Polish is designed to enable students to acquire a functional reading and speaking knowledge of the language while introducing them to Polish Culture. The course will utilize a host of media catered to the academic interests of the students. Loyola University Chicago is ideally located on the north shore of Lake Michigan and is a very strong presence in Chicago’s large Polish Community.

Tuition for the course is waived for graduate students specializing in Central/ Eastern European Studies. There are no prerequisites for this course. It assumes no prior knowledge of the Polish language. Class size is limited and admission is competitive. Class meets 5 hours per day, Monday through Friday, for total of 90 contact hours. Students will receive 6 credits upon successful completion of the course.

Course dates: June 25th – August 17th

For more information contact Bożena Nowicka McLees at (773) 508-2850 or <bmclees@luc.edu>

[From a posting to the SEELANGS mail list.]

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July 3, 2012

POLISH HERITAGE NIGHT - U.S. CELLULAR FIELD - CHICAGO
Texas Rangers vs. Chicago
7:10 p.m.

Come out to a White Sox game and celebrate your Polish Heritage. This half-price ticket offer is extended to all friends and families of the Polish Community! Purchase your half-price tickets today and cheer on the White Sox as they battle the Texas Rangers!

National Anthem: Laureen Wysocki
Gate 4: Wesoly Lud Polish Folk Dance Ensemble of PRCUA

Examples of pricing are as follows:

Lower Box @ $20 (regularly $40)
Lower Reserved @ $18 (regularly $36)
You can order several ways:

Web: <http://www.whitesox.com/phn>
Phone: Ticketmaster (866) 769-4263

[From the May 2012 issue of PGSA Notebook]

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July 6 – 8, 2012

2012 AMERICAN POLISH FESTIVAL & CRAFT SHOW
Sterling Heights, Michigan

The American-Polish Century Club is pleased to announce the American Polish Festival & Craft Show, July 6-8, 2012, on the grounds of The American Polish Century Club, 33204 Maple Lane, Sterling Heights, Mi 48312.

The festival is located in Sterling Heights, Michigan. This is just a few miles from Hamtramck. Poles are the second largest ethnic group in Michigan and are a significant part of the history of Detroit. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Michigan is home to the third largest Polish population after New York and Illinois. The current population of Michigan’s Polish Americans is concentrated in Macomb County. Sterling Heights has become one of the centers of Polonia in Michigan, since their migration from Hamtramck.

Our Festival draws thousands of friends and families from all around Michigan, Ohio, and Illinois. Our spirited festival features live music and dancing. Highlighting our Festival are the biggest names in Polka Music, along with finest Polish Dance Ensembles in Michigan. This is our second year for the Srodek’s Pierogi Eating Challenge. This competition is consuming the most Srodek’s Potato & Cheese Pierogi you can eat in ten minutes. Last year’s 49 pierogi in ten minutes came close to setting the record. Try our delicious Polish Kitchen, the Polish Pub-n-Grub, and Beer Tent or visit anyone of the many vendors that take part in this event. There will be a Traditional Polish Mass on Sunday at 12:00 Noon. Stroll our Outdoor Craft Show featuring over 50 different crafters displaying their fine works. Admission to the festival is free to the public, although a $5.00 daily parking fee is required.

[From a note posted by “Helene” to the Polish Genius mailing list.]

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July 12-14, 2012

FEEFHS 2012 CONFERENCE/WORKSHOP
(The Federation of East European Family History Societies)
Salt Lake City, Utah
Do your ancestors come from Eastern Europe? Do you have records that you cannot read? Are you aware of the vast collection of genealogical records from Eastern Europe on microfilm in the Family History Library, located in Salt Lake City, Utah? Do you know about the images of original church, census, and tax records found on the Internet for countries like the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Estonia, and Latvia?

Our 2012 conference/workshop will be designed to help you do research on your lines. Participants will have a chance to learn from a variety of experts with years of experience in dealing with the records and the institutions that preserve them.

The presentations address the major countries, record types, and languages. During personal consultations each afternoon, speakers will deal with individual questions concerning ancestry in any of the countries between the Alps and the Urals, between the Baltic and the Black seas (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia).

Our workshop is held in the Salt Lake Plaza Hotel at Temple Square, right beside the Family History Library. It will be possible to spend several hours a day in the library. That makes it possible to attend sessions each morning, and do research in the afternoon and evening.

The Salt Lake Plaza Hotel is offering a rock bottom price of $82 per night during the conference. It is next door to the world-famous Family History Library. This is the best place in the world to do this type of research and the best opportunity you will have to do so with the experts. We have reserved a block of rooms—call the hotel directly if the website shows there is no space available.

See you in Salt Lake City!

For more information: <http://feefhs.org/conferences/2012program.html>

[From the FEEFHS Web site, <http://feefhs.org/>]

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July 15-18, 2012

THE 32ND IAJGS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JEWISH GENEALOGY PARIS, FRANCE
A full Bilingual French & English Conference

The conference will be held at the Marriott Rive Gauche Hotel in Paris. Rather than repeat all the information available on this amazing event, let us direct you to the Conference Web site, <http://www.paris2012.eu>, where you can get the whole story.

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August 2 – 5, 2012

38TH ANNUAL BOYNE FALLS POLISH FESTIVAL
Boyne Falls, Michigan

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

[From a note posted by “Helene” to the Polish Genius mailing list.]

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August 12 – 17, 2012

GENEALOGY “SUMMER CAMP”
Toronto, Canada
Toronto Branch, Ontario Genealogical Society

Genealogy “Summer Camp” is a unique program (for adults) that brings out-of-town family historians to Toronto for an intensive week of tutorials and hands-on research at the many archives and reference libraries in the city. If you have ancestors from Toronto or other parts of Ontario, there are many resources here for you. Local family historians are also welcome to participate as “day campers.” We take full advantage of Toronto’s great public transit system, and we keep the group small to allow lots of help from our local experts.

We’ll help you spend more time finding information about your ancestors—and less time finding the archives.

This will be our 16th Summer Camp. More than 125 participants from England, right across Canada and many US states have attended the 15 previous Summer Camps—some more than once!

Genealogy “Summer Camp” 2012 will take place from August 12-17. The Summer Camp fee for 2012 is $230 (Cdn), which covers approximately 7 hours of lectures and tutorials, 25 hours of hands-on instruction and all worksheets and handouts.

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

Applications should be received by 11 June 2012.

[From a note sent out by Gwyneth Pearce, <publicity@torontofamilyhistory.org>]

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August 31 – September 3, 2012

TASTE OF POLONIA
Copernicus Center
5216 W. Lawrence Ave. Chicago, IL 60630

[Brought to my attention by a note posted by “Raven Fan” to the Polish Genius mailing list.]

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September 29 – 30, 2012

POLISH FESTIVAL LOS ANGELES
3424 W. Adams Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90018

Live Entertainment, Food, Dancing, Games & More! $5 Admission for adults. $3 for students and seniors. Kids under 16 free!

[From a note posted by Lynda Snider to the Polish Genius Mailing List]

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*** MORE USEFUL WEB ADDRESSES ***

William J. Krul, President of PGS-Michigan, wrote to tell us about a Web site for seeking vital records in Lublin province. He says, “It excellent, but may take some getting used to, since it is in Polish. I found my paternal grandmother’s birth record and also her parents and grandparents. Some of the information is simply a list with dates. Some even have links to the actual document (which mine did.) Try it out and let me know.” Thanks, Bill!

Paul S. Valasek wrote to bring this story to my attention. It appeared on the Huffington Post site (how’d I miss it?), and as you may have guessed from the URL, the title is “Megan Smolenyak: 10 Things You Didn’t Know About Martha Stewart’s Family Tree.” Many of you probably know Martha Stewart has Polish roots, but Megan gives quite a bit more info you may find interesting.

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In the Winter 2012 issue of *Pathways & Passages*, the Journal of the Polish Genealogical Society of Connecticut and the Northeast, I read a really good article by Lisa A. Alzo, “Researching Your Pennsylvania Ancestors.” It has many, many valuable links to online sources. I did a little searching online, and found that Lisa has a presentation by that title, a webinar online. At the above URL, it is described as “free till May 14,” but I had no trouble watching it. Take a look!

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<http://www.facebook.com/groups/110553989006604/ >

John Guzlowski posted a note to Facebook’s Polish American Writers & Editors group about Polish Media Issues, a worldwide group of individuals who combat bad media coverage of Poland and Poles. It covers everything from Polish jokes in the U.S. to immigration issues in the U.K. But its main work to date has been to combat World War II issues, especially incorrect terms like “Polish concentration camp” and “Poland’s death camps.” (I suspect President Obama has heard from them!). John explained that PMI now has a Facebook arm at the above URL.

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Another note posted to the Writers & Editors group was from Terese Pencak Schwartz, saying that for one day only, the Kindle version of her book *Holocaust Forgotten—Five Million Non-Jewish Victims* was available for free on May 11th. That day has passed, obviously; but you still get the book on your Kindle at the above URL. It costs $5.65 to buy it, and Amazon Prime members can borrow it for free. The paperback is $9.72. As for the subject, let’s quote Amazon’s blurb: “Eleven million people were killed in the Holocaust. Almost six million of these were Jewish—Hitler’s most recognized victims. But, five million were not Jewish. Who were these other victims? The author, a Jewish convert of Polish Catholic descent, whose uncle was murdered by Nazi soldiers, discovered that there are many non-Jewish survivors eager to share their stories. There are hundreds of children of these survivors who have been searching for a voice - an opportunity to finally be counted. This book defines the non-Jewish Holocaust victims with actual interviews and stories contributed by survivors...”

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<http://www.hiddeneurope.co.uk/poznan-from-synagogue-to-swimming-pool>

On the Posen mailing list, “Marge” quoted an interesting item on Poznań from the e-newsletter put out by the publishers of Hidden Europe magazine. The article is brief, but I’m not going to quote it here because it is copyrighted material. Instead, feel free to read the article at the above URL. That will also give you a chance to learn more about Hidden Europe and see if you’d like to subscribe—and maybe even write something for them to print!

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<http://avotaynu.com/journal.htm>

Those of you who’ve become familiar with AVOTAYNU, the International Review of Jewish Genealogy, know that it’s one of the finest periodicals published in the field of genealogy. I’ve been a subscriber for years, and have tried to hold onto all the issues I’ve received. But as
I’ve moved from place to place, I’ve often had to store back issues, and later lost track of them, or lost them outright. So I’m pleased to see Avotaynu, Inc. is offering an Internet subscription service for $35 annually that lets you access back issues from 1985-2011 (newer issues are added within a couple of months after the print version appears). This service uses the Google search engine to find what you’re looking for, and it works whether you have a PC and Mac. It ties the application to your specific IP address, so that if you are hooked up to a wireless network, any computer in the network can access the service. You can learn more at the URL listed above—look down to the bottom where it says “Back Issues of Avotaynu.”

<http://www2.archivists.org/usingarchives>

A note sent out to various organizations explained that “The Society of American Archivists recently published Using Archives: A Guide to Effective Research, a free online resource giving readers straight-to-the-point tips to help them adeptly utilize a collection for genealogy research. In the guide, Laura Schmidt (archivist at The Marion E. Wade Center, Wheaton College) describes how to locate archives that have appropriate materials specific to users’ research; how to effectively use tools such as finding aids, catalogs, and databases; and how to plan a visit to an archive, among other topics.” You can view the publication at the Web page indicated above.

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