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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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*** I MAY BE A LITTLE HARD TO REACH... ***

by Fred Hoffman <wfh@langline.com>

It hardly qualifies as earth-shaking genealogical news to say that I’m moving, but perhaps I should mention it. A fair number of our readers write during the course of the month, to react to things they read in *Gen Dobry!*, to suggest stories we might want to check on, to ask for help, and so on. Since I’m the person they usually contact, it makes sense for me to warn you up front when I’m going to be out of touch. (Of course, some folks say I’m always out of touch ... with reality.)

In any case, my family will be in the process of moving from Connecticut to Houston, Texas during August. Yes, you read that right, we’ve moving to Texas in August—indisputable proof of insanity. In August, people in Hell feel sorry for people in Texas. But it’s the area we think of as home, and we can’t wait to get back there!

I feel a little ashamed that during the past five years in southern New England, I haven’t managed to attend many genealogical events. The two I have attended, however, were first-class: the 2009 and 2010 conferences of the Polish Genealogical Society of Connecticut and the Northeast. Both were held at the student center of Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, thanks largely to the help of Dr. Mieczysław Biskupski, whose *The History of Poland* is the clearest, most concise book I’ve ever read on the subject. If you’re interested, it’s available here:


It was a treat to see Jonathan Shea, Matt Bielawa, Diane Szepanski, and Joseph Maciora again. Plus I got the chance to meet some outstanding people in person whom I only knew online before, including Tom Sadauskas, Debbie Greenlee, Andrew Zuba, Barbara Proko, and Marie Dallas. (If I forgot to mention you, please forgive me!) A word of advice: PGSCTNE is having their conference October 14-15 this year. If you have a chance, try very hard to come. I believe you’ll enjoy it.

I was able to make it to New Britain because it was only about an hour’s drive from where I live. Otherwise, family obligations kept me fairly close to home. I didn’t have chances to attend events in other great places in the Northeast, as I was able to do when we lived in Connecticut back in the 90s. I remember having great fun at events in Buffalo, NY; Northampton, MA; Sturbridge, MA; and New York City. And those are just the ones I still remember; I probably had more fun at the ones I can’t recall...

But enough of all that. I’ve enjoyed Connecticut, and I look forward to enjoying Texas. I just want to let you know I will be out of touch much of August; I’ll have e-mail access, so I’ll check in often; but I’ll have little time to respond. With luck, everything will be calmed down and we’ll be settled in by the time the next issue of *Gen Dobry*! is due, at the end of August.

So I’ll just close by saying “Y’all stay cool and I’ll catch you next time around.”

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*** LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ***

Subject: Studniówka

Editor—This letter refers to Ed Andros’s article in the last issue, “Studniówka,” which suggested enjoying YouTube clips of Polish students practicing the Polonaise or Polonez for the school events known by the name Studniówka.

Thank you so much for publishing this wonderful article, which brings back so many, many memories, and all of them good! My mother and father danced the Polonez, but I was just too clumsy to learn it. Long ago, during one of my trips to Poland, I was fortunate enough to visit a graduation in Warsaw, where I saw an immense group of students practicing the rite. Truly, when I see these videos and when I remember the faces of the students I saw, I know there is still hope for humanity!

Richard Rye, Knoxville, Iowa

Editor—You’re very welcome, and I’m glad the article brought back so many good memories.

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Subject: Come with Me and Visit Hell

I published my cousin’s time in Stutthof on Amazon. It is a Kindle book entitled Come with Me and Visit Hell. It is a very touching story about his incarceration.

Jim Presenkowski / Kuba Przedzienkowski

Editor—I’m glad to pass word of this along, especially since it’s available for Kindle, which I find to be a wonderful way of taking my library along with me wherever I go. The book is just $4.99; I bought it, and 30 seconds later I was reading it. Incidentally, readers may want to see what Debbie Greenlee posted on Poland-Roots about this book:

Come With Me and Visit Hell is the title of Stanislaw Jaskolski’s memoirs during his time in Stutthof, the Nazi death camp located near Sztutowo, Poland (not far from Gdańsk). Stanislaw Jaskolski was the cousin of our member, Jim (Kuba) Presenkowski. Jim promised his cousin, who died in 2004, that he would translate and publish Stanislaw’s memoirs, and that has happened. The book can be purchased through Amazon.com as a KINDLE book:

<http://www.amazon.com/Come-Me-Visit-Hell-ebook/dp/B005CM1TZ6/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1311178040&sr=8-1>

What a great tribute, Jim.

Debbie Greenlee

Editor—Amen!
We should all take note that on July 23, 2011, General John M. Shalikashvii passed away. He is best known for having served as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1993 to 1997, and he was the first foreign-born soldier to reach the rank of four-star General in the U.S. Army. But you may not know that he was born in Poland and lived there until his family fled the approach of the Red Army in 1944.

Now a Pole will probably say “Shalikashvili? That’s not a Polish name.” In fact, the family descended from nobles native to Georgia (the country in the Caucasus region of Eurasia, not the state). But when the Soviet Union invaded Georgia in 1921, John’s father Dimitri chose to join other Georgian exiles in Poland. John was born in Warsaw, and his family lived there until the Red Army approached the city in 1944. The Shalikashvilis fled to Pappenheim, Germany, and stayed with relatives there until they immigrated to the United States in 1952. They settled in Peoria, Illinois. John spoke little English, and the famous story about him was that he learned English by watching John Wayne movies. He himself said those stories were only partly exaggerated—he did watch a lot of movies to help him with his English, and many of them were Wild West films.

He went on to have a wonderful career serving this nation in the military, and it is only right that we should honor his memory.

If you wish to learn more, the Wikipedia entry on him has basic info, including a family tree:


And you can read a full obituary here:


*** ARE YOU RELATED TO HELEN CZECH? ***

by Marge Rice

Editor—Marge Rice posted this note on GenForum and gave permission to reprint it here. It’s very much in the spirit of Paul S. Valasek’s article in the last issue of Gen Dobry! about returning family items to other family members who may want them.

I have an original Cabinet Card photograph of “Helen Czech - 1918”, which I’d like to get back to descendants or family members. Photo was taken by Urbanowicz Studio, 4852 Ashland Ave., Chicago, and she looks to be about age 13. She is pictured in church, after her first Communion.
I found two girls named Helen Czech in Chicago, born abt 1905, who might be the girl in the photo. One was daughter of John and Martha, born Poland and lived 1910 Chicago and 1920 in E. Chicago (Lake Co.) IN. The other, possibly unmarried, lived in Westchester, IL and died 1988 Maywood, Cook Co., IL.

Get back to me at <margerice@prodigy.net> if you are related to Helen Czech.

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*** UPCOMING EVENTS ***

August 12-14, 2011

Winnipeg, Manitoba

SOCIETY FOR GERMAN GENEALOGY IN EASTERN EUROPE
SGGEE 2011 CONVENTION AUGUST 12-14, 2011

VICTORIA INN AND CONVENTION CENTRE

Genealogy Conference and Convention to be Held in Winnipeg, Manitoba During Folklorama

Genealogy as a hobby is seeing a surge in popularity with the new interest in television shows about it and the use of the Internet for doing research. Folklorama in Winnipeg is a time for thinking about one’s ethnicity and culture. What better time could there be for a conference that focuses on these same issues with the added benefit of support for researching personal history? It is also hard to find a better location for this convention than Winnipeg, which is surrounded by rural communities that supported German immigration not only throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries but also post-World War II.

Though the Society for German Genealogy in Eastern Europe (SGGEE) is a rather broadly descriptive name, its focus is the support of German genealogy where origins were in Russian Poland and Volhynia. Russian Poland is the name for that part of central, eastern and northeastern modern Poland that was under Russian rule prior to World War I. Volhynia was a pre-World War I province of Russia that is currently made up of the provinces of Volynska, Rivenska, and Zhytomyrska in northwestern modern-day Ukraine.

Winnipeg is well known as the hub for immigrants who settled in western Canada, with some even heading south to the States. Germans from Volhynia often worked for Mennonites in the Gretna area, building a stake so that they could purchase land in other parts of Manitoba or further west. Other settlement areas include Friedenstal near Emerson, Friedensfeld near Steinbach, Rosenfeld, Morden, Beausejour and the Brokenhead district to the north, Moosehorn with Ashern and Camper, and Waldersee. Some Germans who worshipped in the Polish language as late as the 1950s settled in the Roblin / Inglis region.

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Most of these Germans were Lutheran, though many were Baptist as well. A smaller number were also Moravian Brethren, but they settled east of Edmonton rather than in Manitoba. The earliest of these settlers received a lot of spiritual support from Trinity Lutheran Church in Winnipeg until they were able to establish their own parishes.

SGGEE is an Internet-based, volunteer-supported society. It will have an extensive research library available at the convention along with volunteer support staff and guest speakers covering a variety of topics relevant to German genealogy research and history in Russian Poland and Volhynia. Further information can be found at <http://www.sggee.org>.

[From a press release posted to several different mailing lists.]

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Friday, September 30, and Saturday, October 1, 2011

POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA CONFERENCE
PUZZLED BY THE PAST? PUT THE PIECES TOGETHER!

Among the features offered at this year’s conference will be a day-long series of lectures on all aspects of Polish-American Genealogical Research Methodology, presented by Jonathan D. Shea and Matthew Bielawa. [Editor—You’re not going to find two better-informed and more articulate speakers on this subject!]

There will also be an optional Polish Chicago Bus Tour on Friday, September 30.

The Bus Tour will leave the Hilton Garden Inn at 8:15 a.m. on Friday, September 30th. While traveling on the bus, the docent will give a brief history of the establishment of Polonia in Chicago. Our sights and stops will be as follows:

9:00 a.m. we will tour St. Stanislaus Kostka Church, the first Polish parish in Chicago, which, at one time, served some 40,000 parishioners.

Drive by sites of pertinent buildings that still remain and other important locations, such as St. John Cantius Church.

Tour Pulaski Park Fieldhouse with its historical murals.

An authentic Polish lunch in the Social Hall of the Polish Museum of America, catered by Kasia’s deli.

Tour the Polish Museum of America and the newly renovated Paderewski Room.

Tour of Holy Trinity Church hosted by Fr. Andrew Maslejka.

Drive, via Milwaukee Avenue, thru the Polish corridor of expanding Polish neighborhoods detailing the establishment of St. Hyacinth’s Basilica and its Polish neighborhood of Avondale.
Travel thru Jefferson Park where the Copernicus Center continues to host the Taste of Polonia Festival, every Labor Day weekend.

Drive past St. Adalbert Cemetery, originally known as the Polish Cemetery on death certificates. Pass All Saints Polish National Catholic Church and Cemetery

Return to the hotel between 5-6 p.m.

Hilton Garden Inn
2930 S. River Road
Des Plaines, IL 60018

For more information, visit the PGSA Web site <http://www.pgsa.org>.

[From the July 2011 edition of the PGSA Notebook.]

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October 1 – 3, 2011

POLISH MISSION PRESENTS THE FILMMAKERS OF PATH TO GLORY

Save the first weekend in October to meet the filmmakers of “Path to Glory.” The Polish Mission is hosting the Midwestern premiere of the documentary that celebrates the unique, and centuries old, tradition of Arabian horse-breeding in Poland. For more details, see <http://www.horseflyfilms.com/preview/pathtoglory.html>. (This information was provided by Ceil Jensen.)

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October 14 – 15, 2011

POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF CONNECTICUT AND THE NORTHEAST CONFERENCE

Central Connecticut State University
New Britain, CT

Presentations at this event will be given by an impressive array of speakers, including Stephen S. Barthel, Matthew Bielawa, Daniel Bučko, Romuald K. Byczkiewicz, Donna Pointkouski, Patrick Raycraft, Thomas Sadauskas, Jonathan Shea, and our own Paul S. Valasek!


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October 15, 2011

33RD ANNUAL POLISH RESEARCH SEMINAR

Annual Seminar with Noted Speakers
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.
Cost $65 individual or $100 per couple

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

**Featured Speaker - Baerbel K. Johnson, AG**
Speaking on Prussian Poland
Baerbel K. Johnson, AG is a professional genealogist and works as an International Reference Consultant at the Family History Library. She holds degrees in Family and Local History Studies and Sociology from BYU, and has more than twenty years of extensive experience in European family history research with emphasis on Germany. She has published a number of journal articles, contributed material for several books, and lectured at various conferences. Her personal interest is in “putting flesh on the genealogical skeleton” by placing each individual within a proper social and historical context. She was a featured speaker at our 2008 UPGS Seminar.

also

**J. William Gorski, PGSM Vice-President**
Speaking on Researching Polish Settlements in Michigan

An avid genealogist and collector of Polish historical records, Bill donated his own entire collection of Polish genealogical materials to the library of Michigan in 2002. The J. William Gorski Historical & Genealogical Collection is the product of more than 20 years’ extensive research and offers valuable resources to genealogists who visit the library. To this day, Gorski continues to promote the library’s holdings and urges family historians to use the collection. Bill was also Editor of the PGSM journal, *Polish Eaglet*, for many years.

Reservations by mail by October 3, 2011. Make checks payable to P.G.S.M and send to:

PGSM
c/o Burton Collection
Detroit Public Library
5201 Woodward Ave.
Detroit, MI. 48202-4007

Out-of-town guests can reserve a room at:

Marriott Courtyard Detroit-Troy
1525 East Maple Road
Troy, Michigan 48083

Questions may be sent to Valerie Koselka: <vkoselka.pgsm@gmail.com>
See also this page on the PGSM Website: <http://www.pgsm.org/index_049.htm>

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October 26 - 29, 2011

CGSI’S 13TH GENEALOGICAL/CULTURAL CONFERENCE - MO
Sheraton Westport Chalet Hotel, St. Louis, MO
For more info, visit the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International’s Web site:


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*** MORE USEFUL WEB ADDRESSES ***

<http://telegraf.by/2011/04/access_to_belarusian_archives_blocked_for_poles>

I happened to read about this article from April in a posting to the GenealogyBlog,
<http://www.genealogyblog.com/?p=11242>. I haven’t seen any follow-up, but it’s pretty
interesting. It seems Belarusians with Polish ancestry—and there are quite a few—may have
trouble getting documents from the Belarus State Archives. It has to do with the “Polish Card,”
that is, “a document which allows the Belarusians with Polish roots to travel to Poland without
a visa and get a job there, as well as some benefits.” The GenealogyBlog links to the full article,
at the above URL, and it was fascinating to read the take Telegraph.by has on how Poland is “an
outpost of antislavonic forces” and is doing the bidding of its “big brothers from the West.” It
seems the article’s author can’t understand why Poles are more inclined to trust the West than its
friendly neighbors to the east—you know, the wonderful people who brought Poles Katyn and
the Iron Curtain.

<http://stevemorse.org/census/quiz.php>

In the July 3, 2011 issue of Nu? What’s New?, Gary Mokotoff mentioned a learning aid
for using the 1940 census, and this aid is available on the Morse site at the above address. It is
a quiz designed to help you learn more about how to search the census, because some may find
the use of tools and the FAQ on Morse’s site a little overwhelming. By all means, check the tools
and FAQ at <http://stevemorse.org/> — but if you find a little help would be nice, try the quiz
and see if it helps you prepare for when the census is released in April 2012.

<http://search.geshergalicia.org/>

In a note posted to the JewishGen discussion group, Pamela Weisberger passed along
word that Gesher Galicia has launched its “All Galicia Database” at the above URL. On that
site, the welcome notice reads as follows: “This search engine currently features 172,954 records
from 41 different data sources, covering everything from birth, death, marriage and divorce
records to phone books, school and landowner records, all from the former Austro-Hungarian province of Galicia, which today is part of eastern Poland and western Ukraine. Although Gesher Galicia’s focus is researching Jewish roots in this region, the diverse community sources of information in this database also contain names that span all the ethnic and religious groups who lived in the area, so not everyone listed in this database will necessarily be Jewish.” I’ve found this to be true of many, if not most, Jewish genealogical resources. They’re most helpful for Jewish researchers, obviously; but there’s usually info of value for non-Jewish researchers who have the good sense to take a look, and maybe get a little creative.

<http://www.stjoenj.net/schism.html>
Ray Marshall posted a very informative note on the “History of the Polish Catholic Church in America” to the Polish Genius mailing list. It consisted of quotations from Poles in American History and Tradition, by Joseph A. Wytrwal, Detroit: Endurance Press, 1969. Rather than repeat the whole thing here, I looked to see if the text was available online. It is, at the above Web site. You might take a look; it includes some very interesting reading.

Also on the Polish Genius list, Debbie Greenlee pointed out that Płock baptismal, marriage, and death records are being put online at the above URL. Roman Kaluzniacki posted a follow-up note to clarify that this is being done by the Polish State Archives in Płock. The title page indicates it is a database of USC (Civil Registry) records held by the State Archives for the Roman Catholic parish in Płock. It’s a work in progress, but you can already search and obtain at least some results. Roman added, “If you cannot type Polish characters, there is a ‘keyboard’ popup window with them near the search boxes to help out.” He recommended the page <http://www.archiwum.plock.com/acts_start_en.php>, which describes the project that provided these indices. Also, try visiting the Polish home page of the archives, <http://www.archiwum.plock.com/index_g.php>. If you scroll down to the image of a tree labeled “Genea,” you’ll see links to ongoing projects indexing the records of the Evangelical church in Płock and the Roman Catholic church in Radziwie.

<http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/bah/dam/rg/di/r45_MineAccidentRegisters/r45-14AccidentRegistersInterface.htm>
On the LithGen list, John Peters praised this as “a valuable online resource on mining accidents in Pennsylvania (and other possibly helpful information).” He mentioned the resource because large numbers of Lithuanian immigrants worked in the coal mines of Pennsylvania—as did many Poles. John advised, “Click on a ‘District’ and range of years and then you’ll see a list of links organized by letter of the alphabet—the accidents are listed by the surname of the miner involved.” He added the link to the complete list of records from the PA Archives available online: <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/bah/dam/rg/>.

<http://www.scottishreview.net/CatherineCzerkawska72.shtml>

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In a posting to the Facebook group Polish American Writers & Editors, John Guzlowski gave this link to an article from the *Scottish Review* about the Kosciuszko Foundation’s petition to get the media to stop referring to “Polish death camps.” This is a subject close to the hearts of many Polish-Americans, so you may wish to read the article.


John Guzlowski also posted this link to an entry on one of his blogs, “Ten Essential Polish American Literary Works.” He included his own *Lightning and Ashes* at #10 on the list, but no one in his right mind will begrudge him that. Who’d want to read works by a writer who doesn’t believe in his own books?


In yet another post to that group, John Guzlowski recommended reading this entry in Danushka Goska’s blog. He said, “It’s one of the best blogs I’ve ever read, a blog about leaving and love and family and the places that touch us the most. Read it—you won’t regret it.”

<http://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/tomek/films.htm>

More titles have been added to the short films of Tomasz Wiśniewski available at the Museum of Family History. The list now totals over 100, and the latest ones deal with such towns as Białystok, Rajgród, Krynki, Wysokie Mazowieckie, Hrodna (Grodno), Berestovitsa (Vyalikaya Byerastavitsa), Pinsk, Vilnius, Pułtusk, Gródek, Sokoły, Dywin (Divin), Klewan (Klivan), Merzhausen, and Minsk. The Museum is quite an impressive site; and while it is aimed primarily at Jews, non-Jews will find it valuable as well.

<http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/yizkor/>

Researchers with Jewish roots should also be aware of the ongoing work of the Yizkor Book Project. The list of Jewish communities covered is formidable—as of July 1, 2011, it contained 1,301 entries, 627 books, 9,468 pages, and 20,023 images, according to the Project Manager, Lance Ackerfeld. You can see it at the above link.

<http://www.archive.org/details/historyapolskaw03krusgoog>

On the Polish Genius list, “RomanS” noted that he had stumbled across “a series of books written in early 1900 by a Polish priest, Waclaw Kruszka. They are titled *Historya polska w Ameryce* (Polish history in America) and cover various topics concerning Polish emigration to U.S.” He said the first volume can be accessed at this URL, and a search for “Kruszka” on the Internet Archive will bring up the other volumes.

Kruszka’s history is highly regarded, and a source of valuable info for anyone interested in Polish communities in the U.S. I wish it was better known. Fair warning: the volume at the above link is in Polish. English translations exist, however. Dr. James S. Pula edited a translation in four volumes, published in 1993, 1995, 1998, and 2001; at least two of the volumes are...
available on Amazon.com. If you are deeply interested in the history of America’s Polonia, you should look for ways to get hold of these books—perhaps by interlibrary loan.

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<http://www.cslib.org/genesoc.htm>
On the LithGen list, Daniel posted a list of “approved Genealogical Societies in Connecticut, from the Connecticut State Library Website.” It occurred to me that this list is useful for those who need to do research in Connecticut—membership in an approved society is vital to gaining access to records. But it’s also useful if you have no Connecticut roots, because it suggests an approach to getting similar info for other states. Try searching the state library Web site, or something along those lines. It may pay off!

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Maralyn Wellauer and Brother Joseph Martin were among those who sent out notes mentioning this new database for research in the Poznań region. Maralyn wrote, “Type in the surname you are researching and hit ENTER. If you get a map with colored “pins” on it, click them for results. Results with a green background are births; with a blue/lavender background are deaths; and with a pink background are marriages. The box with the green bar by each entry indicates the likeliness of a match.”

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Marilyn Mroczek Morris sent out a note reminding us that the latest issue of Cosmopolitan Review has been published. She described it as “a transatlantic quarterly with a Polish angle.” The latest issue is always available at <http://cosmopolitanreview.com/>; the URL above is for an article she thought we might enjoy, “Why Speak Polish?”

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If you’re not sick of the hype surrounding Harry Potter—which is, despite the overkill and babble, a pretty darned enjoyable series of books and movies—you might like this article, “Witches, Wizards, Harry Potter & Genealogy.”

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