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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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In case the title of this article seems a bit cryptic, I’m referring to a Website for Polish researchers at the following URL:

<http://geneteka.genealodzy.pl/>

We have mentioned Geneteka in *Gen Dobry!* before, but I’ve noticed several notes recently from people who have discovered it and want to sing its praises. It is worth attention, because it accesses databases of records indexed by Polish researchers. You start with a map of Poland with the provinces as they exist today, and you choose the one that includes your ancestral region. This takes you to a page that allows you to look for a specific surname (Nazwisko) in records of that province that have been indexed so far. In the box “Księga,” you specify what kind of records to search in; click “Wszystkie,” “all,” or select U (Urodzenia = births), M (Małżeństwa = marriages, or Z (Zgony = deaths). Specify a range of years in the boxes “od roku _” (from year _) and “do roku_” (to year _). Checking “Wyszukiwanie dokładne” specifies a search for an exact match. Click on “Wyszukaj,” and you get the results.

As an example, on the Poland-Roots list, Julie Szczepankiewicz wrote: “Most of my Polish ancestors come from Mazowieckie and Podkarpackie, two regions which don’t have great coverage by the FHL microfilm collection, but I’ve found at least a couple dozen records of interest for Mazowieckie on the Geneteka site. In particular, I was excited to finally tear down a 15-year-old brick wall when I found my great-grandfather’s baptismal record in the parish of Mistrzewice, Mazowieckie. The best part was that I was able to download a scan of the actual record, free of charge! Admittedly, I got lucky. It seems that only a small percentage of the indexed records on that site are linked to scans of the documents. But I’ve been able to reconstruct three generations of my Zielinski line even with just the limited records currently available, so it’s definitely worth a look if you have ancestors from that area!” You have to figure this will only get better as more and more researchers index more and records.

Of course, this brings up the key point with something like this: exactly how much material has been indexed? Geneteka tells you up front, on the home page. To the right of the map with the provinces and regions (which include Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, and Russia) is a list of how many parafie (parishes), rejestry (registers), and wpisy (entries) have been indexed so far. So at a glance, you see that only one parish has been done so far from Lubuskie province—only one register, and 698 entries. Of course, 698 entries is nothing to sneeze at! But you might like to know right away that your chances are better with, say, Mazowieckie province, since 294 parishes and 720 registers have been indexed, for a total of 2,420,071 entries. Other leading provinces are Łódzkie (20 parishes, 493 registers), Wielkopolskie (118 parishes, 225 registers), and Kujawsko-Pomorskie (116 parishes, 274 registers).

It’s a bit of a disappointment that the numbers for Podkarpackie province, in particular, are meager so far—18 parishes, 31 registers. This area, covering much of what was western Galicia,
is one we’d love to see covered better, because the Family History Library hasn’t had much luck getting permission to film parish registers there. For right now, this is all that’s available for Podkarpackie province (B = birth, M = marriage, D = death):

- Chrząstów B 1810-1853, M 1810-1865, D 1810-1854
- Gorzyce (Tarnobrzeg powiat) B 1832-1906, M 1860-1909
- Huta Krzeszowska B 1826-1834
- Jalowe (Uniate) B 1882-1893
- Jodłowa B 1679-1762, M 1679-1830, D 1739-1754
- Motyczce Poduchowne B 1833-1907
- Niebiesczany B 1890-1911
- Nozdrzec B 1784-1909, M 1785-1899, D 1785-1845
- Rudnik nad Sanem B 1890-1890, M 1890-1890, D 1890-1890
- Sanok (Narodzenia NMP) D 2006-2011
- Święte (Uniates) M 1870-1927
- Święte (Greek Catholics) D 1872-1845
- Ulanów B 1860-1907, M 1890-1907, D 1890-1907
- Wola Mielecka D 2005-2011
- Wrazawy B 1884-1903, M 1890-1903, D 1890-1903
- Zasów (Zassów) B 1860-1895
- Zdziarec D 1806-1820

This tells us that a lot depends on the luck of the draw: has a Polish researcher, by good luck, happened to do the records you’re interested in? So far, not so many in Podkarpackie province; a lot more in others. But you have to figure the number will only grow, because interest in genealogy has finally begun to take root in Poland. They’ve been infected by the genealogy bug; give them time and it will spread.

Now, if you don’t want to confine your search to one province, just look at the green bar near the top of the home page, under “Geneteka.genealodzy.pl.” The tools include a magnifying glass. Click on it, and it gives you a page where you can check the appearance of a specific surname for a range of years for all the provinces. As before, clicking “Wyszukiwane dokładne” specifies an exact match. Click on “Wyszukaj” and you have results! For a name like Nowak, of course, this is kind of pointless, unless you can zero in on a specific area. But for less common names, it can’t hurt to see what happens.

And, oh, the joy if you get a list and find the symbol with “SKAN” inside a square after an entry! Yes, that means a scan of the register page is available. Of course, it’ll probably be in Russian or German, and hard to read. But if I knew genealogists, once you get your hands on a scan of the record you need, you’ll figure out a way to read it.

And if you get a list of matches, don’t overlook the column under “Dodał.” It means “added,” and clicking it gives the name of the researcher who did the indexing. Click on the symbol and you get a page with info on that researcher, including the line “Wyślij e-mail poprzez formularz.” Click on that and you get a form for sending that researcher an e-mail. Or just look for the
envelope symbol under “Napisz,” which does the same thing. Just imagine, a chance to contact a researcher in Poland who has a deep interest in the place and names you’re looking for! If that thought doesn’t excite you, maybe you should return to the morgue and get back on your slab.

There is a whole lot more to this, of course. Even if I knew how to do it all (and believe me, I don’t), I wouldn’t spoil your fun. Click on different tools, try different years and spellings. Learn by doing—it’s the only way you really learn anything.

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*** LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ***

Subject: Polish researchers A. A. Watta & Co.?

Looking for someone to do family research in Poland. Have been in contact with an organization named Watta—looking for reassurance that it is legitimate. Can you please advise? Since I have no known resources left in the US, i.e. family, etc. and I am looking for info earlier than 1915 in Poland. I seem to have come to a stumbling block and need some advice.

Vivian Guzniczak

Editor—It turns out this is “A. A. Watta & Co., professional genealogists,” listed on PGSA’s Web page with researchers and travel guides at <http://www.pgsa.org/Research/polresguides.php>. While I am familiar with a number of the people and organizations listed on that page, I have not heard anything, good or bad, about A. A. Watta. I told Vivian I would gladly mention this here. If any of you can give her some feedback, please write me at <wfh@lanweine.com> and I’ll pass the note along to Vivian. She has tried some of the other researchers listed on PGSA’s page, and was not happy with the results; that’s why she’s wondering if her luck with Watta will be any better.

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Subject: The Newberry Library and the Chicago Foreign Press Survey

Editor—I was among a number of people who received this note. I’m glad to pass the word along.

I am writing to announce the official release of the Chicago Foreign Language Press Survey online. It is available on the Newberry Library’s website at: <http://flps.newberry.org/>. Please see the attached announcement for further details.

We would appreciate it, if you could distribute this information through your blog at your earliest convenience.

Thank you very much.
The Chicago Foreign Language Press Survey is Online:

The Newberry Library’s Dr. William M. Scholl Center for American History and Culture is pleased to announce the release of a new historical web resource, the Chicago Foreign Language Press Survey, a collection of translations of approximately 50,000 newspaper articles originally published in Chicago’s ethnic press between the 1860s and the 1930s. The articles from 22 ethnic groups were originally translated during the 1930s as a project of the U.S. Federal Works Progress Administration.

The 1930s project intended to offer English-speaking researchers and students access to primary materials on ethnicity and urban life in one of America’s great polyglot cities during a formative span of its history. In subsequent decades the Survey has been invaluable to scholars and students of Chicago history, and it has been used effectively in high school and college classrooms.

The new digital collection, made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, provides broader and better organized access than has been possible with paper and microfilm. The Survey translations have considerable value for teaching and research in immigration studies, urban and local history, modernist and comparative literary studies, the history of popular culture, and many other fields. They can reward browsing for curiosity as well as targeted research.

You can access the Survey here: <http://flps.newberry.org/>. Please direct all inquiries to the Newberry’s Dr. William M. Scholl Center for American History and Culture, <scholl@newberry.org>.

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Subject: Family Roots in Wolyn

Editor—One of our readers sent this note to PolishRoots Webmaster Don Szumowski, and gave permission to repeat it here. Can you help?
I am wondering if you can help me on two counts; I will start with what I think is the easier

I have been tracing my family roots (Boczkowski) from Wolyn and have had some success. A significant archive was located and copied from Zhitomir (Gozdawa Boczkowski from Sandomir) and Leliva Czerczycki from the Hmelnicki archive. The copies are in the form of good quality photos. The material in the former is in handwritten in Russian and the latter is also in handwritten form and a mix of Polish and Russian. Both sets relate to “proving” their szlachta status as well as various land/business transactions. Given how hard it was to find these, I would like to be able to share the material with anyone who might be interested. How do I do this so that it is available to all Poles?

The second issue I have relates, of course, to translation. In this case, I have had the material translated by the researcher who found them. He is not, however, an expert in Polish history in Wolyn nor is his first language Polish or English (he is Russian). What I am looking for is to confirm less than a dozen place names, all from Wolyn area as far as I can gather. Are there any people in your group who might be able to identify places in Wolyn from the period of 1649 to 1770 recorded in Russian? I would be able to send them the photos of the documents to assist.

Richard Boczkowski

*Editor—*If you believe you may be able to assist Richard, please contact me <wfh@langline.com> and I will forward your note to him.

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*** NEH-FUNDED SUMMER SEMINAR FOR TEACHERS ***  

Alex Rudd, list owner of a mailing list for teachers of eastern European languages, posted a note recently that may interest any of you who are teachers with classes K-12 and are interested in engaging with Eastern Europe in your classrooms. The note explained that New York University, with the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities, is offering a Summer Seminar for K-12 teachers from June 30 through July 18, 2013 on “Eastern Europe in Modern European History.” Detailed information is available at this link: <http://cems.as.nyu.edu/page/neh2013>.

The deadline is March 4, 2013, and teachers who are selected to participate will receive a stipend of $2,700 to cover travel and living expenses. Contact Seminar Director, Larry Wolff, at <european.studies@nyu.edu>.

If this interests you, or you know a teacher who might want to get involved, it will certainly do no harm to visit the Web page and send a note to Larry Wolff.

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Dear Friends of the Poznań Project,

The year 2012 has been another important landmark in advancing the Poznań Project. Thanks to the recent relaxing of certain restrictions in the access to vital records in Polish State archives, we have been able to index a large amount of non-microfilmed records, especially Lutheran. The ongoing Polish governmental projects of making some categories of records accessible online have also made it easier to index some parishes relevant to the Poznań Project. The expected development of those efforts is very promising.

The team of Poznań Project volunteers has also been joined by many new persons (I would like to appreciate their help very much), among them there are a number of people who are able to work in places which are relatively less accessible (as some remote Polish archives). This will eventually help indexing the material for some districts which were not too much present in the database so far.

In the last year, I have observed a much more active participation of German volunteers whose skills are particularly needed for the transcription of Protestant and civil registration records.

The indexing of the Catholic part of the vital records for the Poznań area is still the most advanced and approaches 100% of the existent material for certain districts. The area which was once part of Russian Poland is still relatively less transcribed, but the progress is also fast here. We have also been able to accumulate about one half of the existent Protestant marriages from the Poznań region already.

Recently, we have also started to add marriage records produced by the Prussian civil registration system from 1874 on. Those records are usually richer in data than church marriages and in many towns they fill the gaps in the latter records, as original parish marriage books are very often missing for the period close to 1900. There is still a relatively small number of civil records in our database but it may be the category that will grow much faster soon.

In 2012, the Poznań Project website and database was finally moved to a more performant server within the Poznań Supercomputing and Networking Center facilities, and we were also assigned a new web address which is much easier to remember:

<http://poznan-project.psnc.pl/>

I would like to thank from the bottom of my heart to all those who have contributed to advancing the Poznań Project in a number of ways (listed under <http://poznan-project.psnc.pl/data/support.php>). Thanks to your help, the database is growing and many thousands of queries are served every day. I am receiving numerous accounts about the database being the only source where the
origin of “lost ancestors” from the Poznań/Posen region could ultimately be solved. Thousands of users are thus learning about their Polish and/or German heritage.

Your continued support will allow me to proceed with adding new parishes and extending the material for ones already present in the database. New volunteers to transcribe are also welcome, as well as any other ideas to improve the Poznań Project.

As of Jan. 17, we have reached 920,000 marriage records in our database and we expect the one million milestone to be crossed later this year! This result has only been possible to the common efforts made by all of us over the past decade.

I wish you a happy new year 2013 and many new discoveries, especially made through our database.

Dr. Łukasz Bielecki
Poznań, Poland

<http://www.discovering-roots.pl>

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*** UPCOMING EVENTS ***

10 February 2013

PGSA’S QUARTERLY MEETING
Polish Museum of America
984 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Chicago, Illinois
2:00 p.m.

“Mining for Gold: Online Historical Newspapers”

Join us for guest speaker Robin Seidenberg’s presentation on how to unlock your family secrets using online historical newspapers.

Ms. Seidenberg has been studying her family history since 1997 and is especially knowledgeable in the area of using historical newspapers. She is a member of the Genealogical Speakers Guild and the Association of Professional Genealogists. Currently, Robin serves as executive Vice-President of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois, Vice-President of PCBUG and President of Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts.

The meeting will be held in the Social Hall of the Polish Museum of America (PMA), 984 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL. There is ample parking adjacent to the Museum. Refreshments will be offered.
March 21, 2013
“LOCATING FAMILY RECORDS IN POLAND”

Church of the Latter Day Saints Family History Center
584 West Street
Ludlow, Massachusetts
6:30 p.m.

Sponsored by the Polish Genealogy Society of Massachusetts

Pat Welliver of the LDS Family History Center in Ludlow will speak on using the resources of the Center to conduct genealogy research, and Joe Kielec will illustrate the Internet techniques that he used to locate Parish records and map his family in Austria - Poland (Galicia) back to 1801. Bring the name or one of the villages that your Polish ancestors emigrated from and we’ll show you how to see if there are parish records for your research, too.

This event is free and open to the public.

Look us up on Facebook or on the internet at <http://www.pgsma.org> for more information.

[From a note sent by Joseph Kielec]

Saturday, May 4, 2013

WASHINGTON D.C. FAMILY HISTORY CENTER ANNUAL CONFERENCE
10000 Stoneybrook Dr.
Kensington, Maryland

The LDS Washington DC Family History Center will be having its annual genealogy conference on Saturday, 4 May 2013. The URL for their Web page is <http://www.wdcfhc.org/>. The sign-up page for this conference is not up yet, but should be within a week or two.

One of the presenters will be Tom Sadauskas, speaking on the International Tracing Service (ITS) archives and how best to use their 50 million documents to help with East European research, especially when it comes to displaced persons (DPs) and Holocaust victims & survivors. Here’s the write-up for Tom’s presentation:

The International Tracing Service—The Closed Archive That’s Been Finally Opened After
More Than 60 Years

The International Tracing Service (ITS) was created in the closing days of World War II. The ITS collected more than 50 million German and Allied records containing information on over 17.5 million persons. These persons included both Holocaust victims and survivors, forced laborers, and more than 8 million displaced persons (DPs). For more than 60 years, the ITS archives were closed to outside researchers and only accessible to ITS staff members. Not until late 2007, because of outside pressure by numerous groups, was the decision made to open these records to outside researchers. The first organized group of outside researchers to access these records occurred in May 2008. The presenter was part of this first group. Topics to be covered include:

- Brief History of the ITS
- How the ITS Archives Came to Be Opened to the Public
- What Records Are There & How They Can Be Accessed
- What Records Are Not There
- How These records Can Aid Your Genealogy Research
- My Personal Experience As Part of the First Group of Outside Researchers to Visit the ITS Archives

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August 4 – 9, 2013

33RD IAJGS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JEWISH GENEALOGY

This annual event—which is almost always a magnificent success—will be held in 2013 in Boston on August 4 through 9. Learn more at <http://www.iajgs2013.org/>.

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October 23 – 26, 2013

CZECHOSLOVAK GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL 2013 GENEALOGICAL AND CULTURAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM

The Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International (CGSI) will hold its 14th Genealogical and Cultural Conference at the Westin Lombard Hotel in Lombard, Illinois, October 23–26, 2013.

Hotel reservations can now be made for the Conference at the Westin Lombard Hotel in Lombard, Illinois. Click on the Reserve icon when you get to the Hotel page.

The keynote speaker will be our own Paul S. Valasek! Other notable speakers are Lisa A. Alzo, Grace DuMelle, Leo Baca, Lou Szucs, and many more.

For more information on the program, see this Web page:
November 13 – 14, 2013

POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA CONFERENCE

The 2013 Conference will be held at the Hilton Lisle in Naperville, Illinois. In the months ahead, the Website, <http://www.pgsa.org>, and the PGSA Notebook will post additional details.

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*** MORE USEFUL WEB ADDRESSES ***

This link is to Lisa Alzo’s article at Examiner.com, “13 Ways to Find Your East European Ancestors in 2013.” I found this through the 6 January 2013 issue of The Genealogy News, which quoted an item from GenealogyBlog, <http://www.genealogyblog.com/?p=23963>.

On the Poland-Roots list, Józef Taran added that this site for vital records from Lublin province is growing day by day.

In a note posted on the Poland-Roots list, Roman Kałużniacki mentioned this map, at a scale of 1:600,000, which shows the borders of the dioceses of eastern Galicia (although it does not specify the date). The legend at lower left shows you which churches are Roman Catholic and which are Greek Catholic. The color of the borders of individual powiaty also indicates what percentage of the inhabitants was Polish.

Robert Strybel—who writes for the Polish American Journal and other publications—has published this book, Polish/Polonian Heritage and Lifestyles: Everything You Need to Know, in a Kindle edition. It can be purchased for $8.99; or Amazon Prize members can borrow it for free. Rob is a font of info on all things Polish and Polish-American, and I always enjoy reading what he writes. The book description reads as follows: “Everything a Polish-American needs to know about ethnic Polish holidays, festivals and life’s milestones—from Polish weddings to Polish funerals. A mini encyclopedia of Polish customs and traditions—and how to celebrate them.

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Includes poems, song lyrics, blessings, greetings, baby names, etiquette and numerous lists of resources.” Please consider buying or borrowing it!

<http://www.arcadiapublishing.com/9780738598543/Lithuanian-Chicago>

Another book that recently went on sale may be of great interest to some of our readers. It is called Lithuanian Chicago, and Justin G. Riskus wrote it as an entry in Arcadia Publishing’s “Images of America.” This is a great series of affordable books with splendid photos of a variety of communities. If you have Lithuanian roots or roots in Chicago, you should at least take a look.


Bronwyn Klimach posted this link on the Polish Genius list. It’s an article from the Chicago Tribune, “Going back home to Poland,” by Colleen Mastony, and it tells of Polish immigrants going back to Poland. While I hate to see honest, talented people leaving the United States, it is encouraging that more and more Poles believe they can live the good life back in their homeland!


Debbie Greenlee sent me this link, to an article on prospects for real, decent-quality translations by computers. We’re not there yet, not by a long way; but there is hope!

<http://books.google.com/books?id=lfbTAAAAMAAJ>

On the JewishGen mailing list, Ann Rabinowicz mentioned this link, to the Google eBook The Russian Year-book for 1912, Volume 2, compiled and edited by Howard Percy Kennard. It’s a compendium of basic knowledge about the Russian Empire as it existed in the early 1900s, and includes a fair amount of information about that part of Poland ruled by Russia. The table of contents has live links that take you to the section in question. If your ancestors came from the Russian partition, and you’d like basic facts about law, administration, military service, emigration, weights and measures, peasant industries, and so on, this is a pretty useful reference work—and you can’t beat the price!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=1arwsR08yKo>

John Guzlowski mentioned this in a post to the Facebook group “The Way Back -- Unknown Stories of WWII Poland.” This URL takes you to a video of Frank Sinatra singing the Polish folk song “Wolne Serce,” first broadcast in 1982 during martial law in Poland. Toward the end, a series of famous figures (at the time) recite the sentence “Let Poland be Poland.” This was the name of a TV film produced by the United States Information Agency to show support for Solidarność and the Polish people. The U.S. Embassy in Warsaw is posting highlights from that film on YouTube, from December 13 through January 31st (the 30th anniversary of the film’s
broadcast). The clip is accompanied by a link to more info at <http://poland.usembassy.gov/martial_box.html>. Very interesting.

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One of the things that drive even a good translator crazy is the specialized vocabulary associated with many different activities. Polish military terms, for instance, give me a lot of trouble. I happened to run across this page on the Website “The Doomed Soldiers: Polish Underground Soldiers 1944-1963 - The Untold Story.” I bookmarked it because the terms are all worth knowing, especially if you’re dealing with post-World War II Polish activity.

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<http://tinyurl.com/bzkcchh>

On the JewishGen newsgroup, Jan Meisels Allen posted a note about this link to a video on how the International Tracing Service (ITS) reunited a family. A young boy was separated from his natural family during World War II and was placed in foster care by the Nazis. The family contacted the ITS, which, working with the Red Cross in Poland, found his original name and birthplace (Łódź), discovered what had happened to his mother, and found a surviving aunt. IAJGS Board Member Jackye Sullins brought this story to Jan’s attention.

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<http://tinyurl.com/aypaove>

In another post to JewishGen, Jan told of a Wall Street Journal article, “When a Genealogy Hobby Digs Up Unwanted Secrets.” The above URL should take you to the article, or you can try the original URL: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324734904578241822679163276.html>.

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<http://www.nypl.org/locations/tid/36/node/107590>

Steven Lasky also posted a note to JewishGen, explaining that he had added the correct link to the New York Public Library’s Genealogical Research page on his Museum of Family History Website. He added, “Actually, they have quite an extensive list of holdings, so it might benefit you, the genealogical researcher, to peruse this list. I couldn’t find this particular page when I used their search engine, so perhaps you might link to save the link on your computer for future use.” The above URL should take you there. And don’t forget to check out Lasky’s site, <http://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com>.

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<http://about.jstor.org/rr>

I have often Googled subjects and found articles on them stored at the digital library JSTOR, which specializes in academic journals. But to access the articles required signing up for JSTOR, and it wasn’t worth my while. In a note on JewishGen, Renee Stern Steinig noted that JSTOR now allows the public limited access to over 1,200 publications. She wrote, “Open a Register & Read account at <about.jstor.org/rr> to access up to three articles every two weeks.” I will definitely be checking this out!
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