Gen Dobry!

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Editor: William F. “Fred” Hoffman, e-mail: <wfh@langline.com>

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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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It’s funny how people only get seriously interested in their family history after the very people who could answer their questions are gone. So it is with me and my father’s family, the Jabłońskis. Luckily, my father was not reticent about sharing stories of his life in Poland, Ukraine, Siberia, war-time north Africa and Italy, post-war England. These stories are ingrained in me like DNA. But there are still gaps, questions unanswered because I never thought to ask them until too late.

Was his father’s family from the same area for generations or had they moved? What was the Russian connection in his mother’s family, the Kijankas? What were the names of sisters left behind in Poland? How did he learn that they and their families died at the hands of the Nazis? How long did the family live in Ukraine before 1939? Where did his father die?

So many missing details.

What I do know is that Błażej Jabłoński married Anna Kijanko in 1907 in the St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church of Krasnystaw, a rural area near Lublin in eastern Poland. Błażej is the equivalent of Blaise in English, an unusual name, suggesting that one of his parents had a flair for the dramatic.

Błażej and Anna set up home in Małochwiej, a village in Krasnystaw parish. He was a farmer and forest warden. They soon had several mouths to feed, including eldest son Franek (presumably baptised Franciszek) born in 1910, my father Jan (Janek) in 1913, Stanisława (Stasia) in 1919, Janina in 1921, and baby Zigismund (Zygmunt) in 1926. My father always talked about unnamed older sisters left in Poland who had been killed by the Nazis around 1940; so it is likely that they were born between 1908 and 1909. The gap between 1914 and 1918 is likely due to the bloody turmoil of World War I.

This photo of the girls on the next page shows matriarch Anna with her daughters in the 1930s. Anna is seated in the centre, flanked by two women with facial features similar to hers, probably the two unnamed eldest girls. Back left is Janina, who is standing beside Stasia, who is next to an unnamed girl, possibly Anna’s granddaughter. The little girl is clearly a granddaughter in national costume.

My father, Jan, was imbued with the national pride common to his countrymen of that era. He must have read Henryk Sienkiewicz’s famous historical trilogy hundreds of times throughout his life, each time reinforcing that sense of belonging to a great cultural nation. Their love of family, strong Catholic faith, and national pride gave the Jabłońskis strength to keep going through their many trials ahead.

Growing up in Małochwiej was a happy life. Jan’s first memory was of falling in the river as a toddler and being fished out by an older sister, who made him promise not to tell mother. Later, he recalled climbing a tall tree to catch a squirrel, only to get a finger nipped by razor-sharp teeth for his trouble. Then, bribing a fox with sugar until it became a pet, playfully nibbling on their toes as Jan and Franek slept in the barn loft on a warm summer’s night. Long days fishing. Wild summer
storms. Storks making their nests atop chimneys. Falling in an icy river on the way to school and being made to dry off thoroughly in front of a blazing fire by a worried teacher. Life sounded idyllic, like something out of a *Boy’s Own* annual.

Sometime in the early 1930s, the family moved to a farm in Kaszówka, in the Kowel district of Ukraine, which was then part of Poland. The two married daughters remained behind in Krasnystaw, but all the others joined Błażej and Anna as pioneers in a new land. Franek and Jan were in their late teens/early twenties by then. Jan fondly recalled walking through moonlit forests to attend village dances, returning in the wee hours. It was in Ukraine he first owned a well-tailored suit, making friends with the local tailor and spending hours observing his skill. There was much superstition alive in rural Ukraine. A legend of starving wolves devouring a lone cavalryman during one fiercely cold winter, leaving only his boots. A mysterious phosphorescent light that followed travellers home through the forest, which Jan himself experienced. Long-ago canon fire booming again on still nights. Maybe they were omens of things to come.

In September 1939, Ukraine was invaded by the U.S.S.R. Native Ukrainians had been agitating for independence and initially welcomed Stalin’s forces. Polish citizens in the area were deported to forced labour camps in Siberia, with insults such as “Polish pig” hurled at them from former
friends and neighbours. Nightmare days turned into weeks while travelling northeast in cattle cars, people jammed tightly with barely room to sit, let alone lie down. A small stove in the centre of each carriage provided heat and a hole in the floor at one end for toileting. Privacy was unheard of, food and water scarce—no future and no end in sight.

The Jabłoński family existed for two years in the primitive conditions of a forestry camp in northern Siberia, although they thought it would be for the rest of their lives. Young and old had to work hard to earn their daily bread, slaving for long hours felling and hauling trees or doing other necessary work around the camp. No work, no food. At end of day, after sharing the meagre rations, they sought freedom in sleep. Even this escape was denied during winter. A central fire graced the sleeping quarters and beds comprised a bench along the wall. To keep from literally freezing against the wall, one had to rotate one’s body regularly like a shish kebab, first warming one side against the fire, then the other. In summer the gnats and mosquitoes came, great swarms of biting insects. One of the guards once joked to my father, “We only have nine months of winter here, then it’s summer and summer....”

Amazingly, all the family survived except Błażej, who succumbed to typhoid shortly before they reached freedom. In 1941 the U.S.S.R. changed sides, joining the Allies to fight Hitler’s Nazi forces. This resulted in the Sikorski-Maisky agreement, which released enslaved Polish citizens to join the Polish Army. Jan and Franek travelled by whatever means possible (mostly walking, sleeping in lice-infested hollows) to enlist during the short window of opportunity. With no help from Stalin, the family then made their painful way, by whatever means possible, south to Persia (Iran), where they finally reached the British command post in April 1942. Jan and Franek were then transferred via Iraq to Palestine and assigned to the Polish Army in the Middle East, part of the British Eighth Army. The youngest boy, Zigismund, about 16 yo, was sent to England to become an Airforce cadet. Widowed Anna and daughters Janina and Stasia were sent to a British camp in Tengeru, Tanganika, where they did sewing work.

While in Palestine, Jan was conferred a Jerusalem Cross to honour Catholic pilgrims to the Holy Land. It may have protected him during the dangerous three years ahead. Lance-Corporal Jabłoński became a driver-mechanic in the esteemed Krechowiecki Lancers regiment. He told of negotiating trucks over precipitous Iraqi mountains on narrow unmade roads, all solid cliff on one side and vertical drop on the other. He told of deadly black widow spiders and scorpions in the desert, of the sand-laden Egyptian wind storms known as khamsin, and driving a claustrophobic Sherman tank. He laughingly remembered visiting Franek’s unit and seeing their mascot, Wojtek the soldier bear, on his back, guzzling a bottle of beer. Later in the war, he remembered trying to find sleep beside the unquiet dead in an Italian cemetery. During fierce fighting at Monte Cassino, a mortar decapitated the friend fighting beside him. Jan dragged the body to shelter in a living nightmare, then went on to fight another day. Even after receiving a head wound in Ancona, which left him with a drooping eyelid, he returned to the front after two weeks of rehabilitation and stayed with his regiment for the rest of the war.

The Polish regiments of World War II more than held their own in battle, always with the added impetus of freeing their homeland from a hated enemy. It was this fierce determination that spurred
Polish regiments to defeat the German army at Monte Cassino after months of failed attempts by other Allied forces. Taking Monte Cassino cleared the way for the Allies to take Rome, progress north, and win the war.

Once World War II ended, a near-bankrupt Britain hoped that Polish servicemen would return to their beloved homeland. But Churchill and Roosevelt had signed away Poland to Soviet authority during the Yalta conference of February 1945, so very few Poles were prepared to risk throwing themselves on Stalin’s mercy again. For over a year, the Polish army cooled its heels in Italy, until Britain reluctantly concluded that it had a moral obligation to these brave people who had been a significant factor in winning the war. Despite this, Poles were not allowed to march in the Victory Parades for fear of offending Stalin and potentially setting off another war. This bitter insult, on top of the Yalta betrayal, soured the first impression of their new home, Britain, for Polish ex-servicemen.

The Polish Resettlement Corps (PRC) was founded by Britain in 1946 for those soldiers and their families who didn’t choose to return to Poland. Its purpose was to transition Polish refugees into English life, teaching language, laws, customs and various work skills, with the intention of having them become productive citizens within the British Commonwealth.

Jan and Franek joined the PRC for the contracted two years and were assigned to the Cannon Hall Camp in Yorkshire. It was not until two years later that the family was finally reunited, when Anna, Stasia, and Janina disembarked in Southampton from the Cunard ship Georgic on 11 July 1948.

My father’s stories from his 18 years in England and Wales are a varied lot, with mean-spirited landladies, food still on rations, inappropriate food for someone who had suffered near-starvation. He heard ignorant questions such as “Did you have houses in Poland?” But there were kindnesses along the way, too. Regional accents proved quite a challenge. Here was Jan thinking that he understood English fairly well, only to hear a Lancashire or Scottish accent booming out on a railway platform and wondering, “What language is that?”

In those days, people who had suffered the traumas of Siberian enslavement followed by war were not given the special care and counselling that they would receive today. No, they were sent to work and told to be grateful! Ordinary British people, quickly forgetting Polish service during World War II, wondered why they didn’t want to return to Poland and resented that they were “here, taking our jobs.”

Such jobs, too! Jan—the farm boy who thrived on hard work in the great outdoors—was sent below ground, coal mining in Newport, Monmouthshire, Wales. Funny that the Polish guy was always assigned the night-time shift! When Jan objected this to the local employment exchange, the by-the-book civil servant insisted “you have to do it” in outraged tones and Jan insisted “I am not a slave” in equally strident voice. When the civil servant’s boss came out to see what was going on, Jan explained that living in a lodging house meant he couldn’t sleep in the daytime because of household noise and couldn’t work constant night-shifts on zero sleep. Finally, sense prevailed with a more balanced shift rotation.
It wasn’t all disheartening. As part of the PRC arrangements, Jan and fellow Poles were often employed by a kindly local farmer, where they could almost imagine themselves back home in their father’s fields.

After two years of contracted PRC work, the Jabłoński family were reunited in Monmouthshire, Wales and became British citizens.

- Franek, with his romantic Chopin-style haircut, married Maria and moved to Lille in northern France during the late 1940s, where he continued coal mining. They had two daughters. Franek died there in 2000.

- Janina married Walter in 1949. They had two boys and a girl in Warwickshire before moving to Toronto, Canada in 1956. Janina died there in 2007.

The remaining family settled in and around Warwickshire, doing factory work and getting on with life. Coventry had thriving motor and textile industries at the time.

- Stasia married Stan in Shipston, Warwickshire in 1952. They went on to have a girl and three boys before Stasia’s untimely death in 1971.

- The baby of the family, Zygmunt, married an English girl from Staffordshire. They settled in Birmingham and had three sons.

- After living with her son Jan in Coventry for about 15 years, Anna moved to a Polish retirement home in Penrhos, Pwllheli, southwest Wales in the late 1950s. She died there in 1967.

- In 1958 Jan married a local Warwickshire girl, Florence, and they had a daughter (me) in 1959.

My father had a positive personality, always interested in the now and tomorrow, not dwelling on yesterday. During his years in peacetime Britain, he was able to catch up on all the things he’d missed. One of the first things he bought was a bespoke* tailored suit. During the precarious trip from Siberia to Persia, Anna had sold her son’s precious suits to pay for necessities, so it was balm to his soul to replace them one by one over the years in England.

*Editor – For those of you unfamiliar with the term, bespoke is a British word meaning “made to order.”

Thanks to Britain’s new NHS (National Health Service), Jan had an operation to repair the eyelid damaged during battle at Ancona.

Coventry was a major motor manufacturing town, so it didn’t take him long to buy a powerful new motorbike. Not only did this broaden his employment prospects, it also enabled him to become familiar with countryside throughout the English Midlands.
In the early 1960s, long before home video cameras were commonplace, he bought a state-of-the-art movie camera and projector. Jan’s home movie films from this time have been transferred to VHS and later to DVD and are still watchable as a record of the time. One scene shows the view from the top floor of Coventry’s first multi-storey unit block, looking down on row upon row of identical terrace houses. The old world and the new.

Most importantly, after years of renting, Jan was eventually able to buy and renovate his own home in Coventry.

But in the early 1960s, the Warwickshire economy took a downturn and prospects looked bleak. Jan was again employed in shift work, this time at the local General Electric plant. He had done all the training to be a fitter and turner, but never got the certificate to prove it. The mean-spirited boss threatened dismissal if he didn’t work his rostered shift at GE on the night of his final exam. So although Jan did the work of a fitter and turner for years to come, he didn’t have the vital paperwork, so was paid less than he should have been. Franek and Janina had long since emigrated and Jan began to think things might be better for his family overseas too.

Commonwealth countries were advertising to attract new residents. Canada was an option quickly rejected because of its climate—far too cold after Siberia. Australia was probably chosen for its climate and employment opportunities, particularly in Victoria and New South Wales.

So, on 6 June 1964, Jan, Florence and Christine Jabłoński began a new life “down under,” disembarking the P&O Ship Oriana in Melbourne. Our small family settled and prospered in the beautiful Yarra Valley. After an incredible and well-lived life, Jan Jabłoński died at almost 89 years old in April 2002.

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*** LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ***

Subject: Ancestry and (Shhh!) Eastern Europe!

Editor—Christine Jablonski Ward, the author of the lead article in this issue, originally responded to Paul Valasek’s article in the July issue with the following note. It led to Paul’s encouraging her to write about her family’s life, and that’s how we got the story printed above. Thanks, Christine and Paul!

Dzień dobry! – just wanted to respond to your article on Ancestry.com’s big push of its DNA testing and the advertising thereof.

I’m in Australia, so we get different advertising here and none of it denigrates any of the varied ethnicities portrayed. However, it is a heavily advertised service which probably best serves people who are too lazy to do the hard yards of going down the detailed generation by generation research that people do to produce a family tree. We have done both and find the researching
of family tree more interesting and rewarding. However, having the DNA test alongside did produce a couple of new avenues of investigation for both my husband and me:

My father was Polish and my mother English. So I was not surprised and very proud to find that my DNA was 51% Eastern European. The split of 16% Western European and 14% Great Britain was to be expected, since Anglo Saxons did come from Western Europe. Similarly, the small Scandinavian and Finland Northwest Russia components. However, my biggest surprise was 10% Ireland, given that I had only found one Irish-descendant (a great grandmother) in my tree and it was her grandfather who was actually born in Ireland. So it seems there must be more Irish lurking in the tree than I was aware of!

My husband’s researches into his very far reaching family tree had uncovered predominantly English, Scottish, Irish and French ancestors, so he wasn’t surprised to find 40% Great Britain, 20% Scandinavia and 17% Ireland in his results. However, the big surprise – a very pleasant surprise for us both – was 7% Eastern European! Far from being unhappy with this, we are both thrilled to find another point of commonality between us. Maybe it was our mutual Eastern European DNA that attracted in the first place! So, while I’m trying to find out where the Irish are hiding in my tree, he’ll be looking for some Polish in his.

I’d be complaining to Ancestry about their negative insinuations, which are not funny at all. I think you’ll find they will run a mile from being perceived as “racist” in this current PC climate.

Regards,
Christine Jablonski Ward

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*** PROJECT PODLASIE NEEDS YOUR HELP! ***

by Ola Heska <ola@hwwd.com>

Editor—This is a follow-up to an article Ola wrote that appeared in our February 2016 issue.

Hello, fellow genealogists. Last spring, I wrote my appeal for donations to help save old vital record registers in the parish of Tykocin. With the help of those of you who answered my call, the 113 books will soon be cleaned and preserved in acid-free boxes. Digitized records have been given to the Pastor and the material has almost been indexed. Indexes will be available on Geneteka and also on <http://projektpodlasie.pl/> along with a great “Thank You!” we will soon post an update and will include some photos from the last stages of the Tykocin project.

In addition to working in the parish of Tykocin, the Projekt Podlasie group also digitized records of the parishes of Ostrożany and Pobikry. Indexing of the records from these parishes will soon be completed. Other parishes included in the project are: Dąbrowa Wielka, Kuczyn, Czyżew, Jabłoń, Zuzela, Wyszonki Kościence, Jabłonka Kościcle, Wysokie Mazowieckie.
Even though Projekt Podlasie is a new venture, their website, although still under construction, already is impressive. There is a wealth of information about each of the parishes and about noble families that resided in the area. Hopefully those of you whose ancestors came from this area will benefit from the website (even though at this time it is in Polish only).

However, at this time Projektpodlasie.pl needs our support to remain online. Although the entire project is run by volunteers who travel to the Podlasie region to digitize the vital records registers, others who index the records, and others who prepare and administer the web page, funds are needed for webhosting, the domain name, and the server fee. At this time the total fees are about 650 zlotys ($170 according to the current exchange rate). A separate PayPal account was opened for this purpose. Donations can be sent to <indeksacja@projektpodlasie.pl> or from the website <http://szlachta.projektpodlasie.pl/> (scroll to the very bottom of the page to find and click where it says “Przekaż darowiznę / Donate.” Please join me in making a donation to help this website stay online. Thank you.

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*** RE: LOOTED BOOKS IN NUREMBERG — THE JULIUS STREICHER COLLECTION ***

by Felix Gundacker

Editor—We often reprint announcements from Dr. Gundacker and GenTeam.eu. He asked everyone to pass this along, and we are glad to oblige.

Vienna, 25 September 2016

Dear Researchers and Family History Hobbyists,

Today I ask you all again for your valuable assistance.

The Jewish Community (IKG) Nuremberg owns the so-called “Stürmer or Streicher Library,” a collection of approximately 10,000 stolen books by the Nazis. To restore the library to its rightful owners or their descendants is of special interest to the IKG. Right at the outset, I would like to stress that the restitution is free of charge.

Several books could be restored because of a publication of a list of previous Austrian owners in September 2015. A complete list of robbed victims you will find at the following link:

<http://www.genteam.at/inde x.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=150&Itemid=1 49&lang=en>

The list inclusive book notes can be viewed free of charge – no registration is necessary.
Since provenance research is mainly family research, I beg of you for your assistance in this very important matter.

Attached below is a letter from Magister Leibl Rosenberg, the representative of the city of Nuremberg for the collection of the IKG (Jewish Community) and ask you to contact him personally with any and all research findings and questions:

<Leibl.rosenberg@stadtnuernberg.de>

Looted books Not Only from Austria in the Collection of the Jewish Community

On March 12, 1938 Nazi Germany brought Austria home into the Reich (realm) by annexing the country. With it began a terrible history of suffering for the victims of the Nazis: Jewish people, free masons, Sinti and Roma, priests and believers of diverse Christian Denomination, representatives and exponents of the labor movement. They were disenfranchised, humiliated, persecuted, arrested, robbed, expelled, and assassinated. Favored objects of the new masters’ desires were the properties and cultural commodities of any kind: paintings, sculptures, images, manuscripts, writings, archival materials, art wares, tools and instruments, stocks, motor vehicles, furniture and usable items of any kind. One does not go wrong in the assumption that there had to have been about 600,000 art works and millions of publications confiscated from all over Europe.

A portion of the stolen books from 514 Austrian towns and other localities in Europe reached by still obscure ways into the ownership of the infamous Gauleiter (head of a Nazi administrative district) and so-called Frankenführer (Franconian leader) Julius Streicher in Nuremberg.

Remnants of the books remain to this day in the collection of the Jewish Community -IKG (previously the collection was also known as the Stürmer or Streicher Library) in the Nuremberg city library at the Educational Campus. This collection of nearly 10,000 books is the property of the Jewish Community in Nuremberg and was given, years ago, on permanent loan to the city library. The IKG, owners and proprietors of the collection, saw and see themselves as custodians, and they have begun, with great effort, the tedious task of finding the former owners and the restitution of the writings to their legal successors. So far, more than 700 writings were returned to approximately 170 persons or entities in ten different countries. This work is done pro bono; therefore, it is done free of charge for the previous owners, their families and rightful owners, and the city of Nuremberg will pay the postage to forward restored works.

The research of the provenance references in the writings in 25 languages has resulted in over 2,200 former owners from localities in Europe and Overseas. Three geographical focal areas have been crystalized: Nuremberg, Franconia; Strasbourg, Alsace-Lorraine; and Vienna, Austria.

The restitution of robbed cultural goods requires provenance research; in turn, it cannot be successfully made without family research. The acting representative of the city of Nuremberg for the Collection IKG therefore turns today, a good year after sending out the first search list, once more to the genealogists and historians from the staff and user circle at <http://www.GenTeam.eu> to request instructions, reference information, and research result for locating
former owners and their heirs or legal successors. The list published here still contains some inaccuracies and misattributions, traces and fragments despite many of years of careful efforts to avoid errors. It is a matter of 879 former owners of 238 known cities throughout Europe. A list as this one, how could it be any different—a document of mass lootings that often lead to mass murders!

Many years, actually decades have passed since this terrific raid; but it does not alter the iniquity and the suffering of the affected. Please examine whether you can shed some light in the dark, so that in this way the victims will befall just a little justice. The first Search List with Austrian victims of these robberies at GenTeam lead to the restitution of written works and to the clarification of dozens of former owners. For this and for the great and selfless helpfulness of our GenTeam friends is expressly and warmly thanked!

Leibl Rosenberg, M.A.
Representative of the City of Nuremberg for the Collection IKG
In der Stadtbibliothek im Bildungscampus Nürnberg
Egidienplatz 23, Zimmer 207
90403 Nürnberg
(0049)-(0)911-231- 22588

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*** USEFUL RESOURCES BY EDWARD DAVID LUFT — A NEW WEBSITE ***

by Eli Rabinowitz

Editor—Eli Rabinowitz has added to his site a link to a website with information provided by researcher Edward David Luft. This text is an excerpt from <http://elirab.me/useful-resources-by-edward-luft-a-new-website/>, which not only provides the link I referred to, but also gives information on Edward David Luft and Eli Rabinowitz, as well as photographs.

This website contains links to two separate databases. The first is a listing of the third class railway fare from all of the train stations in Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Switzerland to le Havre and Hamburg when paid in U. S. dollars in New York or Chicago. The second database is a gazetteer of all of the locations in the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1905.

Further resources will be added to this website from time to time.

To view, click on the following link:

<http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/poznan/useful_resources.html>

The site is managed by Eli Rabinowitz.
*** LOU D. SZUCS SERVICE AWARD ANNOUNCED ***

   Editor—This is reprinted from the FGS publication The Voice. You can read it online here: <http://tinyurl.com/jycwxn4>.

September 1, 2016—During this morning’s Keynote Session at the FGS 2016 National Conference, “Time Travel: Centuries of Memories in Springfield, Illinois, we announced a new FGS award category, The “Lou D. Szucs Service Award.”

A founding leader of FGS, Lou D. Szucs has represented FGS for nearly every year of the organization’s 40-year history. Her work for Ancestry.com worked to foster collaboration and growth amongst the genealogical community. Her humanitarian efforts towards genealogy and family history have forever impacted the field and will continue to be seen for generations to come.

In response to the new award category, FGS President D. Joshua Taylor said, “Lou was one of the first leaders I met as a young genealogist. Her commitment to FGS and the genealogical community is truly awe-inspiring. The creation of this award is a true testament to her lasting legacy in the field of genealogy.”

The “Lou D. Szucs Service Award” will be presented to recognize the contributions of an individual whose positive personal influence and extraordinary service to FGS and the genealogy industry have gone above and beyond the norm, impacting the overall benefit to the genealogical community at-large and spreading the awareness of family history to the general public.

   Editor – We add our congratulations to those of all the others who have applauded this recognition for Lou. She deserves it!

*** UPCOMING EVENTS ***

Note: see also <http://eogn.wikidot.com/> for a large selection of upcoming events in the world of genealogy.

October 1, 2016

THE POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF MINNESOTA
“ELLIS ISLAND AND OTHER USEFUL WEBSITES IN YOUR GENEALOGY RESEARCH” — BOB KRASKA, PGSMN LIBRARIAN
MGS Building • 1185 N Concord St. • South St. Paul, MN
10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Bob Kraska will present Ellis Island, how to access the site online, with useful examples of what to be looking for. He will also present other useful websites in your research of the family tree.

Parking is available in the lot on the southwest end of the building.

[From an e-mail sent on behalf of the Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota.]

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Saturday, October 8, 2016

11TH ANNUAL FAMILY HISTORY FESTIVAL
SPONSORED BY THE DETROIT PUBLIC LIBRARY BURTON COLLECTION
5201 Woodward Avenue • Detroit, MI 48202
10:00 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Speakers are Thomas MacEntee and Deborah Abbott. This event is free. PGS-Michigan will have a vendor table on the lower level; come visit!

<http://www.detroitpubliclibrary.org/event/11th-annual-family-history-festival>

[From a posting by Valerie Warunek on 20 August 2016 to the Facebook Polish Genealogical Society of Michigan group]

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October 9–19, 2016

POLISH ORIGINS TOUR OF GALICIA

PolishOrigins.com has been conducting tours to the former region of Galicia for four years, and the response has been extraordinary. This year, their September tour is already booked up, but they will conduct another tour in October. You can see the itinerary and learn more here:

<http://polishorigins.com/tours/galicia-tour/>

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October 12, 2016 (ongoing, every other week)

POLISH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE
Anoka County Public Library – Columbia Heights Branch • 3939 Central Ave NE • Columbia Heights, MN (next to the Heights Theatre)
6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

The course organizers are thrilled to bring this course of instruction back into Columbia Heights,
continuing to support and grow this educational opportunity - Polish language and cultural aspects and heritage. Columbia Heights, along with NE Minneapolis, has long been considered the epicenter of the Polish Community. This course concept, originally started within Sister Cities Columbia Heights/Lomianki, Poland, has been ongoing for over 10 years, and been enjoyed by many throughout the years. You are invited to participate.

Instructor Halina Szymkowska-Hudec combines Polish Language instruction with exploration of various aspects of cultural heritage. For further information, contact Vicki Myslajek - phone 763-533-5658 (home) or 952-994-7340 (cell) or e-mail <mary.myslajek@hcmed.org>.

[From an e-mail sent on behalf of the Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota.]

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October 14–15, 2016

GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF POLAND CONFERENCE
BRZEG, POLAND

PGSCTNE President Jonathan Shea and Board Member Dorena Wasik were chosen as speakers for the annual conference of the Genealogical Society of Poland, which will take place in Brzeg. The presentations, which deal with American archival sources, will be conducted in Polish.

For further information, visit:

<http://www.genealodzy.opole.pl>

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October 15, 2016

POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN
2016 ANNUAL GENEALOGY SEMINAR

American Polish Cultural Center • 2975 E Maple Rd (15 Mile Rd) at Dequindre Rd • Troy Michigan 48083

9 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Please join us on Saturday October 15, 2016 for the PGSM annual seminar at the American Polish Cultural Center in Troy, Michigan, from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m.

We are looking forward to hearing Tim Firkowski, the Genealogy Assistant, present two talks. The first one is called “Finding the Family: Problems, Successes and Rewards.” The second talk is entitled: “Researching in Poland: Problems and Successes.”

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Also, **Kamila Mazurek**, was born in Poland and graduated from the University of Poznań, will speak to us about “**Marriage Law in the Former Prussian Partition of Poland**” and “**From Beggars to Kings**,” which covers the classes and occupations in the former Prussian Partition of Poland.

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. Registration is $65 per person and includes continental breakfast, a full Polish dinner, four presentations from two speakers and a chance at door prizes from Ancestry.

Joining us is one way to celebrate your Polish heritage during the month of October. Looking forward to seeing you there!

<http://www.pgsm.org/index.php>

[From a note posted to the Facebook page of the Polish Genealogical Society of Michigan by Valerie Warunek.]

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**October 20, 2016**

**POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF MASSACHUSETTS**

**CSI Meets Roots: Meet a Forensic Genealogist!**

**Chicopee Public Library • 449 Front Street • Chicopee, MA**

The Polish Genealogical Society of Massachusetts and the Chicopee Public Library, along with a grant from The Chicopee Cultural Council (part of The Massachusetts Cultural Council), are pleased to present an exciting program on Forensic Genealogy by hosting well-known and world famous Colleen Fitzpatrick on October 20, 2016 at the Chicopee Public Library, 449 Front Street, Chicopee, MA.

Admission is free but pre-registration is requested to ensure that there is adequate space for everyone who is interested. Please visit our website for registration information:

<http://www.PGSMA.org>

Forensic Scientists and Genealogists share the same goal – to find out who was who, and who did what and when. In explaining how to analyze photographs, to mine databases, and to use DNA analysis to reveal family history, Dr. Fitzpatrick will focus on how forensic genealogy can and has been used to solve mysteries from our family’s past.

Colleen will give two talks, one at 2 p.m. and a second at 6:30 p.m. Here are summaries of them.
2:00 p.m.: Forensic Genealogy:” The Database Detective” and “Not Just the Facts, Ma’am, Give me the Big Picture!”

Colleen has combined several of her talks into this one comprehensive lecture for us on the fundamentals of forensic genealogy and several examples of results!

Birth, marriage, and death indexes are three kinds of data familiar to even casual genealogists. But have you ever considered using Amazon or eBay to solve a genealogical mystery? And once you have found the facts you are searching for, how do you “connect the dots” to create a much more meaningful picture of your ancestors’ lives?

Individual facts only give bits of a story. For best results, it is critical to know how to knit those facts into what we call “information”. Knowing where to look something up is only the first step; knowing how to look at what you find is the real key to success.

And what about very large databases? Is there any sense is looking at a mountain of birth records if all you need is one or two? How can you harness the power of that large amount of data to reveal interesting background information on how your ancestors lived and died?

As an example of how to get the most out of your data, I take one photograph of a scene, and starting from easily recognized details in it, I gradually build a coherent story that gives insight about the “big picture.” I explain how facts, or small bits of information that individually may not seem important, can be fit together like a jigsaw puzzle, to create a picture that is much more meaningful than its individual parts.

Forensic Genealogy has used database mining to solve some of the most compelling mysteries of modern genealogy. It offers much insight on how to use data that genealogists often take for granted. Forensic genealogy will not only show you where to look for information, but more importantly how to look at it.

6:30 p.m.: “The Secrets of Abraham Lincoln’s DNA”

It has been suspected that Abraham Lincoln may have suffered from a variety of genetic disorders including a rare cancer called MEN2B. However, it is only recently that DNA testing has become available that could confirm these suspicions that until now have been based solely on Lincoln’s physical appearance and historical reports about the condition of his health.

The Abraham Lincoln DNA project is one of the first in the area of Bio-Historical research—the study of how the genetics of historical figures may have influenced the course of world history.

Our efforts to obtain a sample of Lincoln’s genome to DNA test have caused us to deal with a large variety of issues, from the ethics of genetic testing an American icon who died over a century ago, to the question of whether Lincoln could have been adopted or illegitimate. There are further issues relating to establishing the provenance of Lincoln relics that could yield the President’s nuclear DNA. To authenticate the relic, the DNA obtained must be shown to be
Lincoln’s and not to have come from contamination from others handling it over the decades. This would normally be done by comparing the mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) found on a relic to the mtDNA of a member of the extended Lincoln family who is maternally linked to the President. But this is not easy, considering Abraham Lincoln has no known living descendants, his brother and his sister died without issue, and no one knows the origins of his mother Nancy Hanks; her family has never been conclusively identified.

This talk will discuss the how we are addressing these issues, and the fascinating secrets that we have so far unlocked about Abraham Lincoln’s DNA.

PGSMA will conduct a short business meeting at 6:30 p.m., prior to the beginning of the evening lecture.

“This program is supported in part by a grant from the Chicopee Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural council, a state agency.”

[From a note sent by Joe Kielec of PGSMA]

October 22, 2016

**SEMINAR**

presented by The Polish Genealogical Society of Connecticut and the Northeast, Inc. and

The Endowed Chair of the Polish and Polish American Studies,

Central Connecticut State University

You are cordially invited to attend a seminar for **ALL RESEARCHERS** to learn about **forensic genealogy and the latest innovations in DNA analysis.**

**DATE:** Saturday, October 22, 2016

**PLACE:** Institute of Technology, Business and Development

Central Connecticut State University

100 Main Street - 3rd floor, New Britain, CT

**REGISTRATION:** 12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

**LECTURE:** A Different Kind of DNA Talk - 1:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

**REFRESHMENTS:** 3:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

**FEE:** $20.00 - Refreshments will be served
Free parking is available in the municipal garage adjacent to the lecture venue. Directions can be found at <http://www.ccsu.edu/itbd/directions.html>

LECTURE: Genealogy and the Six Degrees of Separation - How to Find Anyone in the World - 3:30 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.

Colleen Fitzpatrick, PhD, is an internationally recognized forensic genealogist, the founder of Identifinders International. As a world traveler and multi-lingual, Colleen specializes in international cases. She has researched in over 50 countries, assists nonprofits, military organizations, attorneys, and law enforcement with cold case work, forensic identification, and with locating hard-to-find individuals. Colleen has appeared in hundreds of domestic and international newspapers and magazines and on international radio and television programs.

**** Please note this event is taking place at CCSU’s downtown campus and not the main campus.

To view the Lectures, Colleen Fitzpatrick’s biography, and Registration form, please visit <http://www.pgsctne.org>

For more information, please e-mail Diane Szepanski, Seminar Chair, at <Szepanski3@cox.net>.

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October 23, 2016

FIRST EVER POLISH FESTIVAL IN DALLAS!
Klyde Warren Park • 2012 Woodall Rodgers Fwy • Dallas, Texas 75201
Noon to 9 p.m.

ADMISSION IS FREE!

A perfect outing for Polish American Heritage Month. See:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1590905774545355/>

[From a note posted by Debbie Greenlee to the Polish Genius mailing list.]

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October 23, 2016

POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK STATE
Potts Deli • 41 S. Rossler Ave. • Cheektowaga, NY
12:00 noon
The Polish Genealogical Society of New York State is having a Polish Dinner in honor of Polish Heritage Month. This dinner will also benefit our digitization project for the Dziennik dla Wszystkich newspaper, which was published in Buffalo, NY 1907-1957. We have digitized most of the microfilm for the Dziennik newspaper, but we need to raise additional funds to complete our digitization project.

The Polish dinner is Sunday, October 23, 2016 at Potts Deli, 41 S. Rossler Ave., Cheektowaga, NY. Doors open at noon. Pre-sale tickets are $15 and $17 at the door. There will also be a Chinese Auction, 50-50 split club and Raffle. The menu includes: gołąbki, pierogi, fresh and smoked Polish sausage, mashed potatoes, sweet and sour cabbage.

Tickets may be purchased online at <http://www.PGSNYS.org> or by mailing a check to PGSNYS, PO Box 984, Cheektowaga, NY 14225. For additional information, e-mail Denise Oliansky <denise.oliansky@gmail.com>.

[From an e-mail sent by Nicole Łodyga Pohancsek]

Thursdays – October 27 - November 3, 10, and 17

The Polish Center for Discovery and Learning
and
The Polish Genealogical Society of Massachusetts
present

“Genealogy for Beginners”

Four Part Class - Morning and Afternoon Sessions Available

A series of four (4) 90-120 minute classes on how to research your ancestors will be held this fall at the Polish Center for Discovery and Learning, 33 South Street in Chicopee. Admission is free, but registration is necessary.

Classes will be Thursdays Oct 27, Nov 3, 10, and 17 at 10 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

These classes are for the PGSMA and Polish Center members but open to the public.

Alan Doyle Horbal will present an introduction to genealogy along with helpful hints for conducting your research. You will learn how to use the US Census from 1850-1940 and how to find your family coming in at Ellis Island and to find relatives coming from Europe and making their way in the United States. Alan will also demonstrate international research for Poland, Galicia, Canada, and England. He will also distribute helpful handouts. Bring a notebook and a pen and start your family tree journey!

Requirements: You must be computer literate and have an e-mail address.
About the Instructor

Alan Doyle Horbal has spent over 25 years researching his Ukrainian family, which originated in Bartne, and doing research at the Polish State Archive in Przemyśl. He was a volunteer archivist at the NARA Pittsfield facility until it closed and also volunteered at the Pittsfield Athenaeum. Alan has taught genealogy classes at Williams College and throughout Massachusetts. Alan first spoke to the PGSMA in October 2003. He organized the Computer Genealogy Lab at Chicopee Public Library and is the founder and editor of the Western Massachusetts Genealogy Newsletter.

These classes are co-sponsored by the Polish Center for Discovery and Learning and the Polish Genealogical Society of Massachusetts.

REGISTER FOR EITHER A.M. OR P.M. CLASS BY GOING TO <http://www.pgsma.org/events--meetings.html>

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October 29, 2016

LECTURE ON HALLER’S POLISH ARMY IN FRANCE, PAUL S. VALASEK DDS
The Pineries Room at the Portage County Library • Stevens Point
1 p.m.

Paul Valasek, author of Haller’s Polish Army in France, will lecture on the Polish National Army during World War One on Saturday, October 29, 2016 at 1 p.m. in The Pineries Room at the Portage County Library, Stevens Point. Admission is free.

For more information, visit: <http://www.pchswi.org/>.

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November 4–5, 2016

3RD ANNUAL NASHI PREDKY FALL CONFERENCE
RESEARCH ESSENTIALS: COMBINING THE BASICS WITH 21ST CENTURY TECHNOLOGY
Ukrainian Cultural Center
135 Davidson Ave. • Somerset, NJ 08873

Online Registration: <http://ukrhec.org/nashi-predky-conference>

The 3rd Annual Nashi Predky Fall Conference - Research Essentials: Combining the Basics with 21st century Technology - will be held at the Ukrainian Cultural Center, located at 135 Davidson Avenue in Somerset, NJ. The event features nationally known experts in Eastern European genealogy, and will span two days, including a Cyrillic handwriting workshop, opportunity for document translations, and nine lectures.

On Friday evening, November 4th, participants can register from a choice of three options: a hands-on workshop on Cyrillic handwriting led by Prof. Jonathan Shea, AG; a presentation on DNA entitled “Which atDNA test is right for you?” by Shellee Morehead, CG; or an appointment for assistance with document translation(s). Space is limited for the Workshop (20 seats) and the Translation Desk (16 appointments).

The main day of the conference will be on Saturday, November 5th. Registration opens at 8 a.m. and a light continental breakfast will be available. The morning sessions start off with the presentation “I Found my Village! Now What?” by Julie Szczepankiewicz where she will suggest resources and strategies to help researchers find their ancestral village. “Now I Found It! What Does It Say?”, a linguistic overview by Prof. Jonathan Shea, AG, examines various phonetic and grammatical features of the languages encountered in Eastern European research and attendees will work through the translations of sample documents.

After a buffet luncheon featuring ethnic food, the afternoon sessions offer a dual-track option to participants.

New to the conference in 2016!

The Nashi Predky Family History Group is proud to offer a dual-track afternoon of presentations. For those wanting to strengthen their research skills, the Basics Track offers “US Alien Registration Files” by Shellee Morehead, CG; “How to Locate Those Elusive Military Records for Ancestors Who Served in the Austro-Hungarian Army” by Carl Kotlarchik; and “Finding Uncle Frank: Confirming the Identity of a U.S. Soldier Buried Under the Wrong Name” by Julie Szczepankiewicz.

The Technology Track features three presentations for those researchers wanting to add tools to
their Genealogy Toolbox: “Using Polish Language Websites for Genealogical Research in Galicia (Halychyna)” by Prof. Jonathan Shea, AG; “Genetic Genealogy (DNA) Tools” by Shellee Morehead, CG; and “UAGenealogy: Discovering Online Genealogy Resources” by Michelle Chubenko.

Take advantage of Early Bird pricing and save $10. Discount ends September 30th!

Please feel free to forward to anyone who might be interested.

* About the Family History Group at the Ukrainian Historical & Education Center *

Family History Group programming is coordinated by Mike Buryk, Michelle Tucker Chubenko, and Justin Houser, with the help of the Center’s archivist Michael Andrec and museum director Natalia Honcharenko. The goal is to help promote genealogical research and create an interest in ancestry and heritage in the former areas of the Province of Galicia, Ruthenia, Sub-Carpathian Rus and Russian Empire guberniyas which became Ukraine SSR, including descendants of ethnic groups Boykos, German-Bohemian (Bohmisch), Hutsuls, Lemkos, Moravian, Rusyns, and those of Jewish ancestry. The FHG holds two annual events which offer opportunities for researchers to get advice on preserving family records and learn about tracing their ancestry in both Ukrainian and Polish archives.

For more information, visit:

<http://www.ukrhec.org>

[From a note posted by Michelle Chubenko to various mailing lists.]

November 19, 2016

INDIAN RIVER GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
“FINDING THE MISSING PIECES OF YOUR POLISH AMERICAN FAMILY HISTORY”—JONATHAN SHEA
Indian River County Main Library • Vero Beach, FL
1 p.m.

Jonathan Shea will present a workshop entitled “Finding the Missing Pieces of Your Polish American Family History” for the Indian River Genealogical Society at the Indian River County Main Library in Vero Beach FL at 1 p.m.
For further details, see:

<http://www.irgs.org>

November 20, 2016

PGSA QUARTERLY MEETING
“HOLY COW! WHERE ARE MY POLISH CHICAGO CATHOLICS NOW?” — TERESA STEINKAMP MCMILLIN, CG
Algonquin Public Library (NW), 2600 Harnish Dr., Algonquin, IL 60102
2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Teresa Steinkamp McMillin is a Certified Genealogist who specializes in German-American and Midwest research, as well as reading German script. She has been interested in genealogy since she was a child and currently has many pleased clients. She presents quality genealogical lectures for local societies and national conferences.

This event will be held as a Webinar. For more information as it becomes available, visit the PGSA Website <http://pgsa.org/calendar/>.

July 28–29, 2017

2017 INTERNATIONAL GERMANIC GENEALOGY CONFERENCE
Minneapolis, Minnesota

This is expected to be a unique conference, organized through an international partnership of societies across the United States and Europe. Given how many people of Polish descent came from areas ruled by Germany from 1815 to 1918, this event may be worth your attention even if your ethnic identity is not primarily German.

For more developments, keep an eye on the website: <http://www.ggsmn.org/>.

*** MORE USEFUL WEB ADDRESSES ***

<http://www.przemysl.ap.gov.pl/skany>

Logan Kleinwaks posted a note to the JewishGen mailing list to explain that “The Polish State Archives in Przemyśl has posted online scans of notary records from Dębica, Dobromil, Głogów Małopolski, Kolbuszowa, Krakowiec, Leżajsk, Nisko, Piłzno, Pruchnik, Przeworsk, Radomyśl, Radymno, Ropczyce, Rozwadów, Rzeszów, Sądowa Wisznia, Sokołów Małopolski, Tarnobrzeg, Tyczyn, and Ulanów. Most of these towns were recently added and, for Rzeszów, more records were recently added. Most of the notary records date from the late 19th
to early 20th century, with some from the mid-19th century.” Some records contain wonderful genealogical information; some contain nothing useful—the only way to know is to look. And Logan warns, “If you plan to examine these records, be prepared to spend a significant amount of time looking for your names, with no guarantee of success.” He has posted some instructions at <http://genealogyindexer.org/forum/viewtopic.php?t=5016> that may prove useful.

This item from Eastman’s Online Genealogy Newsletter discusses the reasons many folks have started up blogs on WordPress. You might be interested in learning more on the subject.

As an example of the above, this is a page from Julie Roberts Szczepankiewicz’s blog that many people have found useful.

Lavrentiy (Laurence Krupnak) posted this link to the GaliciaPoland-Ukraine mailing list. It takes you to a website with an impressive selection of dictionaries offering help with various languages to and from Russian, including English, Belarusian, German, and Ukrainian. You need to be able to read the Cyrillic alphabet to use it, of course.

Lavrentiy also posted this link listing some terms used in Galicia that may be unfamiliar.

Valerie Warunek posted this link to the Facebook group Polish Culture, Food and Traditions. It takes you to a page on the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries website with an introduction to the Milwaukee Polonia by John Gurda.

Valerie also posted this link to a YouTube video she found, about the Polish community in Ohio. Marlene Hardman discusses cooking for large groups of people in the Toledo area; and Rosemary Chorzempa, author of Polish Roots, is interviewed in the video.

One more link Valerie posted was this one, providing info about Polish Language, Literature, and Culture courses at Wayne State University.
Jan Meisels Allen posted a note to the JewishGen newsgroup mentioning that Jewish Heritage Europe announced three travel apps of potential interest to those planning ancestral trips to Białystok, Poland; to Lithuania; or to Venice, Italy. Above is the Google Play link for the Białystok app; it is also available from iTunes at <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/jewish-heritage-trail-in-bialystok/id1146480688?mt=8>. You can read more about the app at <http://tinyurl.com/z43xqdb>.

Jan also posted this link to a free research guide offered by Ancestry on how to find Canadian ancestors on their website. You can download the guide at the above URL.

Debbie Greenlee posted this link to the Polish Genius mailing list, warning that it includes some profanity. I have to admit, I laughed a lot while watching this brief parody of *Who Do You Think You Are?*

For those of you who think rewriting history is a bad thing, the link Bronwyn Klimach posted to the Polish Genius list is interesting. It seems the Russian Supreme Court upheld the conviction of a Russian blogger who dared claim that the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany invaded Poland in 1939. At one point, the article states that according to the Russian Supreme Court, a paragraph in his blog constitutes “the public denial of the Nuremberg Trials and circulation of false information about the activities of the USSR during the years of the Second World War.” That paragraph read: “The communists and Germany jointly invaded Poland, sparking off the Second World War. That is, communism and Nazism closely collaborated, yet for some reason they blame Bandera who was in a German concentration camp for declaring Ukrainian independence.”

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