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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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**NEW LAW ON POLISH VITAL RECORDS**

*by Tony Kahane*

Editor—A great deal of attention online has been generated by a recent revamping of the Polish laws on vital records and civil registries. Gary Mokotoff wrote about it in the July 13, 2014 issue of *Nu? What’s New?* Pamela Weisberger, President of Gesher Galicia, posted timely information on the status of the changes to the JewishGen newsgroup. The Jewish Genealogical Society of Toronto posted information, including Pamela’s updates, on its site. And Debbie Greenlee contacted me, Dick Eastman, the Polish Museum of America in Chicago, and some genealogical societies in Poland, to pass along the same info. Pamela Weisberger emphasized particularly a couple of clauses in drafts that would affect researchers. When I wrote to ask her for more information, she put me in touch with Tony Kahane, who is coordinating Gesher Galicia’s efforts to persuade Polish lawmakers to make changes that will benefit researchers. Tony, who intends to go to Warsaw soon to discuss the matter with government officials, kindly sent this summary of the situation. I wanted to pass it along because this could affect genealogical researchers, and Tony feels there is still time to make changes before the law goes into effect. Thank you, Tony!

The bill – *Prawo o Aktach Stanu Cywilnego*

This was approved by the Council of Ministers on July 15, with no significant changes, relating to the withholding periods for vital records, from the earlier text. It was then sent to Parliament—in the first instance, to a subcommittee that will examine it in detail and be able to make changes in the bill’s provisions. Some time in the Fall, from September onwards, the bill will go to the full House for debate. It is intended to become law on January 1, 2015.

Please note one small change, however. Online commentary on this bill referred to four Clauses relevant to genealogical organizations: Clauses 28, 50, 126, and 127. The first two remain unchanged, both in wording and numbering. But the Clause numbered 126 in previous drafts is now 127, and what was Clause 127 before is now Clause 128. The change affects only the numbering of those two Clauses; their wording remains unchanged. But this change could confuse anyone who reads material referring to the numbering as seen in the previous draft.

While it was expected, unfortunately, that the Council of Ministers would not make any significant changes, there is now a good opportunity for organizations and individuals to present their comments, in the realistic hope that the bill can be improved.

**Online comments to the Committee**

There is an online facility for organizations and individuals to send their letters to this parliamentary subcommittee, at:


The procedure is simple. A screen shot of how the page might be filled out appears below. I know
this is quite unnecessary for those who speak good Polish, but it may help readers who don’t know any Polish.

The name of the law—Prawo o Aktach Stanu Cywilnego—should go as a heading on any letter or other communication. People could also include a sub-heading, to make clear what particular issue is being discussed, such as “Okresy przechowywania ksiąg metrykalnych” (“Withholding periods for vital records”), as shown in the sample page image. If individuals write, they could either put “N/D” (“not applicable”) in the field for the name of the institution, or they might want to put something like “person of Polish descent,” “person of Polish Jewish descent,” or “member of Polish genealogical organization.” For those who don’t speak Polish, the button “Załącznik” is for uploading and adding attachments, and “Wysyłanie listu” is the button for sending off the message when it is complete. “Anuluj” cancels what has been entered.

The letter to be attached is, of course, the important thing. This could be (preferably) in the form of a pdf file, or else as a Word document. For organizations, it would be useful if they could use a letterhead at the top of the first page. There should, of course, be a personal name or names (and titles within the organization) given at the end of the letter; but there is no point in adding electronic signatures, as these have no validity in Poland. [One can omit signatures, unless the letter is sent in hard copy, through the post.] Letters are acceptable in English; but if they can be done in Polish, then so much the better.
Organizations should try to use and quote their “official” organizational e-mail addresses (where these exist), rather than private e-mail addresses.

If groups or individuals have already sent a letter, for instance to the Ministry of Information, on this subject, they are free to use exactly the same text, with modifications only as necessary, such as the name of the addressee. However, please note the change of clause numbering mentioned in the second paragraph of this article, and make any necessary changes to the text of an earlier letter.

**Letters to individual Committee members**

The list of Committee members is given at:


From the web page itself, you can click on individual names, for biographical details of each committee member. The 11 committee members, with their e-mail addresses*, are as follows:

Marek Wójcik <Marek.Wojcik@sejm.pl>
Janusz Dzięcioł <Janusz.Dzieciol@sejm.pl>
Roman Kaczor <Roman.Kaczor@sejm.pl>
Józef Lassota <Jozef.Lassota@sejm.pl>
Konstanty Ościęcimski <Konstanty.Oswieciimski@sejm.pl>
Piotr Polak <Piotr.Polak@sejm.pl>
Jacek Sasin <Jacek.Sasin@sejm.pl>
Krystyna Ozga <Krystyna.Ozga@sejm.pl>
Edward Siarka <Edward.Siarka@sejm.pl>
Cezary Olejniczak <Cezary.Olejniczak@sejm.pl>
Henryk Kmiecik <Henryk.Kmiecik@sejm.pl>

[*Note that in the e-mail addresses, no Polish diacritics or accents are used.]*

The Chair is Marek Wójcik, of the ruling Civic Platform party. The two deputy chairs are Krystyna Ozga (PSL) and Jacek Sasin (PiS). The first five people listed above are all from the Civic Platform party (Platforma Obywatelska, PO); the next two (Polak and Sasin) are from the Law and Justice party (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS). Ozga is from the Polish People’s Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe, PSL); Siarka from Sprawiedliwa Polska (“Fair Poland”, SP – an offshoot from PiS that will go back with PiS at the next election); Olejniczak from the Democratic Left Alliance (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratyczne, SLD); and Kmiecik from “Your Movement” (Twój Ruch, TR).

It would be good if people could also write individually to each Committee member. The letter can be exactly the same as that filed online to the Committee, as described above, with just the obvious details (name of addressee, etc) changed. The letter can be sent, by e-mail attachment, to the addresses of the committee members. Again, letterheaded paper and the use of organizational e-mail addresses would be useful – and, where this is possible, letters in Polish.
The Prime Minister

It is thought that it would be particularly helpful if organizations, at least (and individuals if they want to), could also write to the Prime Minister, Donald Tusk. There are two departments where comments to him can be sent. The most appropriate one for organizations such as yours and ours would be one devoted to “international dialogue” [Biuro Pełnomocnika Prezesa Rady Ministrów Międzynarodowego]. See the screen shot above for details of the e-mail address and website. This department is apparently particularly involved in Polish-Jewish/Polish-Israeli relations, as well as Polish-German relations (as it says in the screen shot); but it is also the office with which all international organizations should be dealing.

Our organizations may want to keep a note the details of this department in the Prime Minister’s office, for issues that arise in future.

e-mail: <bpdm@kprm.gov.pl>

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*** LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ***

Subject: Polish Military Units

Pozdrowienie,

In the May issue of *Gen Dobry!*, Gerhard Jene requested information on two Signal Battalions of the Polish Army pre-war. This topic interests me, as an uncle served in the Telephone Platoon of the 3rd Infantry Regiment (pulk Piechoty) in the Polish Soviet War.

Perhaps these sites will be of interest to Mr. Jene.
ŁĄCZNOŚCIOWE KARTY HISTORII CZ. I
ŁĄCZNOŚCIOWCY I ABSOLWENCI ZEGRZA ZAMORDOWANI W KATYNIU
Information on Communications personnel murdered at Katyń. There is one from the First Battalion: ppor. Tadeusz JUNG and two from the Fourth: ppor. Stanisław OWCZAREK, and ppor. Tadeusz Marian Władysław MYSYROWICZ. There may be more in the other volumes, which I was unable to locate.

A searchable database of Polish victims of Soviet actions, including Katyń.

Changes to Army Communication Organization 1935-1936.

Army Communications Interwar.

1 Grupa Łączności, in which 1 Batalion Telegraficzny (Zegrze), and 4 Batalion Telegraficzny (Brześć n Bugiem) belonged.

Information on 1 Batalion Telegraficzny.

Pictures of 4 Batalion Telegraficzny (Przemyśl).

Home page of: ŚWIATOWY ZWIĄZEK POLSKICH ŻOŁNIERZY ŁĄCZNOŚCI
International Association of Polish Communications Soldiers
There is more information besides that already linked.
Email: szpzl.zegrze@gmail.com

I expect that they can provide specific information about the communication units and personnel, pre- and during World War II.

An interesting topic.

Henry Szot

Editor—Thank you for taking the time to answer. I was not able to give Mr. Jene much useful information; but I thought it likely at least one of our readers would be able to tell us of resources that might help answer his questions, and others’.

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*** JULY UPDATE FROM POLISHORIGINS ***

by Agnieszka Pawlus and the PolishOrigins Team

July was a busy month for our whole PolishOrigins Team!

As we are in the middle of the touring season, there have been many emotional family meetings, hours of research in the archives, and miles spent along the way with our dearest guests.

Apart from the current events, we are continuing to work on the future of PolishOrigins. We have already planned the dates of **PO Galicia Tour in 2015**:

- May 10-20
- Sep 6-16
- Oct 4-14

If you make reservations by the end of 2014, you will only pay 5,900 Polish zlotys, total fee, for the whole package of the PO Galicia Tour in 2015.


There is still an opportunity to join the PO Galicia Tour in September and October 2014. This year we have prepared something special for our guests. On one of the evenings, Magdalena, who is a member of PolishOrigins Team, will show you a short presentation on bobbin lace. You will have the occasion to try your hand at making some simple patterns!

Magdalena prepared this video, showing how she made her doily from her favorite pattern:

<http://youtu.be/oKjzsSnVpEE>

There are still openings available for both September and October dates. Find more information on PO Galicia Tour website:

<http://polishorigins.com/document/galicia_tour>

In 2015, we want to offer you the “**Kingdom of Poland Tour**,” which will take place in the area of the former Congress Poland, and will be dedicated to all our guests whose forefathers came from this Russian partition. More details about this new tour will be published soon!

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* Maybe you are planning to come to Poland, but you do not know how to start?

* Maybe you would like to be independent, and not part of a tour group.

* Maybe you have some special desires, and wish to have a tailor-made tour, designed especially for you?
* Maybe you are not sure what to see, where to stay, how to organize your tour?

Send us your request and we will gladly prepare an itinerary suggestion for you. Fill the simple tour request form and see what we can offer you: <http://polishorigins.com/tour/po_family_and_friends_tour_itinerary-example.pdf>. See our exemplary itinerary of Family and Friends Tour. Remember: it costs you nothing and does not oblige you to book our tour!

You can read about one of our latest Family and Friends tours on PolishOrigins Blog.

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Apart from our tours, we cannot forget about our dear Forum members and all of you who are researching family history, using our databases, and the precious help of our volunteer experts! We continue to work on our Indexation Project. Thanks to the regular help of Joann, we already have about half of all our Russian records translation indexed! Joann, thank you again!!!

We received many questions concerning the indexing process (and still I invite you to write all your remarks here, or to the email: <index@polishorigins.com>).

To answer those questions, and make the indexation easier for all of you, we have prepared the short video tutorial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sO8fyk2rlLI>.

Some of you share with us indexes of records from your own family research. We want to confirm that we welcome also indexes of records from outside of PO Forum and will make them available for everyone on the main Indexation page: <http://bit.ly/po_indexation>.

Greetings from Poland!

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*** PGSA WEBMASTER NEEDED ***

by Debbie Greenlee

Editor—Debbie posted this note to the Polish Genius and Poland Roots mailing list.

The PGSA is in need of a webmaster. PGSA is the largest Polish genealogical society in the U.S., headquartered in Chicago.

PGSA is looking for someone with knowledge of website design and technical operations to handle the duties of webmaster and/or chair the Website Committee. If you possess or know of anyone who has the interest and skills for running the website or being a member of the Website Committee, please contact President, David Lewandowski to learn more and/or to volunteer!!

You can contact David by e-mail at <dflewandowski@comcast.net>.

Editor—Tom Flis and James Piechorowski have provided PGSA’s website with
much-needed stability and competence for several years. But they’ve served their hitch, and now someone else needs to step up. If you have the necessary skills, please consider contacting David and seeing if you would like to take on these duties.

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*** MARK YOUR PHOTO’S SUBJECTS ***

Long-time researcher James Tye recently posted a note to the Facebook page of the Polish Genealogical Society of Michigan. He wrote: “This is a topic which never has been discussed to my knowledge. I am asking everyone to mark who your photo’s subject is. Dig out your photo albums or picture boxes and do not hesitate to write down as soon as possible. For example: I have a photograph taken in 1948 at my parents’ wedding. I know a few of the people who stood up for the wedding, but the majority I do not. Nobody ever identified these people who stood up. All the older generation is gone in my family, so there is no one to turn to.”

He makes a very good point, one easily overlooked. The one thing I would suggest caution about is what you use to mark the photos. There is a danger that some markers might bleed through, smear, or otherwise prove unsatisfactory. But if you Google “mark photos safely,” there are a number of web pages that address this concern, such as the following:

<http://www.familytreemagazine.com/article/How-to-Safely-Mark-Your-Photos>  

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*** UPCOMING EVENTS ***

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

August 8–10, 2014

TWIN CITIES POLISH FESTIVAL  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

The Twin Cities Polish Festival is a non-profit organization created to bring a world-class celebration of Polish culture and heritage to the Twin Cities. It also helps promote various community-service and Polish-American organizations.

The Twin Cities Polish Festival will immerse Minnesotans and visitors in “all things Polish,” presenting a kaleidoscope of unique cultural and educational displays, food and top-notch entertainment.

Bring a blanket, take a seat on the lawn along the Old Main Street in Minneapolis, visit with friends, watch outstanding musical and dance entertainment, enjoy traditional foods and
beverages, and just simply have fun! You’ll see for yourself why Poland has earned itself the reputation as one of the world’s most hospitable cultures.

For more information, visit the website:

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

[From the website and an e-mail sent by Virginia Babczak (family originally Babczakiewicz from Nowy Targ). Thanks, Virginia!]

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August 10, 2014

PGSA QUARTERLY MEETING

“THE 1944 WARSAW UPRISING: ITS LEGACY FOR POLAND”
Polish Museum of America, 984 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, Illinois

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, one of the most heroic and tragic events in modern history. The goal of this short presentation is twofold: to present the Warsaw Uprising in a historical context, and to assess its broad legacy for Poland and the world. Marek Suszko is a Polish-American historian. He teaches Polish and European history at Loyola University Chicago. His research focuses on Polish history, including the history of socialism and modern Poland, and he is currently working on his book on Polish history from 1945 to 1956.

There is plenty of parking and it’s free! Public transportation is available. Take the CTA 56 Milwaukee Avenue bus to Augusta or take the Blue Line to Chicago Avenue or Division Street.

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August 12–15, 2014

FEFEHS ANNUAL EASTERN EUROPEAN RESEARCH WORKSHOP
Plaza Hotel, Salt Lake City, Utah

This annual workshop focuses on the records, tools, and methodologies needed to conduct research in Eastern European records, online, in microfilm, and on site. Additional Research Essentials track provides skills and background. Country tracks to include Germany, Poland, Russia, and more. Opens with an orientation of the Family History Library; closes with a banquet and keynote speaker. Includes individual consultation. Call for presentations soon going out. Full details on schedule and registration will be accessible from the FEEFHS home page at <http://feefhs.org/>.

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August 21–24, 2014
CONVENTION OF THE SOCIETY FOR GERMAN GENEALOGY IN EASTERN EUROPE
Coast Plaza Hotel and Conference Centre
1316 - 33rd St.
Calgary, Alberta
CANADA

For information on this convention, visit this website: <https://www.sggee.org/convention/convention_news.html>. Note that you are urged to book your room prior to July 22, 2014, to ensure rate and availability.

[From EEGS Genealogical Sources and Tips, sent out to members of the East European Genealogical Society]

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August 27–30, 2014

FEDERATION OF GENEALOGICAL SOCIETIES CONFERENCE 2014
Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center
San Antonio, Texas

Join us August 27-30, 2014, as together we experience four days of genealogical learning, networking, and discovery, deep in the heart of Texas. Our local co-hosts for 2014 are the Texas State Genealogical Society and the San Antonio Genealogical and Historical Society. Together we will continue our tradition of providing exceptional educational opportunities for genealogists from across the nation and beyond. (The Polish Mission is sponsoring the Polish track, and a special trip to Panna Maria, the first Polish parish and community in the U.S.)

For more info, see the Conference website: <https://www.fgsconference.org/>.

[from Ceil Jensen]

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October 18, 2014

POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN ANNUAL SEMINAR OCTOBER 18, 2014
American Polish Cultural Center, 2975 East Maple Rd. Troy, MI
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Robert Sliwinski, MS, biologist and genetic genealogist will present a talk on the Basics of DNA. Robert will go over the different types of tests available from different companies, compare the newest tests and prices and provide recommendations for what test to take to provide beneficial results for genealogical research.
Interpreting DNA Results: You have your DNA test results...now what? Robert will show through case studies the steps to take to interpret your DNA results. Join Robert as he presents interpretation of some PGSM members DNA results and other case studies. Robert is a member of the International Society of Genetic Genealogists and spoke to the PGSM group in April, 2013. He is a volunteer administrator for three Family Tree DNA projects and started his own company called DNA EXPLORERS.

Kamila Mazurek will present two talks. The first one is called “Doktor Housowski, M.D.” Have you ever wondered how your Polish Ancestors died? Is it possible to deduce cause of death just by looking at the photographs of your ancestors? Is it true your ancestors died because they did not wash their hands and refused to cut their hair? How to determine the cause of death without its name in the death records? How to trace and catch ... Death. Join Kamila on a death hunt for the “serial killers” of our Ancestors’ times.

The second talk is called “Clicking With Your Polish Ancestors.” Take advantage of millions of Polish vital and church records on the Internet. Explore the most popular genealogical databases covering all three former partitions of Poland. Search the Polish digital libraries for addresses, phone books, maps, census records, newspapers, periodical literature on genealogy and heraldry. Learn what treasures are waiting for you at the state and church archives in Poland.

Join us for a fun-filled day at the American Polish Cultural Center in Troy. Download the registration form from Facebook, or register online from our store: <http://pgsm.org/forsale.php>. For more information, simply visit <http://www.pgsm.org>.

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October 25, 2014

UKRAINIAN HISTORICAL AND EDUCATIONAL CENTER OF NEW JERSEY
НАШІ ПРЕДКИ (NASHE PREDKY) — “OUR ANCESTORS”
2014 Family History Group Conference
8:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Ukrainian Cultural Center
135 Davidson Avenue. Somerset, NJ 08873
$55 ($45 by October 3)

• Galicia: An Introduction to the Austro-Hungarian Province
• The Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in L’viv
• DNA and Eastern European Ancestry
• Q&A Panel: Breaking Down Your Brick Wall Ancestor

featuring experts: Matthew Bielawa, Angie Bush, Michael Buryk, and Michelle Chubenko

<http://www.ukrhec.org/family-history-group>
From a post by Michelle Tuchker Chubenko to the GaliciaPoland-Ukraine mailing list

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*** MORE USEFUL WEB ADDRESSES ***

Tim Firkowski posted a note to Facebook’s Polish Genealogy page, giving this link and calling it “great news.” For those who aren’t fluent in Polish, it says that the Małopolskie Genealogy Society and Genealogia Polaków have formed an ad hoc group, directed by Dr. Przemysław Stanko of the Department of Archivistics, University of John Paul II. The goal is to secure, inventory, and digitize parish registers discovered in an old closet. The group will announce exactly where the records are from later, but their volunteer efforts will make the records available to researchers. The materials are an almost complete set of records from 1720, with a gap for 1887-1913, as well as other items, such as cadastral records from the 19th century. One of the comments points out that this work is possible because the parish priest recognized the historical importance of the documents and wanted to make sure they aren’t lost. Given how many priests can’t be bothered with such concerns, this good father deserves praise and gratitude.

In a note to the JewishGen newsgroup, Phyllis Kramer agreed with a comment by Pam Weisberger of Gesher Galicia (<http://maps.geshergalicia.org/>) on how valuable detailed maps can be to genealogical researchers. Phyllis added, “I would like to point out another set of maps which are very detailed and easy to use, from the Lemko Site...to quote: ‘These are high resolution [100,000:1] maps of the southeastern corner of Poland, with a small encroachment into Ukraine and the Slovak Republic. These maps were recently released for public use by the Headquarters of the Polish Army, Carthographic Division, Warsaw 1994....” The main map is at the URL given above; click on any square to get a detailed map of that area. “It’s very easy to see the towns around, the relative sizes of the towns (houses are marked), the roads connecting the towns and the landscape (rivers, parks). The symbols on the map (e.g., religious buildings, gas stations, castles, museums) are explained at <http://www.lemko.org/maps100/legend.jpg>.”

This June 25 article from Eastman’s Online Genealogy Newsletter (EOGN) offers information on a way to publish an e-book from Google Drive. It is getting easier and easier to publish books that no regular publisher would touch because the sales won’t justify the expense. But if passing along the info is what you care about, not making money, you can go the self-publishing route. It requires time and effort to learn how; but there are huge advantages.
Another EOGN article gave this link to a free template to create a five-generation family tree chart in Excel. It’s very simple, and you have to input the data yourself. But the chart it produces is rather elegant and easy to read.

Eastman also mentioned the availability of a beta version of Relative History, a Windows 8 genealogy app that you can download and test. Apparently the app is free while it’s being tested. The link above will tell you more.

Another EOGN article talked of plans for the U.S. National Archives to upload all its holdings to the Wikimedia Commons division of Wikipedia. The link above takes you to The Signpost, a Wikipedia-hosted publication, to learn more. You can also read more in the Open Government Plan 2014-2016, which you can download and read at http://www.archives.gov/open/open-government-plan-3.0.pdf.

On the LithGen mailing list, “rgiedriu@takas.lt” posted a note giving this link to an online version of the Lietuvių pavardžių žodynas, Lithuanian Surname Dictionary, published in the 1980s under the editorship of Aleksandras Vanagas. The print books are difficult to find, so it’s great news that this information is now accessible on the Web. Siga Pliodzinskas added a follow-up: “Since the website is in Lithuanian only, here are a few pointers. When you log in you will have to click on ‘Sutinku’ (‘I agree’) button, meaning that you agree not to download or publish the data for commercial purposes. Then you can type in your surname, but it should be with all the proper Lithuanian characters: ąčęėįšųūž. When your surname info opens up, all the locations where the surname was registered in the 1950s will be abbreviations. To crack the abbreviations you will need to click on ‘Sutrumpinimai’ at the top of the page, then on ‘Gyvenamuju vietu vardu sutrumpinimai.’”

Debbie Greenlee posted notes to several mailing lists, praising the video Fourth Partition, or Czwarta Dzielnica, winner of the 25th annual Polish Film Festival in America, 2013. She said it does a fine job of examining Polish life in America, and she liked a comparison between the housing situations in New York and Chicago. You can learn more about the film at the above website.

Lavrentiy Krupnak mentioned this site on the GaliciaPoland-Ukraine mailing list. He said it’s an Austro-Hungarian military personnel records discussion which has been updated.
often. Many researchers have a terrible time finding info on relatives who served in the Austro-Hungarian military, and every bit of helpful info is needed.

<http://feefhs.org/journal/9/blodgett.pdf>

In another post on Austro-Hungarian military service that Walter Nelson posted, he said this PDF by Steven W. Blodgett, AG, MLS, also offers useful information on how to use military records.

<http://thenews.pl/1/9/Artykul/175480,UK-historian-Norman-Davies-granted-Polish-citizenship>

Many of you are surely familiar with Norman Davies, a historian who has done much to chronicle Poland’s history for English-speaking readers. Bronwyn Klimach posted this URL earlier this month, linking to a story on how Davies was granted Polish citizenship — not something that happens every day! Bronwyn also included links to a couple of articles in which Davies expresses his views: <http://thenews.pl/1/6/Artykul/174660,Norman-Davies-Jaruzelski-played-positive-role-in-late-80s> and <http://thenews.pl/1/6/Artykul/173499,Norman-Davies-on-PolishBritish-relations>. Thanks, Bronwyn!

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