



Gen Dobry!

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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>>

*** KEEP IT SHORT AND TO THE POINT! ***

by Fred Hoffman <wfh@langline.org>

In the last issue of *Gen Dobry!*, I talked briefly about a development that has surprised me somewhat: the growing usefulness of Facebook for researchers. The experiences of this last month have served only to confirm what I said then. I've seen an impressive number of people ask specific questions or upload scans of documents that baffled them, and get answers to their questions within hours or even minutes. I have seen the same thing on various genealogical mailing lists over the last few years. Prompt online help from knowledgeable volunteers—and even some professionals—is no longer rare. It doesn't happen just on Facebook; it also is becoming common on mailing lists, and has long been common in newsgroups.

I have also noticed another phenomenon on Facebook and mailing lists, one a bit less positive. People ask questions online, and proceed to receive all kinds of responses that don't really answer their questions. It's almost as if everyone wants to play expert, and they think that the way to do it is by slinging all kinds of stuff on the wall to see what sticks.

One example happened just this morning. I noticed a lady posted a note saying her family came from the general area of “Wielen/Drawztko”; but she had also encountered some documents that mentioned people from “Helst.” She'd had no luck finding this place, and wondered if anyone could point it out to her. Within hours, she had four different notes from a lady who was trying to be helpful, giving her information on Wieleń and Drawsko, the Polish name of the village Germans called Dratzig. Two of the responses included citations of Polish Wikipedia pages on Wieleń and on Drawsko gmina. After a little while, a note appeared from the lady who asked the question originally, saying “But I'm looking for where ‘Helst’ is.” She had received four responses, and not one of them answered her question!

The frustrating thing is, one of those answers was a step in the right direction. The Polish Wikipedia page on Drawsko gmina has an option at the bottom that allows you to show a listing of the localities in that gmina. Click on it, and right away you see, among the places listed, a link to an entry on the village of Chełst in Wielkopolskie voivodeship. Anyone with a little knowledge of Polish knows that these days, *Ch* and *H* are pronounced the same. It is not at all unusual to see spelling variations that switch the two: a name starting with *Ch-* may sometimes show up starting with *H-*, and vice versa, especially in older records. So it is not difficult to recognize that “Helst” is a plausible variant spelling of “Chełst.” If you then look up “Chełst” in any of a number of sources, including Wikipedia, you see that is the village three miles west of Drawsko. Bingo!

Now in all fairness, the lady who posted those four responses may have thought she had answered the question. She pointed to the Wikipedia page on Drawsko gmina, where one could find the key information. But even on that page, actually spotting the key info required a little digging. She didn't spell out the answer, and that's really what was needed, instead of confusing the poor researcher with lots of info that didn't really quite get the job done.

Please understand me: I do NOT want to gripe at anyone who is kind enough to offer help. A willingness to help others is noble and praiseworthy! But I keep seeing instance where people who wish to help, really don't, because they don't get to the heart of the matter. They actually end up frustrating the people who need assistance. I think perhaps the best advice is simple: if you don't know the answer, keep quiet!

And while I'm at it, please don't post entire pages from Wikipedia online! I realize Wikipedia is a handy source to cite, readily available and more reliable than some will admit. But all you have to do is give the URL of the page in question, maybe point out a sentence or two. Why quote the whole damn thing when all we have to do is click on the link and read it for ourselves?

Clutter, clutter, clutter. These days, clutter is becoming a big problem in many areas of life, and especially online. So much information has become available, it's hard to wade through it all, to separate the kernel of wheat from the tons of chaff. I think we all need to commit to reducing clutter.

And before anyone else points it out, I recognize that I need to take my own advice. I have posted some awfully long and tortuous notes online. These days, I make a conscious effort to save the wordy commentary for those poor souls who innocently ask me in private e-mail for an answer to a question. If I post something publicly, I make a conscious effort not to stray from the main point. But I, too, am an offender, and I have resolved to reform.

So my advice, meant to be kind and constructive, not critical, is this: let's all try hard to stick to the point! If you don't know the answer to a question, don't insist on proving it.

***** LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *****

Subject: Don't Dismiss Facebook Too Quickly!

Editor—My article suggesting genealogists may find Facebook more useful than they expected prompted this enthusiastic response.

I love the first item. I have been trying to get the members of both PGSCTNE and PGSMA to use Facebook and not much of a response. I gave a 3-5 minute pitch for it and the PGSCTNE FB page at the conference last October and don't think that anyone clicked "Like" on our page because of my pitch.

I have 22 first cousins in Poland with some on FB, but most of their children on FB. I learn almost immediately of marriages and births. Pictures are posted and I can update the family tree almost immediately.

Hope you get some converts and thanks for sending this to me.

Bernie Olender

Editor—I'm very glad you liked the article, Bernie. For those who don't know, Bernie is very active on Facebook, especially in connection with PGSCCTNE's page. He's absolutely right about the immediacy of sharing material on Facebook. I would add that you might be surprised how many results you can get from searching for people with specific names. There are quite a few Poles on Facebook, and it can be a great way to find people who share your name and might be able to give you a great source of quick info!

Subject: We Helped Make a Connection!

Editor—I love receiving notes like this one.

Thanks to an article in one of your e-zine, I am now in contact with a gentleman in Poland, Mr. Aleksander Adam Kopiński, who is helping me editing my family tree!

Mr. Kopiński created a page for my grandfather, Czesław Jan Kaden. All this is very exciting and allowed me to find out that I have many relatives in Poland!

If there's anything I can do to help, please let me know. I speak French and Italian (+ English of course!)

To explain more, I live in Italy and since a few months there's a new TV Channel, sponsored by publishing house Feltrinelli, that broadcasts Who Do You Think You Are? Seeing all those people finding stories about their ancestors was another kick to know more about mine. So, looking for a site about genealogy search in Poland, I found yours, and the e-zine, and so it started. (I had already started the tree a few years ago, but got to a wall. Now there's a breach ... now, maybe too many cousins and relatives!!)

I think you should stress the fact that now with the Internet and the fact that so many documents have been digitalized, research has become much easier as well communications with people far away. For example, I knew that one of my great uncles had opened a sanatorium for children in Rabka. So I wrote to the tourist office there; several weeks later, a lady replied, giving me the e-mail of this great uncle's grandson. (Unfortunately he does not speak so much English and I don't speak Polish, so our exchange is somewhat limited). So, trying sometimes gives good results!

Good luck and congratulations for this excellent work.

Patricia Kaden
Cremona (Italy)

Editor—I'm delighted to hear we were able to help. And Mr. Kopiński is the kind of contact we all dream of making. By the way, take a look at Patricia's website, <http://www.cremonatravel.com/index_gb.html>, and tell me she doesn't have a great life!

***** POLISHORIGINS TRANSLATION INDEXING PROJECT *****

Editor—Here's a recent update from Agnieszka Pawlus of PolishOrigins on their recently inaugurated project for indexing translations.

After several weeks of developing and shaping the idea of the project, we finally started the indexation of the translated records from our Forum.

Our wonderful translators in the Russian, Polish and Latin translations' threads voluntarily help hundreds of us sharing their unique skills, polished by years of experience, to help us in uncovering what is hidden behind these mysterious texts, recorded more than 100 years ago. They shed light on our family history without expecting anything in return. Thanks to them, hundreds of us have their family records translated.

We have growing number of original records uploaded and deciphered in our Forum. This means that they may be potentially useful for others if they were used in their family research, not only through our Forum but also if we contributed them to one of the digitization projects.

We officially launched this Monday and we already have more than 500 records indexed (the number was updated just before sending out this email). See the up-to-date effects on the Indexation Database page here: <http://bit.ly/po_indexation>. Big thank you to Joann, Megan, Valerie, Gilberto, and Richard for making a great start on the project.

All details of the project are available on our Forum:

<<http://forum.polishorigins.com/viewtopic.php?t=2387>>

Instructions on indexing are here: <<http://polishorigins.com/document/indexation>>

We invite you join the indexation project. By doing even a few indexes we can pay back to our translators and pay forward to the whole community of Polish genealogy researchers.

We are receiving questions about making indexes of records which are not translated in the PO Forum. So we do confirm: **indexes of records and translations that you have done by yourself or translations from other sources (groups) are welcomed!** In fact we already have dozens such indexes in the PO Indexation database.

Aga, Zenon & PolishOrigins Team

***** UPCOMING EVENTS *****

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

May 1–6, 2014

UNITED POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETIES (UPGS) CONFERENCE

Salt Lake City

Plaza Hotel in downtown Salt Lake City (steps away from the world-renowned Family History Library and historic Temple Square).

122 West South Temple

Salt Lake City, UT 84101

(800) 366-3684

While looking for information about Salt Lake City recently, I found a brochure which calls the city “The Genealogy Capital of the World.” That may sound like bragging but it is a true statement when just a visit to one of its buildings -- the Family History Library -- can provide access to a long list of U.S. records and indexes: census, passenger lists, naturalizations . . . the list is endless! And, of course, it doesn’t stop at the U.S. border but flows on and on to include Canada, Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Under one roof you have the ability to reference enough information to trace many lifetimes. The data is in various forms -- not just the books and periodicals you would find in most libraries -- but microfilm, microfiche, and best of all in recent years, digital format.

But having the material is just part of this genealogy miracle. There is equipment to read and copy your findings and, most importantly, the library is staffed by people willing to help you and with the skills to do so; whether it is finding or reading a record or providing translation help, if it is in another language (Polish Maybe?).

If you’ve never been to the Family History Library or have some brick walls to climb in your own research, a trip to Salt Lake City should be something you put on your “To-Do” list. Life is short! But the list of resources at the Family History Library grows longer each day. Put them to work for you now!

P.S. Many of your fellow Polish Researchers will be there. Make joining them the research highlight of 2014. The PGSA website <<http://www.pgsa.org>> and the *PGSA Notebook* will continue to post details.—Rosalie Lindberg

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Plaza Hotel (next door to the Library)

122 West South Temple

Salt Lake City, UT 84101

(800) 366-3684

Online registration is now open: <<http://upgsconference2014.eventbrite.com/>>.

A copy of the Conference brochure can be downloaded from <<http://pgsa.org/2014UPGS/>>.

[From recent issues of *PGSA Notebook*]

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**May 3, 2014**

**WASHINGTON DC FAMILY HISTORY CENTER GENEALOGY CONFERENCE  
Kensington, Maryland**

Among the events at this conference will be two presentations by Tom Sadauskas. Here are his descriptions of their contents.

**How Your Ancestors Came to America and Tips for Finding Their Records (1890-1950)**

Tom Sadauskas

Every family with immigrant ancestors has stories of how their family first arrived in America. Many of these stories contain grains of truth as well as unsubstantiated myths. This presentation looks at the immigration process as well as: factors that cause emigration; emigration routes and means of travel; dispelling the “names were changed at Ellis Island” myth; locating an ancestral village; record sources including those for displaced persons.

**Your Frequent Flier Ancestors**

Tom Sadauskas

One-little known immigration phenomenon is that of multiple passages to and from the “old country.” Anywhere from one-fourth to one-third of immigrants ultimately returned to their native homeland. One reason researchers fail to find “missing ancestors” is that they lived in America for a brief time and then returned “home.” This presentation looks at why these frequent flyers chose re-emigration and ways of finding them.

For more information on the conference, visit the website:

<<http://www.wdcfhc.org/conf2014/index.php>>

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**May 3 – May 15, 2014**

**THE ROAD HOME**

**A special tour of Poland to reconnect with your roots  
Polish Genealogical Society of Connecticut and the Northeast**

<<http://pgsctne.org/Announcements.aspx>>

I just wanted to mention this upcoming trip to Poland, because Jonathan Shea tells me the trip sold out long ago. It’s a pleasure to hear that, and we hope everyone who goes has a marvelous time!

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**June 21, 2014**

**25TH ANNIVERSARY POLISH AND EASTERN EUROPEAN GENEALOGY  
ROADSHOW**

**Polish Genealogical Society of Massachusetts**

**Polish Center of Discovery & Learning • 33 South St. • Chicopee, MA**

**10 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

Come help PGS-MA celebrate our 25th Anniversary with a genealogy roadshow! For both beginners and experienced researchers, this will be a day of fun and learning featuring four speakers, one-on-one consultations, and great displays and help stations. \$15 members/\$20 non-members.

**Topics & Speakers**

Uncover Your Roots in the Lemko Region of Southeast Poland – Mike Buryk

Beginning Your Genealogy – Alan Doyle Horbal

Naturalization & Related Records – Walter Hickey

Poland - What's That?? – Staś Radosz

**Displays & Highlights**

- Translation Stations (Polish, Russian, and more)
- Free Scanning Station
- “Ask a Genealogist” Tables
- On-line Search Guidance
- Find Your Ancestral Village
- One-on-One Session with Experts
- Polish Lunch by Bernat’s
- Genealogy Raffle
- LDS and Ancestry.com Stations
- Plenty of Chances to Meet & Mingle!

*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.*

For more information, please visit <<http://www.pgsmma.org>> or call Ed Dzielenski, Board Member, 413-567-3132.

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**Thursday, June 26, 2014**

**A TALK FOR REFUGEE WEEK**

**Polish Refugees in Post-War Surrey: A Story of a Displaced Wartime Community**

*by Wies Rogalski*



Surrey History Centre, 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking, Surrey, GU21 6ND, England

7:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Tickets are £5.00, please book online at <<http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/heritageevents>> or at Surrey History Centre, 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking, Surrey, GU21 6ND.

Wies Rogalski was born in Guildford to Polish parents who were displaced to Britain in 1947. For the first six years of his life, he lived in a disused Canadian army base called Tweedsmuir Camp, which stood near Thursley Village in Surrey. The camp, rather than being demolished after the war, was used to house Polish ex-service men and women who had been demobilized in Britain. This talk is an illustrated presentation about Wies' life at Tweedsmuir and his family's integration into British society.

Wies and his brother, Zen, have led an HLF project to capture the memories of those who lived at Tweedsmuir Camp. The project DVD and book will be available to purchase at the talk (correct money or cheques only please). The Polish Community in Tweedsmuir Camp in Surrey after World War Two is priced £12, and the DVD *In Their Own Words - Members of Tweedsmuir Camp community talk about life in a Polish Resettlement Camp*, is £9.99. All proceeds go to the maintenance of the Tweedsmuir Camp Exhibition at the Rural Life Centre, Tilford.

<<http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyhistorycentre>>

e-mail: <[shs@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:shs@surreycc.gov.uk)>

[From an e-mail sent to Don Szumowski c/o PolishRoots]

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**July 12, 2014**

**SEATTLE'S POLISH FESTIVAL**

**Seattle Center Amory & Fisher Rooftop • 305 Harrison St. • Seattle, Washington**

**Noon – 8 p.m.**

Ewa Raczkowski Bennett sent me a note suggesting many of our readers would enjoy attending Seattle's Polish festival. I asked for more information, and she sent me a link to a postcard available now, at <[http://www.polishnewsseattle.org/pics/events/2014\\_SeattlePolishFestival.jpg](http://www.polishnewsseattle.org/pics/events/2014_SeattlePolishFestival.jpg)>. For more details, visit the Festival's site at <<http://www.polishfestivalseattle.org>>.

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**July 27 – August 1, 2014**

**34TH IAJGS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JEWISH GENEALOGY**

**Hilton Center Hotel, Salt Lake City, Utah**

For more information on this event, which is one of the annual highlights of the entire genealogical calendar, visit the website:

<<http://www.iajgs2014.org/>>

Note that the December 29, 2013 issue of *Nu? What's New* said, "For the second year, for those who cannot attend the conference, selected lectures will be streamed live on the Internet. These broadcasts will be accessible on a computer, smart phone, or tablet via Internet connection ... Cost for this form of registration, which is called 'IAJGS 2014 LIVE,' is \$149." You can learn more at the Conference website.

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**August 12–15, 2014**

**FEEFHS 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](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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**\*\*\* MORE USEFUL WEB ADDRESSES \*\*\***

<[http://www.kf.vu.lt/baris/is/Strunaitis/katalikisku\\_vardu\\_rusinimas\\_1901.zip](http://www.kf.vu.lt/baris/is/Strunaitis/katalikisku_vardu_rusinimas_1901.zip)>

If you're dealing with documents in Russian and wonder how Polish first names generally are spelled in the Cyrillic alphabet, Waldemar Chorążewicz posted a note to the Facebook Polish Genealogy group with this link. It downloads a zip file that contains scans of pages from a handwritten booklet listing given names used by Roman Catholics and their Russian spellings. Masculine names appear on the first eight pages, and feminine names follow. The handwritten book is signed "M. Strunojcie"—which appears to be a Polonized form of a Lithuanian surname—and is dated 28 May 1931. As best I can tell, M. Strunojcie copied by hand a booklet issued by the Russian Ministry of Interior Affairs in St. Petersburg in 1901. It was presumably meant to insure that priests keeping records would spell given names borne by Catholics appropriately, and consistently, in Russian script.

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<<http://www.wolyn-metryki.pl/joomla/index.php>>

For those with roots in the region of Volhynia—called Wołyń in Polish, formerly part of Poland but now in western Ukraine (unless Putin invaded it today)—here is a site for 19th-century vital registers from that region. Valerie Warunek posted the info on the PGS-Michigan Facebook page, and credited Waldemar Chorążewicz for bringing it to her attention.

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<<http://www.thecatholicdirectory.com/index.cfm?worldmap=true>>

Charles Chase mentioned this site in a posting to the PGS-Michigan group on Facebook. I can't recall if we've mentioned it before, but it's worth knowing about. It lists Catholic churches all over the world, including over 9,000 cities and towns in Poland. Click on a place name and

you get the churches along there along with mass schedules, if available, and diocese. This can be a real time-saver, as sometimes it is helpful to know what diocese a given village is in. It can also be useful to know if there is more than one parish in a given locality.

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<<http://jgsgw.org/SidCaesarArticle.pdf>>

The April 20th issue of *Nu? What's New?* had an interesting item about the family history of Sid Caesar, who died earlier this year. Some claimed his father's name was changed at Ellis Island, and a group of Jewish genealogists decided to research this urban myth. Robin Meltzer published the results in *Mishpacha*, the journal of the Jewish Genealogy Society of Greater Washington. The article included the family's original name, Ziser. If you'd like to read it, the article is available at this URL. I recommend it—the article is not long, it's very interesting, and it provides a case study on how to disprove Ellis Island myths by tracking down the relevant records.

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<<http://genealogyindexer.org/forum/viewtopic.php?t=4718>>

Logan Kleinwaks announced on the JewishGen discussion group that the 1939 Lithuanian Telephone Directory, *Lietuvos telefono abonentų sąrašas*, is now full-text searchable and viewable on the Genealogy Index website, thanks to the cooperation of Yad Vashem and Yoram Mayorek. You can manually search and browse at the above URL.

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<<http://www.118.lt/gyventoju-paieska>>

Incidentally, if you want to access the current Lithuanian telephone directory and are not intimidated by the Lithuanian language, this URL will take you there. Put the name you're looking for in the field marked "Pavardė, vardas" (surname, first name), and, if you wish, put the name of the town in the field marked "Miestas." Then click on "Ieškoti." Also, it's a good idea to input only part of the surname you want, so that you'll match masculine and feminine forms of the name. For instance, if you're looking for *Staneliūnas*, searching for "Stanel" will bring up all entries with names beginning *Stanel-*, including similar ones such as *Stanelis*. Unless the name you're looking for a really common one, it's smart to cast your net wide and far; you never know what you'll find! By the way, notice that the search results list not only hits on the 118 website, but also hits on Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, LinkedIn, Klasė, and YouTube.

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<<http://media.nmfn.com/tnetwork/lifespan/>>

Edward D. Luft passed along this site, which uses statistics to calculate how long you are likely to live. It's an interesting site to play with, but I have my doubts just how accurate it is. It told me I'm going to live another 22 years, and that seems a tad on the high side. I guess all I can do is be patient—I'll know the truth, eventually.

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<<http://cosmopolitanreview.com/>>

John Guzłowski posted a note to the Facebook Polish American Writers & Editors group,

summarizing the latest issue of *Cosmopolitan Review: A Transatlantic Review of Things Polish*. Among the articles are one by Stephen Drapaka on six centuries of Polish-Hungarian friendship, and an article by Lara Szypszak on her love of Lublin.

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<<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/all-russian-world-war-i-documents-available-online/498026.html>>

The April 20 issue of The Genealogy News had a link to a Geneanet Genealogy Blog announcing that all Russian World War I documents are now available online. The source was this story from the Moscow Times. The story includes a link to the Russian Military Historical Archive, <<http://xn--80adcv1b.xn--p1ai/user>>, which is supposed to have a database where you can search the records. I clicked on the link with trepidation, because many Russian sites are infected with malware. But none of my anti-malware programs started screaming “Warning! Warning!” This site appears to be legit, opening a page where you set up a user’s profile, providing name and password. It’s all in Russian, however. So just how adventurous do you feel?

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