

Gen Dobry!

Volume XV, No. 6

ISSN 1555-774X. Copyright © 2014, PolishRoots®, Inc.

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

CONTENTS

Comparison Shopping for Answers
Letter from the Editor
The Latest from PolishOrigins
Project to Discover Schenectady County's Eastern European Roots
Upcoming Events
More Useful Web Addresses
You May Reprint Articles...

*** 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

30 June 2014

*** COMPARISON SHOPPING FOR ANSWERS ***

by Fred Hoffman < wfh@langline.com >

Back in the days when I used to speak at genealogical conferences, I particularly enjoyed meeting and talking with the other folks who were giving presentations. They invariably knew a great deal more about actual research than I did, because my work deals more with translation and editing. There was always plenty to learn from talking with these experts.

In our conversations, I noticed there was one irritant that came up time and again: the researcher who makes the rounds of the speakers, to do "comparison shopping," for want of a better term. There was always at least one person, sometimes more, who'd stop me and ask me a bunch of questions on his or her particular brick wall; I'd answer to the best of my ability. Later, I'd notice the same person asking another speaker the same questions. Later, yet another. After a while, it got to where we speakers would ask each other, "Has so-and-so caught you yet?" Then we'd compare notes on how we answered the questions, often finding we had given similar answers.

When it became really funny, and a little irritating, is when I'd attend the same event the next year, and there was the comparison shopper again, asking the same questions, getting the same answers, still shopping!

Please understand, if you are a "comparison shopper," I'm not griping at you. It's perfectly reasonable to take advantage of the presence of numerous experts to get their best insights. You pay your money to attend an event, you have every right to get the most you can out of it ... But after a while, we speakers couldn't help but get the impression these persons shopping for answers didn't even seem to be paying attention to what we said.

In recent years, as I've given talks less often but have answered more and more questions online, I found the comparison shoppers there, too (including a few I'd met in person). It's gotten to the point where I'm sometimes reluctant to even answer a question until I've done a search to see who else these people have asked. There's no point in my spending hours looking for info, then finding out someone else had already provided the exact same info back in 2008, only to be ignored!

If you're a comparison shopper, I'm not asking you to stop it. Who am I to tell you what you can and can't do?! But in the interest of helping you actually get answers, rather than spend all your life asking the same old questions, perhaps I can offer a little advice:

Be as concise as possible, but don't leave out facts!

What I mean is, getting the right answer often depends on asking exactly the right question; and formulating a question well is not easy. If you've asked a lot of folks and no one's been able to help you, maybe you're not asking the right question—or you're not asking the question right.

So work on it. Leave out anything that isn't relevant; include anything that might be. In fact, next time, mention that you've asked others, and no one could answer you; and include leads that

have turned out to be wrong. With really tough questions, eliminating the "usual suspects," so to speak, can be vital. Knowing several people have studied this problem, and what they suggested, can be useful. But for God sake, include any hard facts you have: religion, time frame, names of people, and especially names of places. Many a tough question has melted away once we knew the right place to look.

I saw an illustration of this last week. A gentleman posted a note on a mailing list devoted to Lithuanian genealogy, saying he was looking for a place named Raczki that was somewhere near Wilno (now Vilnius, Lithuania). I'd seen this man post notes before, and he's clearly a good guy; so I wondered if I could help. I was not the only one; several of us responded with our best insights. I know I spent maybe an hour or more looking through the *Slownik geograficzny* and Bystrzycki's gazetteer of Poland after World War I, trying to come up with a Raczki that was close enough to Wilno to be a good candidate. I posted my best answer, but made no pretense of certainty that it was correct.

A couple of days later, I noticed the same question on a Polish genealogy mailing list. Again, some bright folks responded, trying to help. Finally, the man asking about Raczki promised to send the complete file of what he had to one of the people trying to help him. The next day, the latter posted a note online in which he was clearly trying not to scream: that file included the name of the powiat this Raczki was in! That was the key piece of info, the one that made it possible to find the right answer. If we had known that from the beginning, we could have found this Raczki in no time. (It turned out the village's standard name was Radźki, of which Raczki is a variant. In the last century, it's been ruled by the Russian Empire, the Second Polish Republic, Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, and now Belarus. You can understand why it presented challenges.)

No one was trying to be a jerk here, and there's no reason to criticize anyone. But it is a simple fact that mentioning the name of the powiat up front would have saved everyone a lot of time and trouble. And yet, how was this gentleman to know that? This is why you ask experts; a bit of info that means nothing to you might mean everything to a specialist.

The best approach is to edit your questions, again and again, trying to hone them to a fine edge. Cut out the stuff about Uncle Walt's lumbago and what a stubborn old hag Auntie May was. That's just clutter; it gets in the way. But if you have a name, especially of a place, include it! If you get an answer from one expert, and it leads nowhere, mention that fact the next time you ask, briefly—that way, the next expert knows not to waste time on a dead end. Each step of the way, make your question better and more exact.

Sooner or later, you'll find someone who can answer it.

*** LETTER FROM THE EDITOR ***

I want to thank everyone who took the time to write me and let me know they'd received the May issue of *Gen Dobry!* We'd had trouble with the previous issue; a

great many of our subscribers did not get their copies. It appears we have now fixed the problem, and your notes were a big help. Thanks to all of you—and don't forget, if you don't get your copy, you should write me and let me know. Also, you can always download the PDF version of each month's issue on the PolishRoots site, at http://polishroots.org/GenDobry/tabid/60/Default.aspx.

Oh, yes, I apologize for giving my e-mail address wrong. Many of you tried to write me care of the address as I gave it, with the domain *langline.org*, and had no luck. The right address, of course, is <*wfh@langline.com*>. I'm still trying to figure out how on earth I got that wrong!

*** THE LATEST FROM POLISHORIGINS***

by Agnieszka Pawlus, PolishOrigins

Editor—I know many of you receive the monthly e-mail newsletters from PolishOrigins, but I like to repeat them for the benefit of those who aren't subscribed. The newsletters almost always have interesting information and offers that may benefit you.

On 8 March 2008, the Polish Archives of Audio-Visual Records, founded in 1955, was transformed into the National Digital Archives (NDA). Since then, their main goals are:

- to archive digital materials, including digital documents,
- to archive photographs, films and sound recordings,
- to create digital files of hard copy materials,
- to share information about archives,
- to make the collection accessible online.

A part of the National Digital Archives is the project **Szukaj w archiwach** ("Search the archives"), where the digitized documents are accessible for everyone, for free. Such an opportunity for us genealogists!

What is more: the Polish Archives' online database is constantly growing. Here are some news from Polish Archives: Polish State Archives have now more than 11 589 600 scans available online! On June 5 Polish Archives added another 1.3 million scans.

How to check if the desired parish records are available online?

Here is short instruction based on post of our PO Forum member 'rakow'. Thank you Paul!

- 1. Go to the website, http://www.szukajwarchiwach.pl/.
- 2. You might see the white pop-up with the title "Bazy danych w archiwach państwowych" or "Databases in state archives." Just close it, by clicking on the grey X in the top right corner.

- 3. Click the Union Jack at the top right corner of the page (or the German or Polish flag if you prefer).
- 4. Tick the box "only with scans / tylko ze skanami." Below the search box, select the tab "Everything / Wszystko" (instead of the tab "Vital records and civil registers/ Akta metrykalne i stanu cywilnego", which most instructions for this site steer you to).
- 5. Type the place name you are interested in into the search box.
- 6. Click "Search / Szukaj."
- 7. See what comes up. There are lots of places that still have nothing on line, but, you might get lucky, especially if you have several places to try.
- 8. Scans are original and descriptions of search results are only in Polish:

Księga urodzeń = **Birth register**

Księga małżeństw = **Marriage register**

Księga zgonów = **Death register**

Akta stanu cywilnego = **Civil registers** (all BMD records in one book)

If you have questions about this or need some help, post your inquiry on our Forum in thread: 'Polish State Archives on-line database: szukajwarchiwach.p''

http://forum.polishorigins.com/viewtopic.php?t=2499

More news

Recently, we enriched our Tours offer for ready-made, private tours in southern Poland. We would like to proudly present:

3 days tour: "Wooden treasures of Southern Poland"

See the itinerary: http://polishorigins.com/document/wooden_treasures>

Wooden architecture is something that we believe is unique in this part of Europe. It has always made a big impression on the people who visit this southern section of Poland. During this three-day trip from Kraków, you will visit wooden churches on the UNESCO heritage list. They include unique wooden architecture styles from the Podhale region and The Ethnographic Park in Sanok (Skansen).

The beautiful shapes, perfectly balanced proportions of the buildings, and the intricate woodcarvings are admired by visitors. And there is something more... the very special aroma

of the old wood, and the nice coolness you encounter when you enter the building on a hot day. The tour takes place in the two provinces of southern Poland: Małopolska (Lesser Poland) and Podkarpackie (Subcarpathia) Province.

6 days "Mini Galicia Tour"

See the itinerary: http://polishorigins.com/document/mini_gt

This tour is designed for, but not limited to, people whose forefathers for generations had lived in Galicia (southern part of today's Poland). We want provide you the best possible opportunity to experience the world you ancestors had to leave.

Our goal is to enrich your understanding of your forefathers' life. If you liked the idea of our regular PO Galicia Tour but you have limited time: Mini Galicia Tour will be perfect for you!

As you can see on PolishOrigins Blog, a lot is happening in 2014. Currently we are publishing Carol's blog: Wanderlust: Polska 2014:

"And so it begins, our trip to Poland. Chilly here in Cleveland, but the sun is shining ... After doing research on my Polish roots for 25+ years, I am finally going to visit the ancestral homeland..."

Read Carol's story on PolishOrigins Blog: < http://blog.polishorigins.com/category/wanderlust-polska-2014/>.

As we already mentioned in our May Newsletter, PO Galicia Tours, in September 7-17 and October 5-15, are confirmed! There are still openings available for both September and October dates. Find more information on the PO Galicia Tour website.

http://polishorigins.com/document/galicia_tour

If you want, please help to spread the news! We would appreciate if you forward our mail to anyone you think might be interested in the topic.

Greetings from Poland!
PolishOrigins Team

*** PROJECT TO DISCOVER SCHENECTADY COUNTY'S EASTERN EUROPEAN ROOTS ***

Phyllis Budka and Bernice Izzo recently sent out the third issue of the *Project to Discover Schenectady County's Eastern European Roots Newsletter*. It includes the following articles.

- "Nowy Targ, Poland: Do YOUR Roots Extend There, Too?" by Phyllis Budka;
- "Memories of Growing Up on North St.," Jessie (Kotarski) Malecki;
- "Aunt Blanche's Memory Box," Eleanor Monlea;
- "Great Grandpa Walenty Giniecki, a.k.a. William Giniecki, Schenectady, NY Part 2," Carole McCarthy;
- "Uncle Jake Another Mother Story," Bernice Izzo;
- "Researching People of Eastern European Descend in Schenectady County: Resources in the Grems-Doolittle Library Schenectady County Historical Society" by Melissa Tacke, Librarian/Archivist

You can learn more by contacting Phyllis at this e-mail address: abudka@nycap.rr.com.

*** UPCOMING EVENTS ***

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

July 11-13, 2014

AMERICAN POLISH FESTIVAL Sterling Heights, Michigan

This event is sponsored by the American Polish Century Club. For more information, visit the website:

http://www.americanpolishfestival.com/home-2/about-us

[From a note posted to the Facebook Polish Culture, Food and Traditions Group by Valerie Warunek]

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. For more details, visit the Festival's site at http://www.polishfestivalseattle.org.

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://conference.iajgs.org/2014/>

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. You can learn more at the Conference website." Click on the menu choice "Live!" for more information on how you can view over 60 of the best programs live over the Internet for \$149, and/or watch the programs for up to 90 days after the conference.

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!]

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/.

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.

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]

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]

*** MORE USEFUL WEB ADDRESSES ***

http://paf-ct.org/americanonbroadstreet/how-do-you-find-family-in-poland/

This link takes you to an interesting blog entry, "An American on Broad Street: How Do You Find Family in Poland?" It was written by Dorena Wasik and tells about her recent trip to Poland. She and Jonathan Shea organized the "Road Home," a trip earlier this year to places of ancestral origin, organized under the auspices of the Polish Genealogical Society of Connecticut and the Northeast. I was pleased to see praise for Jonathan and also for Aleksandra Kacprzak, a Polish researcher familiar to readers of PGSCTNE's journal, *Pathways & Passages*. I know everyone involved worked hard to make the trip a success, and it's always gratifying to see hard work rewarded!

http://cpx.republika.pl/czeladz.htm

This Polish-language page has some very interesting information on 16th-century peasants working on manorial farmsteads. It includes a table with average daily food consumption for such peasants within the Kingdom of Poland. While Google Translate has problems with much of the content, it can make the table comprehensible; it is fascinating info.

http://www.austriahungary.info/en/gazetteer1900

This gazetteer for the Austria-Hungary in the early 1900s links to really useful

information on all kinds of places not so easy to learn about. I found it while looking for details on the German names of villages in the Unterkrain region of what is now Slovenia. It was a huge help in translating a German-language legal contract, and I resolved to bookmark it and not lose track of it!

http://blog.eogn.com/2014/06/05/ancestry-com-to-drop-myfamily-mycanvas-genealogy-com-mundia-and-the-y-dna-and-mtdna-tests/

On June 5, *Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter* [EOGN] had an article on Ancestry. com's closing down operations of MyFamily, MyCanvas, Mundia and the Y-DNA and mtDNA tests. I'm not sure how many of our readers will be affected by this, but I felt we should include a link to the EOGN article, so that you can learn more if this will affect you. Also, this link http://goo.gl/CkGt6F> takes you to an article in which Ken Chahine of Ancestry.com explains some of the reasons behind the decision to terminate the Y-DNA and mtDNA products.

https://www.familytreedna.com/landing/ydna-transfer.aspx

A similar article in *EOGN* mentioned that "Family Tree DNA sent an email message to all Group Administrators to remind them what Family Tree DNA offers." Eastman felt non-administrators would also want to move their own data. The above site gives information and pricing.

http://blog.eogn.com/2014/06/05/new-season-of-who-do-you-think-you-are-begins-july-23/

Eastman also had a short article on the new season of *Who Do You Think You Are*, which premieres July 23 on TLC.

http://blog.eogn.com/2014/06/01/use-d2-biological-solution-to-clean-gravestones/

This article from *EOGN* talks about a cleaner, D/2 Biological Solution, that is apparently safe to use when cleaning gravestones. Over the years, I've noticed the topic of cleaning gravestones without damaging them arises often in genealogical circles, and finding a good solution is not exactly easy. It sounds as if this product gets the job done.

-

http://kpbc.ukw.edu.pl/dlibra/plain-content?id=43916

This has nothing to do with genealogy per se, but this page lets you view *Drzeworyt ludowy w Polsce*, by Władysław Skoczylas. It's a collection of Polish folk woodcuts. I'm not generally all that fond of folk art, but I found these very interesting.

http://genealogyindexer.org/

Additions to the Genealogy Indexer site this month include 1929 Pomerania Landowners {d1080}, 1926 Warsaw Calendar {d1079}, 1897 Warsaw Calendar {d1076}, 1872 West Prussia

Landowners {d1083}, 1929/1930 Jasło Gymnasium Report {s282}, and 1871 East Prussia Landowners {d1087}. You need the DjVu plugin for your web browser to view the items; and they have all been OCR'ed (processed with optical character recognition) software so that the text is searchable—but OCR is never 100% reliable, so read the suggestions on how to improve your search results.

http://yourjewishgem.blogspot.com/

Anyone with Jewish ancestry might want to take a look at this site, on which Marilyn Robinson has assembled a lot of specific information broken down by subject. The site presents a lot of names excerpted from various reports and sources, and I feel this site is worth keeping an eye on, especially for Jewish researchers.

http://global.truelithuania.com/category/usa/

Elise Crocker mentioned this site on the LithGen mailing list. It contains a lot of information about Lithuanian immigration to the United States, including communities, churches, and landmarks of importance to Lithuanian Americans. The home page offers links to "Lithuanians and Their Heritage Abroad," all over the world.

http://www.genealogiapolska.pl/

Valerie Warunek mentioned this page on the Facebook page for the Polish Genealogical Society of Michigan. I don't recall ever seeing it or talking about it before, and it looks to me as if it deserves more attention. Don't worry if the home page comes up in Polish; clicking on the U. S. flag in the upper left corner changes the interface language to English.

http://www.geonames.org

This is another site Valerie mentioned on PGSM's Facebook page that I don't recall visiting before. The site claims "The GeoNames geographical database covers all countries and contains over eight million place names that are available for download free of charge." I haven't used it enough yet to form an opinion, but it is probably worth a closer look.

http://tinyurl.com/p4lc4wg

Valerie also mentioned the page this link takes you to: Greek Catholic duplicate records from western Ukraine. The original URL is quite lengthy, so I took the liberty of generating this TinyURL to take you to the page, which I believe is likely to benefit many researchers with links in that region of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

http://www.genealogyblog.com/?p=32012

Researchers with roots in former East Prussia might be interested in this Genealogy Blog entry, mentioned in the June 1st issue of *The Genealogy News—Weekly Edition*. The entry

announced that Volume 47 of the series *Map Guide to German Parish Registers* is now shipping. This volume is by Kevan M. Hansen and covers the *Kingdom of Prussia, Province of East Prussia, Regierungsbezirk Königsberg*. The information covers what is now Kaliningrad Oblast of Russia and the Warmia region of northeastern Poland.

http://maps.geshergalicia.org/cadastral/debica-dembica-1849/>

Gesher Galicia continues to add cadastral maps to their online collection. Earlier this month, Pamela Weisberger announced to the Jewish Gen newsgroup that an 1849 map of Dębica, a sizable town in southeastern Poland, is now available at the above link. It just amazes me that these days, we can actually see these maps and study them closely online! While I'm mentioning this, I should admit I was flattered that Pamela's note included a link to my translation of the *Slownik geograficzny* entry for Dębica, http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/kolbuszowa/debica/debica10.html>.

http://www.wnyc.org/story/our-ancestry-obsession/

Debbie Greenlee posted a note to several mailing lists about a WNYC radio interview about genealogy. Go to this site and click on the "play" button.

http://mikeeliasz.wordpress.com/2014/06/22/using/

Responding to a question from Polish genealogy blogger Al Wierzba, C. Michael Eliasz-Solomon wrote this entry on how to use Szukajwarchiwum.pl. I know many folks find that site a little challenging, and will appreciate any help they can get!

http://andersarmy.com/>

On the Polish Genealogy page on Facebook, Ceil Jensen posted this link to a project by historian Norman Davies to reconstruct the trail taken by Anders Army. It invites you to "help us to reconstruct history by telling your story."

YOU MAY REPRINT articles from *Gen Dobry!*, PROVIDED: (1) the reprint is used for non-commercial, educational purposes; and (2) the following notice appears at the end of the article: Written by [author's name, e-mail address, and URL, if given]. Previously published by *Gen Dobry!*, Vol. XV, No. 6, 30 June 2014, PolishRoots®: http://www.PolishRoots.org/>.

If you send *Gen Dobry!* an item for publication and that item contains a previously unpublished item from a third party, please also include permission from that party to reprint the item in *Gen Dobry!* We cannot republish private correspondence or copyrighted material without express permission unless it is already clearly in the public domain. If we do publish such private correspondence or copyrighted materials, your submission of it constitutes your agreement to hold the editor, *Gen Dobry!*, and PolishRoots®, Inc. harmless in the event of a valid claim as

a result of such	unauthorized p	publication.	Such	agreement	includes,	but is not	limited to	, all
litigation costs.								

Copyright 2014, PolishRoots®, Inc. All rights reserved