



# Gen Dobry!

**Gen Dobry! 31 December 2001**

\*\*\*\*\* GEN DOBRY! \*\*\*\*\*

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\*\*\* WELCOME! \*\*\*

to the latest issue of GEN DOBRY!, the e-zine of PolishRoots(tm). If you missed previous issues, you can find them at <http://PolishRoots.org>.

Be sure to visit the PolishRoots site and take advantage of the numerous sources featured

there to help you with your research.

One you may have overlooked is the page devoted to a complete list of nests of the Polish Falcons:

[http://www.polishroots.org/polish\\_falcons.htm](http://www.polishroots.org/polish_falcons.htm)

Many, many Polish immigrants and their descendants joined the Falcons, so this can be a rich source of information - yet many folks know nothing about it. Take a look at this page, and if you're interested in more info, feel free to contact Dr. Paul S. Valasek <Paval56@aol.com>.

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\*\*\* NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION:  
CREATE POLISH SURNAME MESSAGE BOARDS \*\*\*

by Ceil Jensen <cjensen@mipolonia.net>

Have you shared the frustration of other Polish researchers that YOUR surnames are not out there on the Internet? Well, the good news is you can add the Polish presence to the messages boards at Rootsweb (<http://www.rootsweb.com>).

The nature of the Internet is to be interactive. Genealogical websites need your input.

Here is a four-step process that I have used with my high school students for a genealogy unit in Social Studies. I also used it with senior citizens and they liked it just as much. Both groups got results with this method.

I made a handout to keep track of the posted information. You can download the worksheet at this address:

<http://www.mipolonia.net/worksheets>

Write down 4 Polish surnames that you are researching. It will help you stay focused as you work on the Internet. Don't forget to list variations in spelling or name changes.

Examples: Zdziebko a.k.a. Jepko or Japko  
: Wojtkowiak a.k.a. Voight  
: Przytula a.k.a. Przytulski

To begin, go to Rootsweb at <http://www.rootsweb.com>.

1. Click on Message Boards at the top of the webpage. Type in the first surname you are researching in the box marked: "Find A Message Board."

If a link comes up for a message board, great! Click on the link. Read over the posted messages.

Now, don't leave. You need to do one of two things:

2. Reply to a message or Post a new message.

You also need to jot down on your worksheet who you replied to and what you wrote about.

When you reply or post you can make sure the small box is marked at the bottom of the entry window that activates the command: "Send me an e-mail when anyone replies to this message."

The subject or title that you post on your message or reply is important to the success of your communication. The subject "Grandpa" or "Family history" or "HELP!" will be read by very few people. "Anthony Przytulski/ Detroit 1890-1976" will be a more effective subject on the Przytulski surname message board.

3. If there is not a message board for your surname you will receive this message:

Find a Board Results: 0 matches for \_\_\_\_\_.

It is your job to request Rootsweb to create a new Message Board.

In the blue band at the bottom of the page is written "Request New Board." Click on it. You will need to complete the free registration to be able to make this request.

A new window will open and give the following information:

"New board creation requests may be submitted for Surnames (last names), localities, and Genealogical Research Topics. Surname requests must be for a single surname only. Localities must be countries, states, provinces, departments, shires, or counties/parishes or similar. Genealogical Research Topics must be specific subjects that would be of interest to a sufficient number of researchers. Before requesting a new board, please search the already existing boards and use them where appropriate. Items marked with \*are required."

Fill in:

- Board Name
- Additional Comments:

In this line you can enter the need for more Polish names, the need for the specific surname to be posted, etc.

4. Notice there is a box to check. It reads: "I would like to administer this board."

You can request the surname without taking any further responsibility. You can just continue to "lurk." But if you REALLY want to find family members, think about becoming the board administrator. You can post additional messages and "prime the pump."

Each time I find a new marriage in the Zdziebko line, I post the information to the board. I have already met one family member in this "brick wall" line. I hope to meet more.

It will take several days for the message board to be set up. Don't forget to return to post a message if you chose not to be the administrator.

Now get out there and POST!

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\*\*\* THE POLISH EXPERIENCE IN DETROIT \*\*\*

by Ceil Jensen <cjensen@mipolonia.net>

Subject: An exhibition created by St. Mary's College of Ave Maria University of Orchard Lake and the Polish American Historical Association in cooperation with the Detroit Historical Museum:

Detroit Historical Museum  
Detroit, Michigan  
October 12, 2001- March 31, 2002  
Admission \$4.25 Adults  
\$2.25 seniors and Students

The Detroit 300 celebration is winding down in the metro area. It was a yearlong celebration commemorating the arrival of the first Europeans on the banks of the Detroit River. The Polish Experience in Detroit exhibit at the Detroit Historical Museum is part of the community's desire to highlight the wide range of ethnicities that populate the region.

This exhibit is an ambitious work that chronicles over 100 years of Polish presence in Detroit. It is the first local exhibit showcasing Polish Americans in twenty years. Although a social studies and art teacher by profession, I went to the show as a family genealogist whose Polish grandparents settled here in the 1880s. I was born and raised in the city and was hoping to see something of our past. The exhibit has many highlights and some shortcomings.

The exhibit has a nice range of photos and artifacts from Hamtramck. The exhibit coordinators are based at a Catholic institution but were inclusive to the Polish Jewish

and Polish Lutherans experiences. Dr. Thaddeus Radzilowski, president of St. Mary's College, spearheaded the project. He is a historian who grew up in Hamtramck and graduated from St. Florian High School. A Hamtramck resident and St. Mary's College professor, Dr. Karen Majewski, served as curator for the exhibition. They selected the themes of the war effort, labor and politics, music and theatre, neighborhoods and families, and sports.

On entering the exhibit there is an immigrant's travel trunk, courtesy of Henrietta Nowakowska. It is packed with articles of clothing and personal belongings. It caught my eye because I was told of the holy cards that lined the interior of my grandmother's trunk. It disappeared years ago. I have often imaged that all the missing genealogical clues to her village were contained in that trunk.

Like the other visitors I called to my husband "come and see this!" Enshrined in a Plexiglas case was a bottle of Gorke's snuff. Just like Grandpa Tony used! Actually, both grandfathers. My cousin Walter wrote:

"I also remember Grandpa (Franz Wendt) would send my brother Pete or Frank Sopko to a grocery store on the corner of 28th and Buchanan. to buy Goirke's Kashub Snuff. That was the nearest store that carried it and it was the only brand grandpa would use. I remember I used to like to tag along with my brother or cousin when they went on this errand."

A unique artifact from the Felician Archives is the pair of glasses worn by Fr. Jozef Dabrowski. Fr. Dabrowski is described in the catalogue as father of the Polish American parochial school system, as well as the priest who brought the Felician Sisters to the United States.

There was Polka music playing and it would have been great to hear someone speaking Polish. The use of radio shows to rally Poles in the community was highlighted on several display boards. It called for a chance to hear radio artists such as Maria Grabowska and Jakub Kmiecic.

The exhibit has a current map of Poland. It isn't clear what the map is illustrating. It would have been instructive to have maps that documented the changing bounders of Poland. It would visually illustrate why our ancestors were referred to as Austrian, German or Russian instead of Polish.

Pie charts and bar graphs are a mainstay of statistical communication. The exhibit would be enhanced if graphs were created to help patrons number-crunch the stats regarding percentage of Polish Americans to other ethnic groups in the city. A timeline showing the influx of immigrants by region into the city would have been helpful.

Wladyslaw Pluta, chairman of the Visual Communication Department at Krakow Academy of Fine Arts, created the exhibition's poster. The gray red and white design depicts an "o" from the word "Polonia" connected with the "o" from "Detroit" to convey

the notion that the Polish American community and the city are inseparable. "The two are linked together," says Dr. Thaddeus Radzilowski, president of St. Mary's College. "You can't understand Detroit unless you understand the enormous contributions that Poles made in creating the city."

I found the information on the poster on the St. Mary's college website:

<http://www.orchardlakeschools.com/mrpgs/d300fldr/pstr.html>

I didn't see any posters at the museum nor in the gift shop. I did buy the 40-page booklet for future reference, which has the poster art on its cover.

A series of lectures were held at the Detroit Historical Museum in connection with the exhibit. The range of speakers was impressive. It's unfortunate that these speakers were not on the \$12.00 CD that contained Dr. Thaddeus Radzilowski's reading of the Exhibition booklet.

One quote struck me as I exited the exhibit:

"Each new wave of Polish immigrants left a different Poland and arrived in a different Detroit."

I think this could be expanded to include:

"Each Polish American Detroiter had a different parish and neighborhood experience."

I left feeling that the west side of Detroit had been dismissed. And why was there no paper trail back to the villages and regions we came from? I left wondering why the final resting places of the Polish community, such as Mt. Elliott, Mt. Olivet and St. Hedwig cemeteries, weren't addressed. No story about the Detroit Poles who were the U.S. Army's Polar Bears and have a special burial site in White Chapel Cemetery, Troy, MI? There was a tile from the demolition of Immaculate Conception Church but not from the Assumption BVM's demolition?

The answer is not that the museum nor curator was lax. The truth is that the Polish American community in the metro area (600,000 strong) needs exhibitions more often than every twenty years. It is an underserved community in the metro area. The size and contributions of the Polish community merit a permanent museum that celebrates both the East and West side of Detroit as well as the emerging communities in the suburbs.

For more info, you can visit:

<http://www.detroithistorical.org/html/Information/PolishPresence.htm>

<http://detnews.com/2001/detroit/0110/10/s12-313939.htm>

Surnames mentioned in the exhibit and catalogue:

Czapor  
Dingell  
Frontczak  
Germack  
Gomulka-Palazolo  
Grabowska  
Gribbs  
Kapiszewski  
Kmieciec  
Lesinski  
Majewski  
Markowski  
Marlinga  
Martin  
Milewski  
Nedzi  
Nowakowska  
Nowicki  
Nowosielski  
Odrobin  
Ozog  
Padzieski  
Pluta  
Raczkowski  
Radzilowski  
Rozalski  
Skalski  
Szmanski  
Wicher  
Zembala  
Zych  
Zynda

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

Subject: Serfdom

Would like to see you address a subject that appears to constantly generate questions to the amateur (very amateur) genealogist: SERFDOM. 99.99% of our Polish ancestors belonged in this category of servitude, howsoever, there is very little available that addresses the subject with respect to our hobby. I have Ortell's publication with your Foreword and it's an excellent base from which to expand.

By way of example from the small information that I did find on serfdom, I was astounded to learn that serfdom was hereditary. Families were required to pay the lord handsomely for the manpower loss if the son moved away, The lord's loss of a son to the priesthood required the family to pay stiff penalties. The family was locked to the land by the lord, unable to move to associated villages, etc, etc. I find also that serfdom phased out in Poland about the mid 1850's as evidenced by the record terms \_agricola\_ as opposed to \_inquilinus\_, etc.

Tom Lassek  
<grandpa@wildak.net>

[Editor's reply: Serfdom is indeed a good idea for an article, and I intend to try to put something together on this subject. Offhand, however, I don't know enough about it to write anything intelligent; I'll have to do some research. It occurs to me some of our readers almost certainly know much more about the subject than I do, so I thought I'd mention this. If you've read something insightful about serfdom and Polish society, or - better yet - if you can write a good article on the subject, I'd love to hear from you!]

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\*\*\* UPDATE ON THE HAMBURG EMIGRATION WEBSITE \*\*\*

On December 16, Joseph Martin of Romeoville, Illinois, posted a note with an update on this Website to the Posen-L mailing list. He said, "For those who might be interested, the Hamburg Emigration web site changed today. It now offers passenger information on ALL the ships that departed Hamburg from 1890 to 1898. It has also moved to a fee-based site. Search is by passenger names." The address is as follows:

[http://www.hamburg.de/fhh/behoerden/staatsarchiv/link\\_to\\_your\\_roots/english/index.htm](http://www.hamburg.de/fhh/behoerden/staatsarchiv/link_to_your_roots/english/index.htm)

[That whole address needs to be entered as a single line. If your browser broke it up into two lines, make sure you type it or copy it as one line when you try to visit the site.]

This is an important site for researchers, so it's a good idea to keep up-to-date on what's happening there - especially when a charge may apply.

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\*\*\* A LITTLE MORE ON THE SEZAM DATABASE \*\*\*

The last issue of \_Gen Dobry!\_ featured an article on the SEZAM database of the Polish State Archives, and the response was quite gratifying - apparently a number of you found it helpful. So I've kept my eyes open for more info on this subject. I saw some good pointers in the latest issue of \_Nu? What's New?\_, the free e-zine from Avotaynu about



Jewish Genealogy. Noted researchers Gary Mokotoff and Warren Blatt have experimenting with searches on the database and their results, and their tips are worth reading.

One particularly good pointer they discovered is that you can get more results if your search takes into account the various grammatical forms of terms and names. Thus in Polish "in Bialystok" is "w Bialymstoku." If you search for records mentioning "Bialystok," you will find a certain number of results; you will find more if you also do a search for matches with "Bialymstoku." Similarly, a search for "Siedlce" will yield results, but you may find more potentially pertinent records if you also search for the locative form "Siedlcach." This is the kind of tip you can get only from people who've invested time and effort in fine-tuning use of the database, as Gary and Warren have done.

Of course it takes some fluency in Polish to know what forms words take in the different cases, and most of you don't have time (or the inclination!) to memorize Polish declensions. But in many instances you don't have to. The forms you need may appear if you browse through the database search options. When you log onto SEZAM, spend a little time checking the drop-down list of Archives. You'll notice that many place names appear with different endings from the standard nominative forms we're used to. If you browse a bit you'll note that the name of the town Lomza can appear as Lomzy, Poznan can appear as Poznania or Poznaniu, Suwalki as Suwalkach and so forth. You don't have to know why those endings apply - you only need to recognize that they can frequently occur in this context. It won't hurt to do an additional search for these forms, and it just might help!

If you think you'll be using SEZAM often (<http://www.archiwa.gov.pl/sezam/index.eng.html>), I definitely recommend reading the article "More on the Polish Archives Database" in the Vol. 2, No. 25, December 16, 2001 issue of *\_Nu? What's New?\_* You can access back issues at <http://www.avotaynu.com/nu.htm>. You can sign up to receive *\_Nu? What's New\_* at <http://www.avotaynu.com/nuwhatsnew.htm>.

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\*\*\* UPCOMING EVENTS \*\*\*

From Now - January 13, 2002

\* "Gifts to the Tsars 1500-1700: Treasurers from the Kremlin" \*

Paul S. Valasek <Paval56@aol.com> sent word of this exclusive U.S. showing at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, now through January 13, 2002. It's a study of power and history in a 105-piece collection of metal work and fine silver from Moscow's Armory Museum. 96 of the items have never before been seen in the States. Polish-related items include a silk saddle given to Czar Boris Godunov from King Sigismund III of Poland to

conclude a peace treaty in 1600 between the two countries as well as a large silver eagle with two sets of wings resting on a golden base which served as a stand for a crown.

Further details may be seen at:

<http://www.ima-art.org>

Or you can contact IMA at 317-923-1331.

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January 7-11, 2002

\* Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy 2002 \*

Wyndham Hotel, Salt Lake City, UT  
Sponsored by the Utah Genealogical Association  
For more info: 1-888-INFO-UGA  
or <http://www.infouga.org/slig2002.htm>

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January 12, 2002

The Detroit Historical Museum invites you to attend:

"Polish and Proud" Meet & Mingle Party

Saturday, January 12 at Noon  
Alger Hall

Free with Museum admission

See the Polish Presence in Detroit exhibit through the eyes of the "VIP's" of Detroit's Polish community! Meet retired Detroit Lions star Leon Hart and view his Heisman Trophy. Special guests also include Detroit mural artist Dennis Orłowski, WWII hero "Chet" Rucinski and many more. After all the introductions are made, you'll have the chance to introduce yourself to these remarkable people.

For more information call 833-1419.

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January 26, 2002

\* Polish Genealogical Group of Arizona Meeting\*

9:30-12:30  
Salt River Project Information Systems Building

1600 N. Priest Drive  
Tempe, AZ 85281

Contact: Carole Buskin e-mail: [cfbuskin@srpnet.com](mailto:cfbuskin@srpnet.com)

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April 5-6, 2002

\* Illinois State Gen Society 2002 Conference \*

"Ethnic Illinois"

To be held at the William Tell Holiday Inn, Countryside, IL

Featured Speaker: Dr. George Schweitzer

Contact: ISGS P.O. Box 10195, Springfield, IL 62791-0195

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~ilsgs/fallconf/announcement.html>

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JULY 19 - 21, 2002

Discovering Our Links to Europe:  
An International Genealogical Conference

Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

July 19th - 21, 2002

This event is being hosted by the Saskatchewan Genealogical Society (SGS), in conjunction with the Federation of East European Family History Societies (FEEFHS), the Bukovina Society of the Americas (BSA), the Society for German Genealogy in Eastern Europe (SGGEE), and the East European Genealogical Society (EEGS). It is anticipated that it will attract an audience of several hundred people.

A call for papers, along with additional information on the Conference, can be seen at the EEGS site:

<http://www.eegsociety.org/CallForPapers.html>

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January 17 & 18, 2003

GENTECH 2003  
PHOENIX, ARIZONA  
The Phoenix Civic Plaza.

"Digital Technology - The Ancestral Frontier"

Maryellen T. <deeproots@go.com> posted a notice on the Polish\_Genius mailing list about this event, saying rightly that it's not too soon to make plans to attend. Past conferences of GENTECH have focused on how to use technology more effectively in your genealogical research. She suggested checking out the web site:

<http://www.agcig.org/gt03.htm>

She also pointed out that "volunteers will be needed in January to start work on the publicity campaign for this event. Suzanne Siders is the Chair of that Committee." You can fill out the volunteer form at the above site.

[Debbie Greenlee added that info on this event is included on the Events Calendar of PolishRoots:

[http://www.polishroots.org/coming\\_events.htm](http://www.polishroots.org/coming_events.htm)

In fact, it's always a good idea to check this site, as it contains more info than we have room for here.]

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\*\*\* MORE USEFUL WEB ADDRESSES \*\*\*

<http://members.tripod.com/~allbell/minsk.html>

David Wolf <drwolf@capslock.net> mentioned this site in a note posted to Poland-Roots-L, and said it helped him study the Russian alphabet in preparation for tackling Russian-language records on FHL microfilms. It has a wealth of links, of which he found the "Field guide to 19th century Russian printed, italic and cursive alphabets" particularly useful. (Jewish researchers will also find help deciphering Hebrew-alphabet cursive, which is not the sort of info one runs into every day!).

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<http://www3.vistatech.net/~jack/poltrans.htm>

While on the subject of help with translating records Frederick Kobylarz <fkobylarz@monmouth.com> posted a note with this URL on Poland-Roots-L. It came after several people had noticed Jack Bowman's Website, which gave samples and translations of Napoleonic-format Polish and Russian records, had disappeared. Fred found that the ISP had changed and tracked down the new address. For those who need help with these records, this site is a free source of helpful information.

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<http://www.posen-l.com/>

This is the address of the official Website of the POSEN-L mailing list. It has many pages that could aid researchers interested in the former Provinz Posen, including, for instance, a page listing the Kreise of Posen, with names in German and Polish, many with links to lists of towns in that Kreis: <http://www.posen-l.com/MnIntroPg.html#Kreise>

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<http://historicaltextarchive.com/austria/contents.htm>

On POSEN-L@rootsweb.com, A. John Birkholz <brotherjohn@imt.net> gave this address, saying "For those who have an interest in history and have not seen my periodic post on the topic, Don Mabry has provided an interesting work which includes our area of interest." It's called "A Short History of Austria-Hungary and Poland" (London: The Encyclopedia Britannica Company, Ltd., 1914). He suggests beginning with "Chapter 23: Early History Of Poland."

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<http://www.maps.lt/>

On Herbarz-L Jean-Pierre Sangin <sangin@sympatico.ca> gave this as the address for a new site with a "very detailed map from Lithuania ... All villages are here." If your research involves places in Lithuania, this one is worth a look. It is, however, only in Lithuanian at this time; and unless I'm mistaken, it will find only the Lithuanian forms of place names, not the Polish or Russian versions that typically appear in records of genealogical value. Still, free interactive maps of Lithuania are nothing to turn your nose up at!

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<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/labas/>

This is a Website with information on the Lithuanian e-zine \_Labas\_. You can browse past issues and sign up to receive future ones.

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