



Gen Dobry!

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CONTENTS

If You’re looking for Polish Family Photos from Indiana, Try Another Hemisphere

Letters to the Editor

Origins of the Greater Pittston Area, Revised

A Polish Surname Database Online!

Two Other Databases of Interest

Petition for Property Compensation Rights

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://www.polishroots.org/gendobry/gendobry_index.htm

If you’d like *Gen Dobry!* in PDF form, this issue is available for downloading here:

http://www.polishroots.org/gendobry/PDF/GenDobry_IX_10.pdf

***** IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR POLISH FAMILY PHOTOS FROM INDIANA, TRY ANOTHER HEMISPHERE *****

by Paul S. Valasek <hallersarmy@aol.com>

Back in January 2008's issue of *Gen Dobry!*, I touched on the concept that family materials may be in strangers' hands, maybe thousands of miles away, in different countries, even in another hemisphere. Please take a look at that article again for a basic reminder of pen pals and letters.

http://www.polishroots.org/gendobry/PDF/GenDobry_IX_1.pdf

I would like to take this another step and show our readers another possibility. A couple of years ago, I bought two photo postcards from a dealer in Poland. They were quite inexpensive and rather average in terms of content, but what made me pick up my ears was his description of them as being from Indiana, USA. I assumed they were souvenir postcards for some city/ town in Indiana which somehow found their way to a dealer in Poland, most likely with a shoebox full of greeting cards, holiday cards, and the ever-favorite views of Niagara Falls, a local diner, and a motel where someone once stayed.

After viewing the scans, I realized there was a bit more importance to these photos—not earth-shattering, but too much for me to leave them to dry out in a box in Poland. To view these cards, take a look at this page on the PolishRoots site:

http://www.polishroots.org/schools/indiana_schools.htm

Here were two photos of grammar school classes (actually Polish school) fully watched over by Roman Catholic priests and a nun. One card is from Gary, Indiana, dated May 4, 1919; the other is from Michigan City, Indiana, postmarked October 4, 1912.

The Gary card with a priest and a nun has the following text on the back (as best Fred Hoffman and I could decipher and translate it—improvements to the translation are welcome):

“The photograph shows one of the classes of our Polish parish school here in Gary. Next to the children stands the Sister who teaches 2nd grade. And above, guess who? Picture taken 4 May 1919.”

The Michigan City card has the following message:

My dear ones! By this post I am sending 4 other photographs in a separate package—the largest one shows our rectory. Pastor Bolka and I are standing on the front. I marked my two rooms above with little crosses. On these three cards I gave the necessary explanations; the smaller postcard, on which I am writing, shows the children of (??) the two higher classes of our parochial school, and us priests, as well. At the same time I am

sending by mail 70 (dollars?) from which I ask you to give the pension to Mr. Ku?st/
Knast? (about 20 ???). Another 36 is due to Mr. Dzioch (???), right? I received Helcia's
(?)/ (Helen's) letter, thanks for that. I am healthy as a fish, I am using Sanatogen. I ???
you all ___ and kiss your hands. Greetings to acquaintances. Fr. Jan.

I received Wacek's (?) letter and thank him for it.

So we may assume Father Jan wrote both cards and he is the priest in both photos—at least, the priest in both photos looks similar. It appears that the priest on the right-hand side of the Michigan City card is the same man we see on the top of the Gary photo, though the handwriting on the two cards is completely different. We are also now looking for another priest in Michigan City as well as a nun teaching second grade from Gary in 1919.

We have a name, Pastor Bolka (possibly the other priest, though this may be marked on another photo which I do not have.) We also have a name and address of Father Jan's family (?) or good friend in Poland, "Madame J. Chylewska," at "Synag str 3, Hohensalza, Prov. Posen"; and at the very top, it's stated, "Europe – Germany." This alone would allow us to date the card before World War I, when Poznań was Posen and Provinz Posen was part of Germany. As far as who Helcia, Wacek and Mr. Knast are, that would need to be determined from the Posen side of this mystery.

So where is Hohensalza?? Is that even a correct spelling?? Well, it costs nothing to find out. Google "Hohensalza"—if it's correct, it will show up, if not, Google will suggest an alternative spelling. Not only was it correct, but it's the German name for the Polish town called Inowrocław today. As for Madame J. Chylewska, we may assume this is her married name, as it's addressed "Madame" for some reason. So we may also assume she is over the age of 20 in 1912, placing her year of birth before 1892.

There is a Joanna (J) Chylewska listed as marrying Adalbertus Biernacki in 1880 at the age of 28 in the Poznań Project marriage list:

<http://bindweed.man.poznan.pl/posen/search.php>

The age is not a bad match, but this was Joanna's single name, which would not agree with "Madame." Also the place of marriage was Bydgoszcz, not Inowrocław. But then folks do move about. Let's say we need to keep looking, but we should always keep what we've found in mind, as it may yet turn out to be accurate.

And what about *Synagstr 3*, or as it should read, *Synag. str 3*? For basic German research, one must understand that in an address, "str" means *Straße*, "street" in English. Fine, so we have *Synag. Street # 3*. My first impression was that it's a reference to "Synagogue Street," but I wasn't sure. I asked Fred Hoffman and he agreed, that interpretation makes sense. But I still wanted concrete proof. Fred suggested I ask Edward Luft, who is a regular contributor to *Gen Dobry!*—he has considerable firsthand knowledge of many locations in the Prussian partition (my weakest). If there is or was a synagogue in Inowrocław, Edward was a good bet to know how to find

out about it. I also sent an e-mail to my good friend, Michalina Byra, at the National Library in Warsaw. Well, they both answered quickly—and amazingly, they both listed the following site:

<http://kpbc.umk.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=22561>

After checking it out, indeed, I was satisfied *Synag. Street* was shortened from *Synagogen Straße*, which ran through the heart of Hohensalza.

Now, my interest was piqued. Is the street still there? What about the house or building where J. Chylewska received these cards in 1912 and 1919? Checking Google Map, I entered “Inowrocław.” Sure enough, a detailed map showed up with street names when you zoom in on images. After a quick perusal, there was no *Synogogen Street*; but if you split screen the Hohensalza map and the Google map, you can see that today, the street is most likely the one called *Wałowa*—as Edward Luft first pointed out. This is credible because there are only a few streets that retained their old German names; most switched from German to Polish. For instance, *Wasser Gasse* (Water Alley/ Lane) becomes *Wodna (ulica)*, which means “Water Street”; *Kirchen Straße* is now *Kościelna ulica*, both meaning “Church Street.” What is truly amazing is when you take the Google Map and overlay a satellite image with map grids. If we knew what the building at # 3 looked like, **and** if it survived two world wars, we easily could see it on a satellite image of current-day Poland.

So what else can we come up with? We need to try to pinpoint the parish in Indiana, as that might narrow down our search. At least the priests and nun should be recognized from class photos, jubilee books, student recognition, etc. It can be quite difficult to recognize a student, especially if we knew them as an adult, but teachers’ images are often burned in our memories (for good or bad)!

I checked a reference book, *The Official Catholic Directory*, Complete Edition 1912 (perfect timing for genealogists). I find it to be a tremendous value, not only for its information but also of its low cost (\$5.00); I bought it from a research library that decided the book had no further value to its readers! I first assumed that since Gary and Michigan City are so close to Chicago that today they are considered suburbs, I should check under the Diocese of Chicago. Not finding any Indiana parishes listed, I skimmed through the book and found the Diocese of Indianapolis. I did not think that would work, and indeed, it turned up blank. Now resorting to that often overlooked feature (by me) called the Table of Contents, I found that Indiana had two dioceses, Indianapolis and Ft. Wayne. Ft. Wayne seemed a bit far away, as it’s across the state, closer to Ohio than Illinois—but sure enough, there were the cities of northwestern Indiana’s Polonia, Gary and Michigan City.

Under Gary, Indiana, there is a listing for Holy Angels, under the direction of Rev. Francis Thomas Jansen. Well, not exactly Franciszek Tomasz Jansen, so I will hold that for a later choice. The second listing is for St. Hedwig’s, under Rev. P. A. Kahellak, with four Franciscan sisters of St. Kunegunda. Now that sounds more promising. The only other two parishes listed are St. Emericus (Hungarian) and a Slovenian parish being organized. So it appeared my first choice was St. Hedwig’s.

For Michigan City, we have a listing of St. Stanislaus, which sounds good. The other choices are Immaculate Conception, headed by Rev. A.M. Ellering (doesn't sound Polish to me), and a Syrian parish being built. I assumed St. Stanislaus Parish would be what I want.

Checking the Internet via Google, I tried "Polish Parishes Gary Indiana." I found one for St. Hedwig's, but also one for Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary which does not show up in my 1912 catalogue, as it began in 1917, five years later. On the back of the card that mentions Gary, Indiana, the year as written is 1919.

Let me quote the parish's Website:

<http://home.catholicweb.com/AssumptionBVM/index.cfm/>

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Roman Catholic Church began in 1917 when a group of Polish settlers in New Chicago met to see how to establish a parish in their neighborhood. Then-Bishop Herman Alerding of the Diocese of Fort Wayne, gave the group permission to establish a parish under the patronage of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He appointed the Rev. Peter H. Kahellek of neighboring St. Hedwig Parish in Gary to celebrate the first Mass on the First Sunday of Advent, 1917 in an old abandoned school building.

Now what is interesting is here is a Polish parish branching off from an existing one, talking about the diocese of Ft. Wayne as well as having St. Hedwig's priest officiating at the first mass. More ties together.

When Fred Hoffman translated the back of the Michigan City card, the name of Pastor Bolka was uncovered. Googling "Bolka priest Indiana" uncovered the following match:

http://home.att.net/~Local_Catholic/HJA-ch12.htm

The following is excerpted from that site under: "NORTH JUDSON. Starke County. SS. Cyril & Methodius' Church. 1881."

In 1896, Father Kubacki was succeeded by Rev. Peter A. Kahellek, who in return was succeeded by Rev. Joseph Bolka, in July 1899. On November 25, 1904, Father Bolka was transferred to East Chicago and the Rev. Felix Thomas Seroczynski, given charge.

Again, we have connections of Father Kahellek and now Father Bolka, both in northwestern Indiana at or before the necessary time frame. The time frame is earlier than the cards, which is acceptable, and also would explain how Father Bolka later became pastor (advancement takes time). Also, the earlier founding of SS. Cyril and Methodius is consistent with the time frame of Polish immigrants coming from the Prussian partition. It's all starting to come together.

From another Website, www.liturgicalcenter.org/pdf/hist/h_012.pdf, we find information from a volume of Rev. Waclaw Kruszka's book *Historia Polska w Ameryce [Polish History in Ameri-*

ca]. This volume was published in 1908. At the end, a Father Jan Kasprzykowski is mentioned. Could this be our Father Jan??

8. Parafia św. Stanisława Kostki w Michigan City, Ind.
(założona r. 1891.)

Nad brzegiem Jeziora Michigan parafię tę założył ks. Raszkievicz z Otis i tegoż roku oddał ją ks. Wróblowi. Przy rozpoczęciu parafia liczyła 70 familii, w roku 1896 już 120 familii. W styczniu roku 1896. parafia posiadała \$15,000 majątku, a \$4,500 długu. W roku 1906. w szkole było już około 300 dzieci i 5 Sióstr Notre Damek.

Asystentem ks. Wróbla od kilku lat jest ks. Jan Kasprzykowski.

8. Parish of St. Stanislaus Kostka in Michigan City, Indiana (founded in 1891).

Rev. Raszkievicz from Otis founded this parish on the shore of Lake Michigan and in the same year turned it over to Rev. Wróbel. At the outset, the parish number 70 families; by 1896, there were already 120 families. In January 1896, the parish owned \$15,000 in property, and had a debt of \$4,500. In 1906, there were about 300 children in the school, and five Sisters of Notre Dame.

The assistant to Rev. Wróbel is Rev. Jan Kasprzykowski.

* * * *

At this point, if this was someone in my family, I would take a ride over to both parishes and ask people there if they know of this class. Since time and money limits researching trips, I will do the next best thing. I will turn this over to the potentially limitless researchers on the Internet. I would not be surprised if someone sooner or later comes up with a match, added information, or best yet, an identical matching photo of the class stored in their family history box. These cards are not surely the only ones which were created.

In conclusion, let's look at what steps led me through this maze of genealogical investigation. Similar steps are useful for whatever research tasks may present themselves to you.

1. An item was created, in this case two photos of school classes (not unusual and for good reasons).
2. They were saved by the family (again, not unusual).
3. They were shared with other family members (often distant ones) in this case in Poland (not unusual for the times.)
4. Somebody in Poland saved and protected them, most likely for decades (and through World War II) but never threw them out nor destroyed them (Very good rule!) **and** wrote some notations on the back of one card, and a letter on the other! Naming names!! (Again, great ideas to date them and locate them.)
5. Someone else got hold of them and, rather than destroying them, put them up for sale. (Again, not unusual, and in this case, the seller helped to preserve them and bring them to the "surface.")

6. They were placed on the Internet for buyers to look at. (Gee, what else are Internet auction sites known for? Ebay, anyone??)
7. Someone (me) found them and figured they were worth saving a bit longer—and fortunately, they were cheap enough for me to purchase without digging too deep.
8. I have access to some genealogical materials, i.e. the *Official Catholic Directory*. This is why researchers need to buy books and reference materials and build their own library. (The Internet has not yet been completed!)
9. With leads from the book, I could then match up information found on the Internet. Some facts may be duplication, others may be new. Google, Google, Google!
10. I exchanged ideas with fellow researchers. This is where many researchers are losing their edge. We cannot do it all ourselves, sitting at home in front of our computers. I strongly recommend attending genealogical conferences for that first-hand, human-to-human exchange of questions and ideas.
11. We can verify information using both old original materials as well as the latest technology, reaching into space to follow up our questions.
12. I have access to a Website for researchers, PolishRoots. Actually, anyone reading this has the same outlet for legitimate materials, as we are always looking for new articles and images.
13. I have now put the photos online for the world to look at. With luck, one day someone will come along and say, “I know who these kids are, and especially the teachers.” And thus, two photos, taken nearly 100 years ago and having traveled from one hemisphere to another and back, will once again make sense to people and may show some value in relating the story of our Polish past. What would Father Jan have to say?

Think how great our knowledge would be if everyone did something like this! I guarantee each one of you have some similar items to share.

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

Subject: Follow-up on German Railways article

Editor—This note was sent to Edward Luft, author of the article “The Rich Ones Rode in Third-Class Railway Cars to Hamburg or Le Havre” in the September issue of Gen Dobry! Edward passed it along to me, and I thought you might find it interesting.

I enjoyed reading your article in *Gen Dobry!* about fares on German railways. You may enjoy reading the letter below, it is taken from book titled: *Writing Home* by Kula-Wtulich which fea-

tures letters written by immigrants from Russian sector of Poland. This letter does mention some parts of train travel.

Distances:

Zielona to Zieluń is 8 miles

Zieluń to Budy (Budy Kraszewskie) is 27 miles

Zieluń to Lidzbark is 7 miles

Lidzbark to Jabłonowo is 28 miles

Jabłonowo to Berlin is 288 miles

Berlin to Bremen is 149 miles

Ed Kornowski
Buffalo, NY

169 Louis Koronowski, en route to the United States (?), writes from Bremen to his wife, address unknown. On stationery of F. Missler's Travel Agency, Bremen. Near the printing is a picture of a ship and next to it in the author's handwriting: "This is the ship."

6.III.1891

Bremen. 6 March 1891

Dear wife, the first words of my letter are, praised be Jesus Christ!

Now, dear wife, I will tell you about my entire journey from the moment I left Zielona until today, on which my letter ends. From Zielona, I reached Zielun safely. I stopped in to see mother, ate supper [at her place], and then she arranged for a guide. I went with him to the border near Budy, where he picked up two others. I asked him what he was going to charge; he told me 5 rubles. I bargained with him until we agreed on 3 rubles. We reached the border before noon where I had to keep watch for 6 hours until there was a change of Russian guards. At exactly 6 in the evening, a second one did come and only then did we start to move cautiously across the border to Lidzbark. When we arrived there, it was already 8 in the evening. And he, Jarzynek, about whom I speak, went across on a pass in the morning of that day, that is, 27 February. He was the first one in Lidzbark. [Once there] I went to his friend and told him to take me to Koronowski, my stryj. (Uncle on fathers side) We became acquainted and right away he [and his family] welcomed me. They gave me a bedroom and good food to eat on Saturday and Sunday until two in the afternoon. They did not want [to accept] anything from me, only some time to have a Mass said for their intentions. May God reward them a hundred times. On 1 March, that is, on Sunday, at two in the afternoon, we left Lidzbark to press forward by train. In one coach there were over 40 of us. We traveled until Jabłonowo where we [deliberately] changed coaches. We were somewhat cautious and looked around at everything. As soon as the train stopped, we immediately got off and went across, not on the station side, but in back of the coaches to the side opposite the railroad station. We went in back of the railroad station where nobody could see us. We kept a sharp eye on everything as to what was happening there. When the rest of them were coming out of the

coaches, the gendarmes took all of them, and I am told, sent all of them back to the Old Country, so that only 6 of us were left.

Later, another train arrived and we got on it, and we fearfully rode to Berlin, arriving at 5 on Monday morning. As soon as we got off the train and [went into] the railroad station, we were taken through the city. It was like some kind of paradise, for that is a marvelous city. There, there was already peace. Right away the agent's representative took us by coach to the agent whose address we had. He took us to the place where the agent lived, and we bought a steamship ticket [from him]. Then we were driven through Berlin. Here work for the day had already begun; the masons were already building. It was as warm as it is in May in Poland. On Monday at 3 in the afternoon, we were transported to the railroad station to go to Bremen. When we were traveling to Bremen, it was daytime and we saw people working in the fields; they were plowing and spreading manure around, which they got on their shirts. As it was warm, the rye was getting green. In Poland maybe there was still snow. On 2 March, that is, on the very same Monday that we left, we arrived in Bremen at 11 in the evening. From the coaches, we were taken to the director's office to have the steamship ticket issued, and then we were escorted to the hotel where we paid one mark for one night and a half day. We were supposed to depart on Wednesday; but because of the large crowd of people, we had to wait until Saturday. Even though we had to wait, it was without any cost to us; no one had to pay a pfennig; because room and board were provided for us at the expense of the travel agency. We had purchased a steamship ticket to sail on Wednesday, but our ticket number was not selected until somewhat later because there was no space already for us on that ocean liner. Those passengers who had their steamship tickets sent out to them earlier [departed first], and for that reason many people were detained until Saturday. That letter, which you have received or will receive from Berlin from our agent, has the address you are to go to. Do not lose it because it will come in handy either for your wife or for somebody else; hold on to it. And now I will tell you the kind of food I have in Bremen. For breakfast, 3 rolls and as much coffee as one can drink, even 10 cups. Lunch is like this, potatoes and carrots cooked together in a broth, potatoes with cabbage also cooked in a broth, very fat and lean pork meat; for snacks, bread; and for supper, bread and butter on a plate and all the coffee one wants to drink. And now I will tell you about the loneliness I feel; if I had wings, I would immediately fly to you, dear wife. During this time everything is fine here in Bremen. I have very decent sleeping quarters and food. I will be staying here from Monday until Saturday. I do not know what I am thinking of, that is, I will be staying in Bremen until the 6th day of March. I am well, thank God, which I also wish you dear wife and our children, and I wish for their good upbringing. And now give my regards to Pan Kociecki and to Panstwo Spejni. I wish all of you a happy holiday. I will be boarding ship on 7 March at 8 in the morning, so do not expect a letter from me any sooner until God has seen me through and I have managed to find work. I am not going to write any more now because I have little paper left.

Louis Koronowski

Here is Edward Luft's reply to Mr. Koronowski:

Thank you for your e-mail. I am so glad that you enjoyed reading my article. I hope that you will recommend it to others. What a pity that Louis did not describe what the coach looked like inside other than that there were 40 passengers!

If you do not know the name of the ship, you might try to find it in the *Morton-Allen Directory*.

Editor—The book from which Louis Koronowski's letter is quoted, Writing Home: Immigrants in Brazil and the United States, was compiled by Witold Kula, Nina Assorodobraj-Kula, and Marcin Kula, and translated into English by Josephine Wtulich. This letter is typical of many letters from Polish immigrants to their family and friends back home. They often consist of one paragraph, with little punctuation, filling page after page, as if the writer sat down, started writing, and kept going till he'd filled all the pages he had.

If you're interested whether this book might contain letters from a relative, you can search a searchable database indexed by Marilyn Novak at <http://www.pgsa.org/writinghome.php>. A linked page, <http://www.pgsa.org/histletters.php>, tells the story of how these letters came to be preserved. It's too long to go into here, but it is fascinating stuff!

Subject: Revision of an Article in the May 2008 Issue

I have to put in a correction to the piece I submitted on "The Origins of The Greater Pittston Area" which appeared in the May 2008 issue of *Gen Dobry!*, starting on page 7.

Further research revealed the name Avoca was *not* selected in reference to the infamous Mud Run Rail Disaster. The correct explanation is: when borough officials petitioned the postal authorities in Washington, D. C. to have the existing post office moved to a more central location, as the population grew, their request was denied because there was another town named Pleasant Valley in Pennsylvania. Borough officials then petitioned Luzerne County Court to rename the town. In 1889, the court of Quarter Sessions granted their request and the name of the borough was changed from Pleasant Valley to Avoca.

I sending as attachment the entire piece with the correction for Avoca and the three additional sources listed to confirm this story.

Tony Paddock <tcp10@verizon.net>

Editor—It would probably be best to simply reprint the revised article as Tony sent it. Accordingly, it follows this note.

***** ORIGINS OF THE GREATER PITTSTON AREA, REVISED *****

by Tony Paddock <tcp10@verizon.net>

First settled in the late 18th and early 19th century, largely by colonists from New England who erected small settlements and farms near local streams, the Greater Pittston Area, situated in the northeastern corner of Luzerne County, forming the northern boundary of Wyoming's historic vale, consists of 14 municipalities created from the original townships – Pittston, Exeter and Kingston, initially founded by the colonists. With the discovery of coal began the great influx of immigrants – mostly from Eastern Europe, Italy and Ireland that make up the heterogeneous population as it is found today.

Avoca – When Albert McAlpine settled here in 1837, in the flats near Mill Creek, the village was a wilderness. He named the settlement Pleasant Valley and constructed a mill for manufacturing wooden barrels and boxes out of the native trees. Pleasant Valley was officially incorporated on May 24, 1871. Later, when borough officials petitioned the postal authorities in Washington, D. C. to have the existing post office moved to a more central location, as the population grew, their request was denied because there was another town named Pleasant Valley in Pennsylvania. Borough officials then petitioned Luzerne County Court to rename the town. In 1889, the court of Quarter Sessions granted their request and the name of the borough was changed from Pleasant Valley to Avoca.

Dupont – This hamlet was first known as Lidy in honor of a local family. It was re-named Heidleburg and sometime later christened Smithville after a supervisor at the village's Heidleburg coal breaker. When the town applied to Washington, D. C. to open a post office in the early 20th century, it was discovered there was another Smithville in the state. There are two schools of thought as to how the name Dupont was selected. The first, and legend considers it more accurate, is the town was named for its first postmaster. The second suggests the town was named for the Dupont family, who owned the powder mill nearby, that supplied dynamite to the mining industry. It was incorporated as a borough on April 12, 1917,

Duryea – Originally known as Babylon for the variety of languages spoken by its residents, it was later called Marcy Township after Zebulon Marcy, one of the first settlers in the area. Incorporated as the borough of Duryea in 1901, it was named after Colonel Abram Duryea, a mine owner and resident.

Exeter – Initially designated Sturmersville after Colonel Solomon Sturmer, who laid out the village in 1874, it was renamed Exeter when it was incorporated in 1884.

Exeter Township – One of the original five townships formed under Connecticut dating back to 1768. The township was named for Exeter, RI, the original home of some of the early pioneers. The Harding section of the township was named for a family bearing that name.

Hughestown – Established in 1810 as Hamtown and incorporated in 1879, then renamed for the Hughes family, initial residents of the hamlet.

Jenkins Township – Named for Colonel John Jenkins who, in the 18th century, carried out the

first survey of the Wyoming Valley. The Port Blanchard and Port Griffith segments of the township, named for early pioneers, were established at the ferry ports on the Susquehanna River. How the Inkerman section was named remains a question and legend holds the Sebastopol section is named for a Black Sea port in Crimea. The township incorporated in 1852.

Lafin – The first homesteaders, Isaac Gold and Joseph Gardner, arrived in 1794, settling near Gardners Creek. First known as Nash, then White Oak Hollow, Lafin is named for the company that manufactured blasting powder for the area mines. It incorporated as a borough in 1889.

Pittston – Like Pittston Township, it was named after Sir William Pitt an English statesman and member of the British Parliament. Originally spelled Pittstown and called Pittstown Ferry as it was a port for a rope drawn ferry that linked the two river banks. Chartered as a borough in 1853 and incorporated as a city in 1894.

Pittston Township – Formed and surveyed in 1768 under Connecticut, it was one of the five townships of the Susquehanna Land Company.

West Pittston – Nicknamed the Garden Village, it was first known as Fort Jenkins. Christened West Pittston when it incorporated in 1857.

West Wyoming – First known as Carpenter Town, then Carpenter’s Hallow for a landholder who constructed a grist mill on Abraham’s Creek, so called for an Indian Chief, in 1780. Later called Shoemaker’s Hallow when ownership of the mill changed hands. In 1898 it was named West Wyoming, after breaking away from Wyoming, and became its own borough.

Wyoming – In the late 18th century most of the village was owned by Jacob Bedford and initially known as New Troy and later Troy Hollow. It was designated Wyoming in 1839, the name given to the entire valley by the Lenni Lenâpé or Delaware Indians. It is impossible to state with any certainty when the name Wyoming, considered in any one of its various forms, was first applied. According to John Heckewelder, the word Wyoming is a corruption of Maugh-wau-wa-me, the compounded words of maugh-wau, meaning “large or extensive,” and wa-me, signifying “plains or meadows,” and may be translated “The Large Plains.”

Yatesville – Named for Francis Yates, an early pioneer miner. Yatesville incorporated as a borough in 1878.

Source Materials

Oscar Jewell Harvey. *A History of Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County – Early Wyoming Valley History*. Wilkes-Barre, PA 1900

Luzerne County Recorder of Deeds

Pittston, PA, *The Sunday Dispatch*

Wilkes-Barre, PA, *The Times Leader, The Sunday Independent*

The Wyoming Historical Society and Geological Society (now known as the Luzerne County Historical Society).

Golden, Charles J. *50th Anniversary of the First National Bank of Avoca, 1907-1957*

Donovan, John A. *An Overview of Avoca Borough's First Hundred Years, 1871-1971*

Avoca Borough Archive

***** A POLISH SURNAME DATABASE ONLINE! *****

by Zenon Znamirowski <zenon@polishorigins.com>

Dear Mr. Hoffman,

Ten months ago you were kind enough to post in your *Gen Dobry!* my note about launching our new website www.PolishOrigins.com. Since then we have tried gradually improving it to be more and more valuable and useful, especially for those who are interested in genealogy, history of their old country and are looking for relatives living in today's Poland.

Only a few days ago we brought on-line first version of our new tool:

Surnames Database <http://surnames.polishorigins.com>

The main goal of the database is to make it possible for everyone to search for people who are interested in the same surnames and to enable the exchange of information and findings. In the near future we will add a second database for places (towns, villages, cities) of interest.

What distinguishes our database:

- your e-mail address is not revealed to anyone. Communication with other forum and database users can be performed only via private messages or Forum;
- each member can very easily create a simple web page about his or her research by adding notes and pictures;
- in the near future everyone will be able to search for places and members whose ancestors emigrated from a given city, town or village. You can already add places of your interest into the database.

We hope that the database will be helpful for many people in their genealogical and family search. There are already a few members, about who we know, who connected through our website, e.g.:

<http://forum.polishorigins.com/viewtopic.php?t=32>, or
<http://forum.polishorigins.com/viewtopic.php?p=290#290>

or even found their living relatives among Poles:

<http://forum.polishorigins.com/viewtopic.php?p=379#379>

More detailed information about how can you can make use of the Surnames Database can be found here:

<http://forum.polishorigins.com/viewtopic.php?t=152>

Address of the Surnames Database: <http://surnames.polishorigins.com> or <http://polishorigins.com/surnames>

Best regards,

Zenon & Team

<http://www.PolishOrigins.com>

Editor—As I told Zenon when I responded, I'm very pleased to see this database because it's one that welcomes posts in English. There are also posts on surnames and other aspects of Polish research at <http://www.genealodzy.pl/>, but they aren't much help if you're not fluent in Polish.

*** TWO OTHER DATABASES OF INTEREST ***

by Thomas Sadauskas <Thomas.Sadauskas@tma.osd.mil>

Ancestry.com has added the UK Incoming Passengers, 1878-1960. The term Incoming is also known as Inbound by the British Archives at Kew.

The database can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/668qq5>

Here is some info about it from Ancestry.com:

Source Information:

Ancestry.com. UK Incoming Passenger Lists, 1878-1960 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: The Generations Network, Inc., 2008. Original data: Board of Trade: Commercial and Statistical Department and successors: Inwards Passenger Lists. Kew, Surrey, England: The National Archives of the UK (TNA). Series BT26, 1,472 pieces.

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formation provided. Images may be used only for purposes of research, private study or education. Applications for any other use should be made to the National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU. Infringement of the above condition may result in legal action.

About UK Incoming Passenger Lists, 1878-1960

This database is an index to the Board of Trade's passenger lists of ships arriving in the United Kingdom from foreign ports outside of Europe and the Mediterranean from 1878-1888 and 1890-1960. Information listed on the passenger lists may include: name of passenger, their birth date or age, port of departure, port of arrival, date of arrival, and vessel name."

It looks like the database is a work in progress. I searched for my grandfather's sister (Mrs. Agota Baltramaitis) who sailed in 1912 (along with her two year old daughter) from Hamburg to Grimsby, England and then by train to Southampton and onto America and Ellis Island and by train to Chicago to join her husband. I couldn't find her but then I checked the site and found that only records for 1951, 1955, 1957, and 1958 had been loaded to date (as of 27 October 2008).

Another database recently available is from Cook County, Illinois

<http://www.cookcountyclerkofcourt.org/NR/default.aspx>

Per the Website:

The Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County Archives is home to more than 500,000 naturalization petitions covering the years 1871 to 1929. More than 400,000 of these records are Declarations of Intention, 1906-1929 which were usually the first papers to be filed by those who wished to become U.S. citizens.

Because the Declaration may be the only public record of an individual immigrant, it is a significant source of documentation for genealogists and scholars.

Also, taken as a whole, the Declarations of Intention document the social changes of the immigrant experience during this era and so can be of interest to scholars and researchers from many disciplines.

This database of Declarations of Intention was created thanks to a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), a division of the National Archives. Since the beginning of the project in November 2006, more than 150,000 Circuit Court records have been entered into the database, and we continue to enter more on an on-going basis.

Again, this site is a work in progress. You'll need to periodically go back to visit it to see if that missing relative has had their record loaded. I found the Declaration of Intent for Jonas Baltramaitis (my grandfather's brother-in-law). He's listed as "John Baltramonas" in the database.

Interestingly, his occupation is listed as “ship builder” as compared to his 1920 U.S. Census entry which lists his occupation as “carpenter.” I guess I’ll now need to figure out what kind of ship building would have been going on the South Side of Chicago in 1919.

***** PETITION FOR PROPERTY COMPENSATION RIGHTS *****

by Wiesław [George] Helon <ghelon@yahoo.com.au>

Editor—This petition was sent to me so I could send it along to others.

To ALL as Addressed -

Please take a few minutes to Visit this URL:

<http://www.petitiononline.com/kresy08/petition.html>

and sign this Petition,

Poland: Equality in Reparation, Property and Compensation Rights and Their Protection

which I have prepared on behalf of all Survivors, Children, Heirs and Descendants of those Patriotic and Heroic Polish Citizens and Martyrs who lived within, and valiantly guarded Poland’s Eastern Borderland Frontier [Kresy Wschodnie] between the inter-war years of 1920 to 1940.

It is addressed to:

The President and Parliament of the Republic of Poland

On the abandonment, helplessness and inability of survivors, children, heirs, and descendants —of those patriotic and heroic Polish Citizens and Martyrs who lived in, and valiantly guarded Poland’s Eastern Borderland Frontier (Kresy Wschodnie) between the inter-war years of 1920 to 1940 - to apply for Property Compensation in order to realize their claims and satisfy their entitlements without recourse to unnecessary and prolonged Court actions and Appeals, because of widespread and systemic defects in various Legislation enacted by the Parliament of the Republic of Poland and those Provisions contained therein.

Please let others know about this Petition and how the Survivors, their Children, Heirs and Descendants and their Families of the Deportations have been forgotten and how they are being treated. We are the silent victims of the Forgotten Holocaust consigned to the oblivion of history.

Your interest, support, and feedback is very much appreciated.

Thank you.

Wiesław [George] Helon
Post Office Box 88
Toowoomba Queensland 4350
AUSTRALIA

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

November 1, 2008

HOLY CROSS CEMETERY, DETROIT

The Polish Genealogical Society of Michigan and the West Side Detroit Polish American Historical Society are planning a pilgrimage, prayer, and *Wypominki* (naming) at Holy Cross Cemetery on Saturday, November 1, beginning at 1:00 p.m.

Steve Frayer will provide keyboards and vocals. We are planning a tour of the cemetery and are planning to visit the graves of a few prominent individuals who are buried at Holy Cross with presentations of their histories. We hope to have a short presentation on the history of the cemetery and a short representation on the history of Polish All Souls customs. Those attending will also be able to visit the graves of their deceased relatives up until 5 p.m.

- *West Side Detroit Polish American Historical Society Newsletter*
www.detroitpolonia.org

[From a note posted by Ceil Jensen to the Polish Genius mailing list.]

Saturday, November 1 – Sunday, November 2, 2008

**LITHUANIAN MUSIC HALL MUGÈ [FAIR]
2715 E. ALLEGHENY AVE.
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA**

The Lithuanian Music Hall in Philadelphia will hold its *Mugè* (Fair) November 1 and 2, Saturday and Sunday. Time is 12 noon until 5 p.m. each day. There will be food, desserts, music, folk dances, and vendors coming in to sell their Lithuanian wares. All three floors will be used for this event. This is a nice way to learn more about your Lithuanian heritage.

[From a note by Millie Helt, Recording Secretary for the Music Hall Association Board, posted to the Lithuanian Genealogy mailing list.]

November 20 – 21, 2008

**THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SLAVIC STUDIES
(AAASS)
40TH NATIONAL CONVENTION
Philadelphia Marriott Downtown
1201 Market Street
Philadelphia, Pa.**

A panel on Carpatho-Rusyns and the Folk Arts: Dance, Song, and Architecture will be held on Thursday November 20th, from 3:15-5:15 p.m., Grand Ballroom, Salon F.

Patricia A. Krafcik (Evergreen State College) is the panel chair.

Scholars and their papers to be presented include:

- Joby Patterson (University of Oregon): “Cultural Communication in Wood: The Diffusion of Building Styles in the Carpathians”;
- Cathy Black (Brigham Young University): “From Obscurity to the Kyczera State: The Reconstruction of the Polish Lemko Rusyn Fedory Ritual”;
- Robert Metil (Chatham College) “Rusyn Song in Eastern Slovakia: Old and New Performance Contexts.”
- The annual meeting of the associates of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center will take place Friday 11/21 from 1:30-3:30 p.m. in Hospitality Suite 2.

For complete program and registration info, see

<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~aaass/convention.html>

[From a note posted to the Galicia_Poland-Ukraine mailing list]

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

<http://torugg.org/tugg>

On the Galicia_Poland-Ukraine list, Jim Onyschuk announced the launch of his new “Discovering My Roots” blog at this address. Its purpose is to “help plan your research trip to Ukraine; educate ourselves on “How to do” genealogical research on our Ukrainian and Polish ancestry; learn what is available to help our search; to ask for other’s help in knowing where to look; to share our experiences and knowledge. Every day or two an article of interest on Ukrainian or Polish genealogy will be published ... We want you to tell us what you like or want

more of so go ahead; let us know what you think.”

http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/baedeker_n_germany_1910.html

Gerd Müllenheim posted a note in German on the Posen mailing list, explaining that a great deal of map material for Germany as of 1910 can be found at this URL. Since much of what is now northern and western and southwestern Poland was part of Germany as of that year, these historical maps may be very helpful for some of our readers.

<http://genj.sourceforge.net/wiki/doku.php>

On the Polish Genius list, Paul Guzowski wrote that he is “a fan of open source (free) software and use it for my genealogy research and recording. There are several good programs out there for different operating systems but I use GenJ [at the above URL] because it is easy, platform-independent, and reads/writes standard GEDCOM files which are compatible with most commercial genealogy software. I recently came across another program called GeneWeb (<http://www.geneweb.org/>) that is browser based and available for multiple operating systems including Windows. I haven’t used it but it looks pretty good and it can also use GEDCOM files.” He also praised Open Office (www.openoffice.org) as able to do everything Microsoft Office does, and is trying an open source desktop publisher called Scribus, available at <http://www.scribus.net>. Researchers are always looking for good software to organize genealogical notes, write up their results, and publish it. Open source software is certainly worth a look!

<http://www.genealogybank.com>

Also on the Polish Genius list, Ray Marshall said this was a potentially valuable Website he had not encountered before. He noted that “you could do a general search of Minnesota newspapers (or any state) for individuals” (<http://www.genealogybank.com/gbnk/newspapers/>). Ray added, “They list the date for each article so if you don’t want to pop for the twenty bucks, you could just do some library research of the newspaper microfilm if your library has it or if it available through interlibrary loan. If your ancestor owned a business or was otherwise newsworthy, I would highly recommend that you do a preliminary search of the newspapers in Genealogybank.com and see what they might have. You might be surprised if you only have now what your ancestor wanted you to have. You could find some of the information they DIDN’T want you to have.”

http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy/2008/09/your-family-coa.html

In a recent issue of *Eastman’s Online Genealogical Newsletter*, Dick Eastman addressed a subject all too familiar to those of us connected with genealogy for any length of time: claims of nobility and coats of arms. I know I constantly get notes from people who want to know what their “family crest” was, and they’re baffled when I told them only nobles had such critters! This article is a pretty good summary of what’s involved in finding out if your family really did have a coat of arms, and how to track it down. (I just wish Eastman had mentioned PolishRoots among the sites that can help with Polish nobility!)

<http://windowoneurasia.blogspot.com/2008/10/window-on-eurasia-belarusians-russians.html>

Paul S. Valasek brought this site to my attention. It has some rather controversial claims about the relationship—or lack of it—between Belarusians and Russians. Strictly from a linguistic point of view, I found many of the claims dubious. Still, it's good occasionally to be exposed to controversial claims, if only because you learn a lot by refuting them!

<http://www.canada.com/montrealgazette/news/story.html?id=a85311d0-5acb-42da-aac5-e37857d70e17&k=29091>

Maureen Mroczek Morris brought this story to my attention, from the 9 July 2008 issue of *The Montreal Gazette*, about the reunion of several dozen Polish orphans who were brought to Canada in 1949. They got together at the Polish Canadian Welfare Institute on Bélanger St. The guest of honour was Jan Krolikowski, the Roman Catholic priest who accompanied the orphans on their journey from Africa and wrote a book, *Stolen Childhood*, about their wartime ordeal. It's a fascinating story, even if I didn't learn about it till more than four months later.

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