



Gen Dobry!

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*** WELCOME! ***

to the latest issue of *Gen Dobry!*, the e-zine of PolishRoots®. If you missed previous issues, you can find them here:

http://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_VII_8.pdf

***** MALE OR FEMALE: WHICH IS IT? *****

by Fred Hoffman <wfh@langline.com>

One of the reasons I like to answer questions on surnames is because looking up the answers constantly teaches me something new. Every so often I come across a tidbit I think may interest others, and this is one of those times. It has to do with the feminine form of Polish surnames that are adjectival in form. One of the first things we researchers learn to deal with is that names such as *Lewandowski* or *Nowotny* have distinctive feminine forms, *Lewandowska* or *Nowotna*. We should expect our female ancestors to show up in Polish records under those forms, not under the masculine versions. No exceptions, right?

Well, if you weren't born yesterday you know better than to fall for that one. There are always exceptions! In this case, it has been true for a long time that Polish females almost always used the feminine forms. But there's strong evidence that custom is changing.

The whole question came up when a researcher wrote, "I'd be interested in learning anything you can tell me about this Polish surname – *Wyczesany* ... I did a search on the link you provided (<http://www.herby.com.pl/herby/indexslo.html>) which shows 350 people with this surname as of 1990. It appears to be obscure. There are also another 150 people with a variation on the spelling, *Wyczesana*."

I started my reply with basic info on pronunciation and meaning:

Wyczesana, pronounced roughly "vich-ess-AH-nah," is the feminine form of *Wyczesany* ("vich- ess-AH-nee"). Though none of my sources mentions the name's origin, I'm pretty sure it developed as a participle of the verb *wyczesać*, "to comb out." *Wyczesany* would mean literally "combed out," and that form would apply to a male; a female would be *Wyczesana*. Presumably this started as a nickname for an ancestor whose hair was always well combed, never tangled and messy-looking.

But then I verified the data given on the *Słownik nazwisk* Website, and started wondering. 150 females, 350 males!? How can that be? That shouldn't happen, unless something really odd is going on. The numbers for males and females with a specific name should not differ by more than a few percentage points. In a given instance anything is possible; but this sort of discrepancy is a red flag, a sign saying "You'd better take another look at this; something is weird here!"

Then I remembered a phenomenon Prof. Kazimierz Rymut had mentioned in his foreword to the CD-ROM *Dictionary of Surnames in Current Use In Poland at the Beginning of the 21st Century*:

But in recent decades surnames of the *Nowotny* and *Górny* type are more and more often encountered in reference to women. There are women whose identification papers give their surnames in forms of that type, such as *Górny* and *Zagrodney*. This is a new phenomenon in Poland, and one spreading rapidly, even though linguistic handbooks regard these name forms as incorrect.

I remember I mentioned this once to Polish researcher Iwona Dakiniewicz, and she was astonished; she'd never run across it. But the more I've worked with data from the 1990 database online at <http://www.herby.com.pl/herby/indexslo.html>, and especially with the more comprehensive and accurate 2002 data from Rymut's CD, the more I've come across obvious discrepancies in numbers. A significant number of surnames that were masculine in form were showing up as two or three times as common as their feminine counterparts.

The 1990 data did not tell me enough to figure out what was going on with this specific name. But the 2002 data from the CD breaks the numbers down by gender, indicating the number of males with M. and females with F. I'd never really stopped to look closely at this before, but decided it would only take a few moments to crunch the numbers for these entries.

The 2002 data showed 147 Polish citizens named Wyczesana, 440 named Wyczesany. All the Wyczesana's were female—and so were 142 of the Wyczesany's! Adjust the figures in light of the data I just gave, and you have 147+142 females = 289, compared with 298 males (440-142). Once you take that into account, the numbers are much more in line with what we'd expect.

In case you're interested in this particular surname, the data from 1990 and 2002 both showed it all over Poland, but with the largest numbers in the general area of Kraków and Tarnów, in southcentral to southeastern Poland. The 1990 data showed 98 Wyczesany's in Kraków province, 131 in Tarnów province; the numbers for Wyczesana were 57 in Kraków province, 61 in Tarnów province. The 2002 data showed a similar distribution (adjusting, of course, for the changes in provinces as of 1999). So while a given Wyczesany family could have come from anywhere, odds are decent they came from that general area, between Kraków and Tarnów.

Back to this whole masculine/feminine issue. Of course, you can't jump to conclusions based on only one set of data. Close examination in this case, however, confirmed the impression I'd received while looking up many other names. I will take time to examine this point in the future whenever I come across a significant discrepancy between numbers of males and females, just to verify that the phenomenon is real. But based on what I've seen before, I'm pretty sure it is.

Why are Polish women forsaking the feminine forms? I can think of several possible answers, but I have no way of testing which ones hold up under examination.

I have noticed a tendency in Poland in recent decades to shed some of the complexity of name forms. These days, for instance, married women are much more likely to call themselves *Nowak*, not *Nowakowa* (Mrs. Nowak), or *Zaremba*, not *Zarembina* (Mrs. Zaremba). Unless I'm very much mistaken, unmarried females rarely advertise their status by using the traditional forms with *-ówna* and *-ewna*. This all may be partly due to a tendency to modernize, to junk old forms that no longer seem to serve a useful purpose. The attitude of many is that distinctive feminine forms may be nice, but they aren't efficient. These days a lot of us are embracing efficiency, only to realize too late that we've given up something that gave life flavor and charm.

Feminism might have something to do with it, too; I don't think American women are the only ones to resist social practices that have no other purpose than to set them apart from men. Such practices

strike many as inconsistent with a desire for legal equality. (Others, of course, feel women should never settle for mere equality).

Personal security might also be a factor. I know some women who live alone don't want the address on their mail, for instance, to make it clear they're female, as that might make things too easy for sexual predators. Simply from that standpoint, mail addressed to "A. Wyczesany" is less of a tip-off than mail addressed to "A. Wyczesana." No point, in effect, putting up a sign saying "Hey, creeps, a single woman lives here." My understanding is a lot of American women choose to go by names that don't reveal their gender for precisely the same reason—for instance, "A. Jones" instead of "Amanda Jones."

Maybe these factors are involved. Maybe it's due to something I haven't thought of. All I can say is, this particular change is showing up in Poland. It's hardly universal, and perhaps in time most people will opt to preserve the distinctive feminine forms. Then again, in a generation maybe they'll be nothing more than a memory, a footnote in old books. We'll just have to wait and see.

In the meantime, this is one more of those things they teach you is *always* true, that actually isn't. In older records, however, you can generally rely on seeing females called *Wyczesana*, not *Wyczesany*; *Nowotna*, not *Nowotny*; *Wiśniewska*, not *Wiśniewski*. So when it comes to what you'll see as you trace your family tree, the old rules still apply. These days ... well, it ain't necessarily so.

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

Subject: Hair on Your Chest

Editor—The piece we reprinted in the last issue, "Proud to Be Polish," included the observation "You always prefer rye bread to white or wheat. Your dad has forced you to eat horseradish, claiming that it will 'put hair on your chest' (even if you're a female!)." One reader reacted to this:

Oh my goodness! My dad, who was raised by his Polish grandparents, always said this to me when I didn't eat my bread crusts. Sadly, he passed away earlier this year — I would have liked to have asked him if he learned the expression from them.

Mary (female) Treder <mct919@hotmail.com>

Editor—I'm sorry to hear your Dad is gone and you can't ask him. It would be interesting to hear what he'd say. I can't imagine why anyone would encourage a woman to grow hair on her chest. As if shaving your legs isn't bad enough....

Subject: Misspellings in the Ellis Island Database

Editor—In my article “Place Names: More Important than Surnames?” I mentioned a researcher trying to find a place name mangled in the Ellis Island database index as “Kosfarovd.” That brought this comment:

Re Ellis Island, people can't be told often enough that the place and personal names in the database are unedited. My paternal gm's line is connected to the small town of Kęty, in the Śląsk region. Four letters. Four tiny, little letters. In doing some EI research, I found at least 5, possibly more, misspellings of Kęty (there were other reasons why I knew it was the same town). Just sayin'.

As for the mangled place name, it is useful to know which combinations of letters would never occur in Polish and/or German. When I saw the place name, I thought immediately, “Nordic”! (yeah, right). Even if you don't know either language, a good dictionary (by which I mean \$12 for something like Cassell's in paperback), or a little map Googling, can help a lot.

Re PDF's, some you can cut and paste, some not. It depends, apparently, on whether the creator of the original document “locked” it.

As always, thanks for an unendingly useful and interesting e-zine.

Sophie M. Korczyk <smkorczyk@comcast.net>

Editor—I appreciate your taking the time to send me these comments. As for PDF's, it never occurred to me, but yes, they do support various security measures, including ways to lock out changes, or even prevent extracting the text. I've never locked one, but I guess some people do. So that can indeed be a factor when PDF's misbehave.

Subject: The Lucky Ladewski Papers

Editor—This note actually was sent to PolishRoots Webmaster, Don Szumowski. Don shared it with me since the author obviously wants to spread word of this work:

Since my retirement in February, I have been working with the Center for History in South Bend to restore and digitize the work of Gertrude “Lucky” Ladewski, a local devotee of Genealogy and Polish Culture.

I have completed the first 16 boxes of paper through the letter “P” and we have data up and online through the letter “M”...

Although the work concentrates on Polish surnames, others nationalities are covered when data is available. The focus is St. Joseph County, Indiana families, but as you browse through you will follow their journeys from NY, PA, IL, etc. to the factories of turn-of-the-century St. Joseph County ... so there is a relation to many families in these states

If God cooperates and lets me hang around for a while the work should be complete by summer of 2007....

Please feel free to tag on to this site as a database and share the information with others researching our Polish Heritage:

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~instjose/LadewskiPapers/lucky.htm>

Jim Piechorowski <Jamespiech@aol.com>

Editor—I remember one of the first issues I ever typeset of the Newsletter of the Polish Genealogical Society (as PGSA was called back then) had an article on Lucky Ladewski. I was sorry to see she'd passed on, and am glad to hear you're working to restore and digitize her work. It's bad enough when death robs us of a good person; we can't let her work be lost, too. Good luck!

Subject: Poland in the Rockies

Editor—Maureen Mroczek Morris sent me a copy of this piece, which she submitted to White Eagle News/Bialy Orzel. It's about the 2006 "Poland in the Rockies" program in Alberta. I thought you might enjoy reading about it:

Poland in the Rockies is, for some, a life-changing experience. That certainly was the case this July for students attending the second-ever 11-day summer symposium on Polish history and culture in the Rocky Mountains of Alberta, Canada. For students participating in this graduate-level conference, the multidisciplinary program known as *Poland in the Rockies* is about meeting other young people with common cultural reference points and similar family experiences. It's about learning and sharing and having fun in a culturally-friendly environment. The intensive program brings together speakers from a wide variety of disciplines (history, art, literature, linguistics, journalism, politics, film and theater) and bright gifted students from all over North America. Classes are conducted in English at various venues in Canmore, a resort town about an hour's drive from Calgary. Friendships are forged and cemented at meals, campfires, on swims, hikes and in after-hours gatherings where Polish themes dominate conversation.

2004 marked the first-ever *Poland in the Rockies*, the brain-child of Tony Muszynski, a Canadian-born lawyer who saw the need to afford young people in Canada and the United States an opportunity to explore identity issues in a congenial and intellectually stimulating environment.

Speakers for the 2006 program were historians Marek Chodakiewicz, Robert Frost, and Karin Friedrich; *Newsweek International* Senior Editor Andrew Nagorski; *Globe and Mail* journalist Esanislao (Stan) Oziewicz; *Polityka* journalist Adam Szostkiewicz; director of Polish Studies at Indiana University and translator of modern Polish literature, Bill Johnston; director of Polish Studies at the University of Toronto, Tamara Trojanowska; film director Menachem Daum; film, television and theatre writer Eva Nagorski; and writer Irene Tomaszewski. The symposium also included a presentation by Witold Naturski on the Yalta conference and its long-term consequences. Several films (including one student film) complemented the lectures: CNN's *Warsaw Uprising: The Forgotten Soldiers of WWII*; *A Forgotten Odyssey: The Untold Story of 1,700,000 Poles Deported to Siberia in 1940*; *Land of My Mother*; *1000 Years of Polish History*;

Zegota: Council to Aid Jews in Occupied Poland (1942-45); Exiles; Solidarity; Hiding and Seeking and *The Last Witness* (a film about Katyń).

The students represented many disciplines, including the biological sciences, drama, literature, computer science, mythology and literature, and hailed from various Canadian provinces and states in the U.S.A. All students were fully funded, primarily by individual sponsors and Polish organizations in Canada. As the excellence of the program becomes more widely known, it is hoped that more organizations and individuals in the United States and Canada will lend their support.

Irene Tomaszewski, founding member of *Poland in the Rockies*, was honored by Alexi Marchel's dramatic reading of her translation of *Letters from a Gestapo Prison: The Krystyna Wituska Story*. Irene is currently working on a film, *African Waltz*, selected for the Sundance Independent Producers' Workshop, about post-WWII Poles who were relocated to Africa.

For 11 days students were steeped in Polish history and culture. Somewhat formal presentations were interspersed with panel discussions. Students learned that the paradigms that define Polish national and cultural identity are many and shifting and that the dominant paradigms have shifted over time for historical reasons. Listeners were admonished to discover the less prominent paradigms that never gained ascendancy, to understand those paradigms that did, and to not destroy Polish traditions or to degrade them. In small groups, students struggled with the challenges of translating Polish poetry and literature (culture) for English-speaking audiences.

The intensity of the program was matched by the intensity of newly-formed friendships. Students took home *Poland in the Rockies* t-shirts, a network of friends and mentors, memories, inspiration and ideas.

As one student commented at the conclusion of *Poland in the Rockies*, "I am so much happier now than I was before coming to *Poland in the Rockies*."

Maureen Mroczek Morris <maureenm@sbcglobal.net>

Subject: 1906 Records from Mary Queen of Angels Church

Editor—This note was sent in reference to Paul Valasek's article "1906 Births, Marriages, and Deaths for St. John Cantius and Mary of The Angels – Chicago" in our January 2006 issue:

I was spending time on the indexing for the Poznań Project and didn't keep up with *Gen Dobry!* Searching the back issues I was missing I found an item of interest in January 2006 on "the 1906 records from Mary Queen of Angels Church."

My Great-grandfather put a few dollars into building the church, and several relatives were married and probably baptized there, but none listed in 1906. Several people were listed on Wabansia St., where my GGF lived and operated a tailor business in the rear of 134 Wabansia St. for some 20+ years. He had about 20 employees and (as related to me by relatives) would roll out the barrel on

Friday afternoons. Legend further has it that he provided Sears with the first ready-made pants, since into the late 1800s most clothes were tailor-made. The site was covered over by railroad tracks about 1915.

Ed Price (Przybylski) <edwardwp@aol.com>

***** INDEX OF SURNAMES AND PLACE NAMES FOUND IN *FROM SERFDOM TO SELF-GOVERNMENT: MEMOIRS OF A POLISH MAYOR, 1842-1927*, BY JAN SŁOMKA, 1941, MINERVA PUBLISHING CO., LTD, LONDON *****

compiled by Thomas Sajwaj <tesgen@comcast.net>

Editor—Tom has gone to the trouble of compiling an index for this book, one I've been hearing about for years. Dorothy Pancoast wrote a 7-page article on it, with numerous extracts, that appeared in the May 1995 issue of PGSA's Journal Rodziny. From what I can tell, it's a really good look at how peasants lived in Poland in the 19th and early 20th centuries. There are jillions of references to the book online, including a brief extract here (and on many other sites): <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~atpc/heritage/history/h-life/peasant.html>. If you can get your hands on the book through a library, I think you may find it interesting and informative, well worth the trouble. Tom's index will undoubtedly help a lot.

This book is an excellent overview of pleasant and town life and historical events that occurred at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Jan Słomka (1842-1927) was mayor of Dzików, now a suburb of Tarnobrzeg in southeastern Poland.

“The first edition appeared in 1912.... The second, which is now offered in shortened form in this English version, appeared in 1929” (quotation from the translator's foreword). The book is apparently out-of-print, but might be obtained from a used book dealer.

All spellings are as they appeared in the text. No effort was made to change or correct them. The (?) was used when a surname was implied, but not actually given in the text, or where there was uncertainty.

Some names were given in the text only with a first name or title, but with only an initial for the surname. For others, only a surname was given with a first name. Place names, outside the Tarnobrzeg area, such as Lublin and Kraków, were not included here. Dzików and Tarnobrzeg were also omitted, given their numerous citations in the text.

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 Skopanie; village where sheep were raised; 64
 Skowierzyn; place where “the best fruit was grown”; 38
 Slomka (?) Felix; uncle of Jan Slomka; 2
 Slomka(?), Kunegunda; grandmother of Jan Slomka; 6
 Slomka(?); Peter, uncle of Jan Slomka; 2
 Slomka(?), Valentine; grandfather of Jan Slomka; 1
 Slomka, Jan; author of book; ---
 Slomka, Joseph; father of Jan Slomka; 1

Slomka, Mary Tworek; wife of Jan Slomka; 10
 Slomka, Yadwiga; mother of Jan Slomka; 2
 Sobieski, King John; king of Poland in the 1600s; 189
 Sobov,; village near Dzikow; 14, 212, 260
 Sosnkowski, Colonel; adjutant to Joseph Pilsudski; 242
 Srula; a tavern owner; 104
 Stala; nearby village scene of heavy fighting in World War 1; 233
 Stala, Jan; elected mayor of Dzikow after the World War 1; 254
 Stala, Stanislas; manager of a savings and loan bank; 198
 Stampor; cobbler in Tarnobrzeg from Rzeszov; 66
 Stany; place where pottery was made; 71
 Stuergh, Graf; a murdered premier; 241
 Sucorzev; a nearby village; 113
 Szczawnica; place in the “high Carpathians”; 76
 Szczucin; site of a battle in 1863(?); 13, 206
 Szrayber; a tavern owner; 104, 105
 T., Jacob; neighbor of Jan Slomka; 33
 Tarnov/Tarnow; “far-away” town or city; ix, 18, 59, 60, 80, 175, 207, 267
 Tarnowska; village near Dzikow; 14
 Tarnowska Vola, a place presumably near Dzikow, 125, 270
 Tarnowska, Countess; wife of Count Zdislav Tarnowski; 224, 237-238
 Tarnowski family; nobility and owners of much land around Dzikow; 1, 5, 14, 72
 Tarnowski, Andrew; a noble who acted as a judge; 159, 160, 161
 Tarnowski, Count Jan; son of Jan Bogdan Tarnowski; 165
 Tarnowski, Count Jan Bogdan; died in 1850; 163
 Tarnowski, Count John; member of Tarnowski family; 48, 159
 Tarnowski, Count Stanislaw; brother of Count Jan Tarnowski; 166, 168, 201
 Tarnowski, Count Zdislav; Count in 1914 in Dzikow; 214, 218-219, 237, 261, 264-265, 270
 Tarnowski, Countess Gabriela Malachowska; wife of Jan Bogdan Tarnowski; 164
 Tarnowski, Countess Sophia Zamoyska; built first hospital in Miechocin in 1864, 131, 166
 Tarnowski; Count Julius, killed at Szczucin; 13
 Tertil; an elected official in 1918; 246
 Trzesn; village near Dzikow; 14
 Tworek, Jan; Jan Slomka’s father-in-law, from Machov; 10
 Ulanov; nearby place with great war damage; 233
 Vielowski; a farmer in Dzikow; 201
 Vioneck, W.; an elected official in 1918; 243
 Vymyskov/Vymyslov; nearby village; 180, 213
 W.; Jan, a neighbor of Jan Slomka, 116
 W., Leysor; a Jew who was “the richest businessman in Tarnobrzeg”; 90, 98, 99
 W., Valeryan; a farmer in Dzikow; 201
 Weinberg, seller of limestone in Cracow; 178, 179
 Weiss, Helen; school principal and elected official in 1918; 243
 Wianek; heights near Tarnobrzeg; 213
 Wieliczka; source of rock salt; 55
 Wielowies; village near Dzikow; 14

Witos, Wincenty; “a man of unusual understanding for public affairs”; ix, 246
Wrzawa/Wrzawy; place where “the best fruit was grown”; 38, 39, 213
Wurm; townsman in Maydan; 74
Wydrza,; nearby village, scene of heavy fighting; 233
Z.; Mr., county head of Mielec; 169
Zakopane; place in the “high Carpathians”; 76
Zakrzow; village near Dzikow; 14, 41, 129
Zaleszany; place near the San River; 213
Zapav/Zupav; place with “water-wheel”; 72, 87
Zderski; family that owned a home in Tarnobrzeg; 88
Zegrze; a place name; 242
Zemkovicz, Adam; general manager of post-war construction; 239
Zupava; village near Dzikow; 14, 19
Zwierzyniets; village near Dzikow; 14
Zywiec; place where soldiers were recruited; 206

Editor—As Tom said, he did not make any effort to correct the spelling as given in the book. I'm surprised the translator wasn't more consistent in rendering names. As any student of Polish knows, Poles don't use the letter V – they use W for that sound. So everywhere you see a V in this list of proper names, you can routinely change it to W. I can't imagine why the translator apparently did this with some names, but not with others. It's not a major problem, however; anyone who does Polish research has to learn to “see V and think W.”

***** MORE PHOTOS OF POLISH VILLAGES ONLINE *****

by Debbie Greenlee <daveg@airmail.net>

Editor—Debbie posted this note on the Poland-Roots mailing list.

I recently placed the rest of my photos of my 2005 trip to Poland on my web site. I had over 90 rolls of film to go through. Please take a look. Perhaps you'll find your ancestral village. I've added “new” villages and new photos in “old” villages. The old województwo is indicated for each village on the web site.

<http://www.polishfamily.com/p4e/index.html>

Just because I have all these photos does not mean I did anything more than stop to take a photograph, however. My routine is to stop and take pictures of shrines, memorials, churches, cemeteries and so on as I drive from one destination to another.

I am almost finished scanning my photos from my trip in July, 2006 so those should be online shortly.

The “new” villages from 2005 include:

Biedoszyce	Kalisz	Stara Brzeźnica
Brudnia	Kiejsze	Stasikowa
Brusy	Kolonia Czołowo	Stegna
Brzezie	Kolonia Stróża	Strzelce Wielkie
Brzyska	Kościerzyna	Stutthof
Chełmno	Łąpsze Niżne	Szaflary
Chodaki	Łask	Szczerców
Czernikowo	Lichnowy	Szczawnica
Dąbrówka (Krosno)	Malbork	Targowiska
Dąbrówka (Bydgoszcz)	Mikołajówek	Trybsz
Dubidze	Modliborzyce	Tujsk
Dziedno	Niedzica	Ujazd
Gdańsk	Oliwa	Wałdowo
Glinik Górny	Ośniszczewko	Wierzchy
Gniew	Piaseczno	Włóki
Góra	Piaski	Wola Buczkowska
Gruczno	Radostków	Wróblík Szlachecki
Hałuszowa	Nowa Brzeźnica	Zakrzewo
Iłów	Siniarzewo	Żelichowo
Inowrocław	Słubice	
Jasło	Sopot	

*** PRENUPTIAL AGREEMENTS ***

by Joe Armata <jarmata@gsphdean.gsph.pitt.edu>

Editor—On the Poland Roots list Julie Szczepankiewicz <bjszczep@sbcglobal.net> asked about the legalese we always see at the end of marriage records about how the couple had made no prenuptial agreement between them. She asked what kind of agreement this referred to. I've often wondered about this myself. Here is a note Joe Armata posted in response, one I found very enlightening and worth sharing with our readers.

Hi Julie! I once ran across a prenuptial agreement, and here it is for your interest.

To sum it up, the groom's father agreed to sell the property to the groom, with the bulk of the price being paid by the bride's father as a dowry and the rest by the marrying couple within 8 years, and the marrying couple also agree to provide for the groom's parents for the rest of their lives when the property transfer is completed.

My guess is most pre-nups were like this, agreements on land ownership or use, and on caring for elderly parents once the children take over the family property. In old Poland it was considered bad form for parents to cling to their property in their senior years. Fathers were expected to pass on their land and homes to their children when they became adults and were able to make use of them, and not to make their children wait years and years until the parents died of old age and the children themselves were getting on in years. One of the consequences of this was that once the

parents lost title to the property, they were at the mercy of their children for food and shelter, and it wasn't unheard of for the children to make things hard on the parents, or even to kick them out, especially if the parents had been hard on the children growing up. Many of the wandering homeless elderly beggars that were a fixture of rural Poland came out of that type of a situation. Contracts like this one helped clarify the familial obligations so the parents could surrender their property with some sense of security and peace of mind for their future.

I've changed all the surnames to initials, for privacy. Words between parentheses are in the original. Words between slashes are interpolations or corrections in the margins of the original, initialed by the signatories. Words between square brackets are my comments or insertions.

It came to pass in the provincial capital Płock in the so-called Bishop's Palace in the People's Office on the (28th of January) ninth day of February of the year 1800-seventy.

Before Wawrzyniec J, the Regent of the People's Office in Płock, residing ex officio in that same town, in the presence of the witnesses listed below, there appeared:

1st. Ignacy S, son of Konstancy, the groom, of legal age to enter into the bonds of marriage, acting with the advice of his father Konstancy,

2nd. Ludwika M, the bride, also of legal age for the bonds of marriage, acting with the advice of her father Mikołaj M,

3rd. Konstancy S, son of Łukasz, owner of property in the village of Strubczewo,

4th. Mikołaj M, son of Stanisław, owner of property in the village of Kamionki,

Ignacy and Konstancy S [being] residents of the village of Strubczewo in the township of Brudzen /in the district of Lipno/ and Ludwika M and Mikołaj M residents of the village of Kamionki in the township of Sikorz in the district of Płock, /Konstancy/ S electing Strubczewo as his residence for the purposes of this contract and the other three Kamionki [I gather this means Ignacy will move in with his wife until he gets the use of his father's property in 8 years], known to the Regent and competent for the actions listed below, who have testified to a contract with the following provisions:

Para 1. Ignacy S and Ludwika M declare that they intend to unite in the bonds of marriage, and if this intention comes to fruition, they have decided that each shall be the owner of the property which they now have, which they shall acquire by this contract, and which they shall acquire.....[missing lines].....will be.... mutually in equal shares.--

Para 2. Konstancy S will hereby sell the property in Strubczewo of the property [sic] lettered B from Lipno district, whose title of ownership in the real estate register is assigned to him, with all /attached properties/, appurtenances, and rights and likewise tax obligations, also four horses, two cows, two oxen, and thirty sheep, to the co-contractor Ignacy S, his son by marriage with Józefa

nee P, and Ignacy S accepts this sale.--

Para 3. The contractors declare that they have established and agreed on the value of nine hundred rubles, of which seven hundred fifty rubles the co-contractor Mikołaj M as the dowry of Ludwika his daughter by marriage with Faustyna nee O, and one hundred fifty rubles the future newlyweds Ignacy S and Ludwika M, which [sic] after eight years without interest they promise to repay to Konstancy S, or to his heirs with the exclusion of Ignacy S, [and] they promise to repay this upon the execution of this contract, namely in the year 1800- seventy-eight /corrected to read “eight”/ on the (11th) twenty-third day of April.--

Para 4. Konstancy S permits his son Ignacy S, immediately after his marriage to Ludwika M, to transfer the title of ownership of the acquired property in the real estate register to himself, but to take actual ownership and use only on St. Wojciech’s Day [April 23] 1800-seventy-eight /corrected to read “eight”/, and until that time he reserves the earnings for himself and his wife. The payment of taxes and encumbrances will become the obligation of Ignacy S only after the assumption of [the property’s] use.--

Para 5. Ignacy S, upon assumption of the use of the property acquired by this contract, obligates himself to give his father and mother residential quarters in one room, one cubic *sazhen* [1 Russian *sazhen* = about 7 feet] of wood for fuel with a supply of six bushels of clean and healthy oats, a half-*mórg* [1 Russian *mórg* = about 1.25 acres] of garden land; /to provide one cow with winter and spring fodder together with his own cattle/; and /to pay/ a sum of twenty-two rubles fifty kopeks yearly to the end of his father’s days, and after his death [to give] his surviving mother the entire room /and the cow/ and half of the rest of the aforementioned provisions, which for stamp purposes shall be valued at twenty-four rubles annually.--

Para 6. Upon payment of the sum of seven hundred fifty rubles by Mikołaj M to Konstancy S, Ignacy S must enter the acquired property into the real estate registry as the dowry of his future wife Ludwika M.--

Para 7. If Ignacy S is drafted into the army, his father Konstancy S promises to redeem him at his own expense, without any deduction or demand for recompense.--

The Regent warned the parties that as the contract comprises a prenuptial agreement, it must be disclosed in the marriage record under penalty of legal nullification.

This contract, for which, /encompassing the sale of real estate for 900 rubles, a provisional emolument of 46 1/2 rubles, a declaration and prenuptial agreement and dowry of 750 rubles,/ a stamp at the cost of eight rubles sixty-five kopeks /corrected to read “sixty-five”/ was charged, after careful and diligent reading, was accepted by the parties involved, in witness whereof Ignacy S affixes his signature, as do the witnesses Szymon S and Józef L, residents of Płock and known to the Regent, having the legal attributes and without impediment, and as likewise does the Regent, all the others however declared they are unable to sign their names.

[Signatures]

Editor—I know that Joe’s absolutely right about elderly parents often having to become beggars after turning the family farm over to their children. The May and August 1998 issues of PGSA’s Journal Rodziny had a two-part translation of an article by Polish scholar Michal Koczyński about the fate of the elderly in the Kujawy region, “Is Old Age Not a Joy?” It gives statistics on how many of the elderly ended up as beggars, how many ended up boarding with strangers, and so on. So Joe’s comments on this agreement strike me as pretty sound. Anyone who’s ever dealt with one of these marriage records has probably seen the legalese in question and wondered what it meant; so I thought many of you would find this interesting and enlightening.

***** AUSCHWITZ TO BE RENAMED ... OR NOT? *****

Ray Marshall <raymarsh@mninter.net> sent me a note on a news item I had completely missed: Poland’s attempt to change the name of Auschwitz, to make clear the camp was run by German Nazis, not Poles. The *Polish American Journal* reported that the change had been approved by all concerned, but subsequent news reports indicate that the United Nations (specifically UNESCO) has not signed off on the change.

I don’t have space to quote all the news stories on this, and couldn’t do so anyway without violating copyrights. But if you’re interested, here are some links to stories online that trace the development of this story.

I couldn’t find the story in the *Polish American Journal’s* online archive, but there are plenty of sites online that reported the change had been approved, as for instance here:

<http://www.warsawvoice.pl/view/11914>

At one time CNN had a report on this, but apparently it retracted the story. At least, that’s what this source claims:

http://www.rawstory.com/news/2006/Reuters_retracts_Auschwitz_renaming_story_0728.html

Here’s a Jewish source on the subject:

http://www.totallyjewish.com/news/world/?content_id=3920

And *Polonia Today* has a write-up that seems to summarize the current situation:

<http://www.poloniatoday.com/auschwitz0806.htm>

All these stories have datelines of July 2006. If I hear more I’ll talk about it in future issues. For now it appears that the change is on hold, but the Polish government is confident it will be approved eventually.

***** MOLD THREATENS PRUSSIAN RECORDS *****

On the Posen-L mailing list Gerd_Müllenheim <muellenh@pt.lu> posted an interesting note quoting a July 15, 2006 story from the newspaper *Preußische Allgemeine Zeitung*, <http://www.preussische-allgemeine.de/>. The headline, translated to English, says “Mold Infestation. Personal Registers Inaccessible for the Time Being.”

The story goes on to say that the original civil registry books from the German “eastern regions” are infested with mold, and displaced persons who apply to Standesamt I (Civil Registry 1) in Berlin (Rückerstraße 9, 10119 Berlin, telephone 0 30 / 90 20 72 59), for certificates of birth, death or marriage will have to be prepared for a pretty long wait. [These “eastern regions” are parts of former East Prussia, Pomerania, Silesia, East Brandenburg, and Saxony, once part of the German Empire but now either in Poland or the Kaliningrad district of Russia]. The five staff members responsible for that region had complained of an increase in respiratory illnesses, so the authorities had specialists conduct tests. The tests showed that the 6,500 volumes, which are stored on the ground floor and in the cellar, are infested with various molds, most of them invisible. They come primarily from the records’ original storage sites and present a health risk, primarily due to the layers of dust in their current site—a risk that has only been detected through modern technology.

The province does not feel it can pay the seven-figure cost to clean these irreplaceable books, which to this point have undergone only minor destruction. Financing for professional dust cleaning in the archive, which will run some 100,000 Euros, is also still up in the air.

Since the processing of orders must go on, and the volumes have not been microfilmed, the staff will have to resume work while wearing protective clothing.

*** POLISH TRIVIA QUESTIONS ***

Editor: In the last issue we gave 5 questions from a Polish trivia game PolishRoots Vice President Paul Valasek <paval56@aol.com> came across. The answers to those questions appear below, followed by this month’s questions, the answers to which will appear in the next issue. We want to thank Tom Bratkowski for permission to reprint these.

Answers to the Questions in the July Issue:

Category: Geography

— Q. On what river is Wrocław located?

— A. The Odra

— Q. What is the historic religious hill in Częstochowa called?

— A. Jasna Góra

— Q. Which major American university has a commons named Kosciuszko Square?

— A. Harvard

— Q. How many lakes are there in Poland currently (1985)? (within 100)

— A. 9,300

- Q. For what is the town of Busko-Zdrój noted?
- A. For mineral water and health spas

New Questions for the August Issue

Category: Humanities

1. What Polish literary form has Czesław Miłosz mastered? [*Note: these questions were formulated back in the 80s, long before Miłosz died.*]
2. Who wrote a biography of Marshal Piłsudski in 1940?
3. What art medium is the Cybis Studio in the U.S. most noted for producing?
4. For what is Polish American inventor Joseph Tykociner noted?
5. With what are the names, Lenica, Mroszczak, Palka, Swierzy and Zamecznik associated?

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

September 8 – 10, 2006

THE 28TH FALL CONFERENCE of the POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

“From Research to *Rodziny*”

Held at the Schaumburg Marriott in Schaumburg, Illinois.

For more information see the PGSA Website at <http://www.pgsa.org/Conference28/Conf28.htm>, or contact Linda Ulanski at lulanski@aol.com.

Monday, September 11, 2006

TORONTO UKRAINIAN GENEALOGY GROUP (TUGG) MEETING

7:00 pm at St. Vladimir Institute, 620 Spadina Avenue, Toronto.

“We will be co-sponsoring with St. Vladimir the speaker George Duravetz, who will be speaking on ‘How Canadians Can Survive a trip to Ukraine & Ukrainian Bureaucracy.’ Mr. Duravetz, who

has retired from teaching in Toronto, has produced a two-part manual on the Ukrainian language. He will talk about his life in Ukraine these past 10 years. He spends part of each year in Bukovina and part in Canada. There will be a \$10.00 charge for this St. Vlad Institute lecture.”

Editor—This is from a note posted by Sonia van Heerden <soniavh11@hotmail.com> on the mailing list Galicia_Poland-Ukraine.

Friday and Saturday, September 22 and 23, 2006

2006 POLISH GENEALOGICAL CONFERENCE

sponsored by

**POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF CONNECTICUT AND THE NORTHEAST,
INC.**

and

**THE ENDOWED CHAIR OF THE POLISH AND POLISH AMERICAN STUDIES,
CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY**

Place: Central Connecticut State University, Student Center, New Britain, CT

Friday, September 22, 2006 — Beginner’s Workshop: Getting Started: Finding the Missing Pieces of Your Polish-American Family History

Saturday, September 23, 2006 — (full schedule)
Registration will close September 12.

Fee: \$40 Friday and Saturday
\$35 Saturday only
\$10 Friday only

Includes Polish-American buffet lunch (Saturday only)

Registration forms are available online at http://www.pgscctne.org/confintro_ccsu.html or e-mail Diane Szepanski, Conference Chair at pgsconf@yahoo.com or Szepanski@ccsu.edu for more information.

October 27 – 29, 2006

SASKATCHEWAN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL SEMINAR

Moosomin, Saskatchewan

Editor—This is from a note sent out by Mavis Menzies, president of EEGS.

If you missed the August 4 to 6 event or you enjoyed our conference so much that you want to attend another one ASAP, then you will be interested in the Saskatchewan Genealogical Society Annual Seminar hosted by the Pipestone Branch to be held on October 27 to 29, 2006 in Moosomin, Saskatchewan. Geographic focus includes Galicia and Bukovina, Scotland, Norway, USA, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario.

Speakers include our own EEGS founding member, Brian Lenius. His presentations will expand on the information given in his talks at the recent EEGS/FEEFHS Conference. Topics include: "Understanding Parish Record Keeping in Galicia and Bukovina," "Land Records and Property Maps in the Austrian Empire Focusing on Galicia," and "Locating Ancestral Villages in Galicia and Finding Genealogical Records."

Elizabeth Briggs, who also provided a well-received presentation at the Winnipeg Conference, will be speaking on "Genealogical Resources for Those Getting Started" and sessions on British research and the Red River Settlement.

Harriet Eislinger of Brandon, Manitoba, will speak on using the Family History Centres and preparing for a research trip to Salt Lake City.

Pat Ryan of Regina, SK, a well-known instructor, researcher and lecturer, provides four presentations which topics cover the areas of research in Ontario, USA, and Scotland, as well as a session on using the internet "to go fishing"... for new friends and old relatives.

Please view the attachments for more details on the 10 speakers and 23 presentations.

Early Bird Registration is only \$80.00, postmarked on or before September 26th
Registration includes several meals and the syllabus which is a printed book of lecture handouts (illustrations, outlines, or other materials).

If you have further questions about the conference, please check at <http://www.saskgenealogy.com>.

November 4, 2006

The Polish Genealogical Society of Michigan's Annual Seminar

At the Polish Cultural Center: **2979 E Maple Rd., Troy, MI 48083**

3 Lectures by Matthew Bielawa:

- 1. Vital Genealogy: Records across Poland (Parts I & II)
- 2. Polski Komputer & Your Genealogy
- 3. Going East: Preparing for Your Trip to Poland

Registration before Oct. 25th is \$50; after Oct. 25th it is \$60. A Polish-style lunch is included.

Mail Registration Form from Website and check to:

PGSM
c/o Burton Historical Collection
Detroit Public Library
5201 Woodward Av.
Detroit, MI 48202-4007

For more info see the PGSM Website: <http://www.pgsm.org>

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

<http://creativegene.blogspot.com/2006/08/carnival-of-genealogy-6th-edition.html>

Jann Soltis <jamasol@yahoo.com> sent me a note about the “Carnival of Genealogy,” which she puts together on her blog twice a month. “It has a different topic with each edition, though all topics are genealogy-related. This edition’s topic is genealogical societies and it looks at the declining membership in genealogical societies as well as what can be done about it. I’d also like to mention that my blog is usually about items that would interest Polish genealogists (though I do throw in a bit of other things just for variety). I have excerpts from the book *Poles in Michigan*, reviews on James Martin’s *Against a Crimson Sky*, and a review of *Detroit’s Polonia* book launch, just to name a few.

<http://christoph.stoepel.net/Geogen-localized-en.aspx>

On the German-Surnames mailing list Michael Messinger <mmessinger@macalester.edu> asked if there’s a Website that can produce surname distribution maps for Germany. Wolf Zscheile <saxonyroots@charter.net> answered with this URL. If you have roots in Germany it might be worth a look. The home page is in English, everything else is (surprise!) in German.

http://www.posselt-landkarten.de/index_ostgebiete.htm

Many Polish researchers also need access to maps showing the various regions of the German Empire. On the Posen mailing list Matt Theiner answered a request by giving links to two good sites with maps showing the different regions of Germany. The one above connects to 1:100,000 maps of the *Ostgebiete*, the “eastern regions”—the areas formerly ruled by Germany but now in Poland and the Kaliningrad district of Russia. The maps show the area as of 1871. Also worth a look is <http://lazarus.elte.hu/hun/digkonyv/topo/3felmeres.htm>, a 1:200,000 map of Austria-Hungary that also includes much of Germany, as well as the entire area of the former Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania. On the master map the names are in the official languages of the various places depicted, but they’re not usually too hard to recognize.

In a follow-up note, Tom Krajewski <tomkraj@charter.net> mentioned that you can get the *Ostgebiete* maps in English by searching on Google for “Karte des Deutschen Reiches 1:100.000”; the first hit is the site in question. Then you can click on Google’s option “Translate this page,” and a decent English translation comes up. If the language barrier bothers you, this is worth a try.

Finally, James Birkholz <jbirchwood@comcast.net> pointed out that there is a link to the German agency that still publishes old maps at <http://tinyurl.com/nlfgx> (this is a link to their

English-language page). He also pointed out that Uwe at <http://www.kartenmeister.com> might be able to sell you the same maps without dealing with the German bureaucracy.

<http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Lithuania/>

On the soc.genealogy.jewish newsgroup Aaron Roetenberg <aaronr@suscom.net> announced that the JewishGen Lithuanian vital records translation project has added over 3,000 records today, searchable at the above address. “The record total is over 15,000 vital records. Records just added are from Panevezys, Rokiskis, Ariogala, Joniskelis, Birzai. The records contain other towns. The town is where the record was registered. Records contain towns such as Kaunas, Kelme, Ukmerge and many more towns. We just received more Linkuva and Birzai records which will be up after the Genealogy conference in NY. We have more birth, marriage and death records currently being translated at the LVIA. We need additional funding to translate records. Please consider a donation at http://www.jewishgen.org/JewishGen-erosity/v_projectslist.asp?project_cat=17 and select the Lithuanian Jewish vital records box.

<http://www.census.gov/genealogy/www/freqnames.html>

A recent issue of *EOGN* (*Eastman's Online Genealogical Newsletter*) reminded me of this link, which tells you just how common your name is. You can search by surname, male first name, and female first name. He checked his own name and found that *Eastman* is the 1,661st most popular name in the U. S., out of the 88,799 surnames listed. I've got him beat — *Hoffman* ranks 252nd!

http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy/2006/08/helping_russian.html

Ray Marshall <raymarsh@mninter.net> wrote to make sure I saw this article in a recent edition of *EOGN*. (I had). It tells of a story from the *Moscow Times* about genealogical research in Russia. For decades the Communists discouraged such research, but now it's becoming popular. What matters to Russians is not whether their ancestors were nobles, but how far back they can trace them. It mentions are the All-Russian Genealogical Tree Website at <http://www.vgd.ru>. You can go directly to the original article itself here:
<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2006/08/15/002.html>.

<http://www.historicmapworks.com/>

Another item from a recent edition of *EOGN* was entitled “Residential Genealogy Online.” Dick Eastman said he went to this Website, and clicked on one map for a town where some of his ancestors had lived. He zoomed in and found his great-great-uncle's house listed. This was after he'd been on the Website about 15 seconds! You may not be quite that lucky, but this site may tell you something about places where your relatives have lived. (Note, however, that the search only works for the states of Massachusetts, Maine, and New York.)

http://www.anglik.net/polish_translation.htm

People are always looking for Websites that can help with translations. On the Galicia_Poland-Ukraine mailing list Yochana <haimyoch@netvision.net.il> mentioned this one, hoping it might help someone. It features real translators, not computers, who will do up to five

words for free. You need more than five words translated? They have a link for that, too. It'll cost you something, but then after all, the laborer is worthy of his hire....

<http://www.przodkowie.com/warszawa/>

On the PolandBorderSurnames mailing list Andy Kowaluk <ak_gen@iinet.net.au> answered a question on where to find the Website that lists Warsaw's residents as of 1854. He provided this link, and added, "The site lists inhabitants by surname. If you click on a surname it gives you details of their Given Name, Occupation, the name and number of the street and the owner of the house. Information can also be accessed street by street. The link 'spis ulic' gives you a listing of streets. By clicking on a street you are given a list of street numbers together with the owner of the site. There is no real way of knowing if a person with the same surname is one of your forebears unless you can trace them in some other way. It is possible, for example, that you have traced a person using birth certificates or marriage certificates to Warsaw at around that time. In a case such as this the site might be a part of the overall jigsaw puzzle of your research."

http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/j2ee/servlet/NGL_v1

On the Galicia_Poland-Ukraine mailing list Laurence Krupnak posted a note from "Karen H." giving this gravesite locator for veterans' gravesites. "Search for burial locations of veterans and their family members in VA National Cemeteries, state veterans cemeteries, various other military and Department of Interior cemeteries, and for veterans buried in private cemeteries when the grave is marked with a government grave marker." She also mentioned the site <http://www.abmc.gov/home.php>, for Americans buried overseas.

<http://www.honoringourancestors.com/>

Bill Serchak <weserchak@erols.com> sent out a note that included a sample copy of the *Honoring Our Ancestors* Newsletter, published by Megan Smolenyak, a prominent and well-known researcher. I'd heard of Megan often, and it's my impression she knows what she's talking about; but somehow I'd never heard about her newsletter. You can subscribe at this site, which has numerous other pages, including a link to the sister site <http://www.genetealogy.com/>, also worth a look for serious researchers.

<http://www.upstreamvistula.org/Cemeteries/Cemeteries.htm>

On the Posen mailing list Jutta Dennerlein <Jutta.Dennerlein@t-online.de> posted this address for Upstream Vistula's Cmentarze Project, which "has added the documentation of 36 more cemeteries in Central Poland and the Dobriner Land. The project now covers 79 cemeteries. A new Style Guide for cemeteries and monuments helps with the interpretation of the pictures and other discoveries on site."

<http://www.avotaynu.com/nu/v07n13.htm>

The August 27, 2006 issue of the e-zine *Nu? What's New?*, Vol. 7, No. 13, has a good article about the ongoing LDS-Jewish dispute, "Mormon/Jewish Controversy: The Problem That Won't Go Away: This is Emes." If you're not familiar with this, many Jews have been infuriated to discover that their ancestors have been posthumously baptized by members of the LDS. The

Church is trying to solve the problem, and this is Gary Mokotoff's summary of where matters stand.

http://www.uwm.edu/News/Features/06.08/Medieval_Manuscripts.html

Paul Valasek pointed me toward this site, which tells how University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee librarians have seen to it that numerous medieval manuscripts, brought back to the U. S. as souvenirs by an American soldier, are being returned to Poland.

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