



Gen Dobry!

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*** WELCOME! ***

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

<<http://polishroots.org/GenDobry/tabid/60/Default.aspx>>

***** THANKS FOR RESPONDING! *****

by *Fred Hoffman* <wfh@langline.com>

There's nothing I love more than when readers of *Gen Dobry!* – or any other publication – step up to help other readers. Often people ask me for information or advice, and I have to admit I can't help them. But it's a great feeling to add, "Why ask me when you can ask 8,000 people?" That's how many people are signed up for *Gen Dobry!* And the odds are good someone out there knows something that will help you.

Let me cite two examples. In the Letters to the Editor in the September 2017 issue, George Blazak wrote asking for help finding missing records. He wrote as follows:

My name is George Blazak (Jerzy Błażak). I have been following *Gen Dobry!* for a little while to help me with my Genealogy search. I am a member of the Queensland Family History society which is in Brisbane, Australia. We have various groups in our club, one of which is a Central European group (they mainly do Germany). DNA shows I am 96% eastern European so this group is not quite what I want as Polish problems may be different from German research.

I came to Australia with my parents in 1949 from a DP camp in Germany. My father was born (1917) in a small place called Mamlicz, which is below Bydgoszcz. From microfilm which I obtained from LDS, I have the records of births of all his brothers and sisters and only the deaths in the early 1900s. In these, my grandfather died in 1925 when 65 and grandfather's first wife died in 1904 aged 37 (neither of these death records showed their parents). Working backwards, approximate birth dates can be determined. However, LDS records do not show anything. Similarly, grandfather remarried (my father's mother) in 1905 but there is no record. I have looked at records in other parishes etc., around there but nothing. My Polish is manageable, so I have visited some of my cousins twice and one of them made enquiries at the church in Mamlicz and it appears that the records do not go back very far.

My dilemma is, why can't I find these missing records? Is it because Poland did not officially exist before World War I or the wars wiped a lot of the records? Also, If I got this right, the Urząd Stanu Cywilnego in Barcin says their birth records go back 100 years and marriages only 80 years. They suggested seeking records from the archives in Bydgoszcz which I had already done through LDS.

Can you offer any advice, please?

Regards,
George Blazak

Earlier this month, George wrote back to me:

Hi Fred. I have been successful with one of the contacts I got through *Gen Dobry!* I have gone back to my GGGfather who was born in 1790. This person had a contact in Poland who is a genealogist. Thanks. I could not have done it without your assistance, George.

Doesn't that warm your heart? Someone saw George's request, and put him in contact with a genealogist in Poland. Now he has information back to his ancestor born in 1790. No money changed hands, no monetary benefit profit – it's a simple case of one person helping another. Given the lies and vitriol we see constantly online these days, this reminder that many people are smart and decent restores my faith in humanity.

Another good example was a response to Paul S. Valasek's lead article in the last issue, "A Young Lady, a Gentleman, and a ... U-boat? A Lesson in Genealogical Research." Paul showed us four interesting photographs and went over what he learned from them. His conclusions included recognition that the photographs were taken on Belle Isle in the Detroit River. Paul's article ended, "Also, let PolishRoots hear from anyone who has any Polish connections to Belle Isle. Since we know it is in Detroit, that shouldn't be difficult to locate"

Within a few days, I received a response from Brother Joseph Martin:

All of my families hail from Detroit, and it is quite likely that all of them visited Belle Isle over the years. I know our family did.

This is a photo of my Kaptur family who lived in the Sweetest Heart of Mary Parish. The photo was taken on Belle Isle as evidenced by the Belle Isle Conservatory in the background. Best guess for a time frame is the late 1920s. The lady in the black hat is my great grandmother, Marcyanna (Skibinska) Kaptur and the man over her shoulder is her husband Nicholas Kaptur. To the far left in a light colored hat is their daughter, Emily Kaptur. But who are the rest of the folks? I have not been able to identify any others.



They could be the family of Frances (Kaptur) Siemowski, or Apolonia (Skibinska) Kowalski, or Lucy (Skibinska) Majewski. We have no photos from those other families to attempt any matching identifications.

But the photo was taken on Belle Isle in Detroit.

Brother Joseph Martin

So Brother Joseph provided information to help confirm Paul's suspicions, and shared a similar photograph. Who knows, maybe someone else will see this and be able to tell both Paul and Brother Joseph something useful.

Now, we don't always get answers to questions posted in *Gen Dobry!* Sometimes, requests go unanswered; that's the way it goes in life. But thanks to all who have helped!

With Thanksgiving coming up soon, I don't mind saying, I am thankful for the opportunity to play a role in giving our readers a forum where they can share information. Thank you – and if you ever think you may have info to share, don't hesitate to contact me!

*** LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ***

Subject: Award for Excellence in Writing

Editor – Brother Joseph Martin also sent me a copy of an announcement I was very pleased to read, and I wanted to pass it along.

On August 30th, the International Society of Family History Writers and Editors (ISFHWE) announced the winners of the 2017 “Excellence-in-Writing Competition” during the 2017 Conference of the Federation of Genealogical Societies in Pittsburgh, PA. Brother Joseph Martin was honored with a Second Place Award in the category for published articles for his work, “Apolonia Lewicka and the Priest,” which appeared in the Summer 2016 issue of *Rodziny*, the journal of the Polish Genealogical Society of America. The article featured the story of his great grandmother and the financial help she received from her paternal cousin, Father Jan Lewicki, pastor of St. Marcin Church in the city of Poznań, Poland. He assisted with funds to allow her and her brother to obtain tickets on the SS *Slavonia* to immigrate to the U.S. in 1892. Brother Joseph will receive a certificate and a cash prize for his entry. He has been a member of ISFHWE for several years and serves as the proof reader for its quarterly newsletter, *Columns*.

Editor – Congratulations, Brother Joseph! It's a pleasure to hear of the recognition you received. It's also nice to see an organization like ISFHWE taking notice of good writing in a Polish-oriented periodical. There are times I wonder if most organizations even realize there is a Europe east of the German border...

***** GERMAN VOLUME OF *IN THEIR WORDS* PUBLISHED *****

by *Fred Hoffman* <wfh@langline.com>

I am not terribly comfortable using space in *Gen Dobry!* to advertise anything, except as a one-time mention of services or products that may benefit our readers. So I'm kind of hesitant to announce this. On the other hand, quite a few people who read *Gen Dobry!* told me they wanted to be informed when this book was ready. So maybe if I keep this short and sweet, you'll forgive my crass commercialism.

Jonathan Shea and I finally finished the last volume of the *In Their Words* series of translation guides for genealogists. It took seventeen years (how is that possible?) since the Polish volume first appeared. But the German volume has finally joined the Polish, Russian, and Latin ones; it is finished and available.

If you want to know more, please visit our website:

<<http://www.langline.com/German.htm>>

***** POLISH INDEPENDENCE DAY *****

by *Aga and the whole PolishOrigins Team* <newsletter@polishorigins.com>

Editor – I like to pass along issues of the online newsletter of PolishOrigins.com. I know many of our readers are subscribed to the newsletter, but it seems a good idea to make sure all our readers have the chance to know what the team is up to.

Very soon, on November 11, we will celebrate Polish Independence Day. I have prepared just a few reflections before this approaching anniversary...

This national holiday commemorates the restoration of Poland's sovereignty in 1918 after the end of World War I and after the 123 years of partitions by Russia, Prussia, and Austria.

One of the most difficult barriers in doing Polish Genealogy is the fact that, for over a 100 years, the lands of contemporary Poland were divided into three partitions which were, in fact, three different countries.

All aspects of everyday life were greatly disrupted. Everything was changed. The borders changed, official languages, political administration, currency, communication system, road networks, the education system, military. Imagine that in different partitions the railroad tracks had a different width.

Add to all of this the fact that Poles were at that time only about 70% of the whole population of the country. There were also Jews, Ukrainians, Belarusians, and Germans/Prussians. There were many controversial territories where plebiscites were organized. In Silesia, the lands beyond the Olza river, in the Spiš region, at the Polish-Czechoslovak border.

Much of this was also a result of the Polish-Soviet war, which continued after the end of World War I, and lasted until 1921.

As you will learn, the new political authorities had to deal with so many problems after Poland regained its independence in 1918! Even today, after 99 years, some local differences in the architecture, shapes of villages, general economic situation and the level of the development are still visible in some areas.

Understanding the years of partitioned Poland and its transformation in the 20th century, is one of the crucial aspects to understand today's Poland, and most of all to the successful research results and an understanding of our ancestor's lives.

That is why we always wanted to focus on this division of the lands in the area of today's Poland. We started from Galicia (Austrian Partition) because from there the scale of emigration was the largest. In 2013 the [Galicia Tour](#)'s itinerary was created.

Next, we continued our plan in the former Russian partition, creating the [Kingdom of Poland Tour](#). Both tours are being regularly organized for several years with success.

In 2018, after many years of preparation, consultation and building our experience during our Genealogy Tours, we have finally prepared [Prussian Poland Tour](#), completing the whole picture of partitioned Poland. Its debut edition is planned to for **September 15-25, 2018**.

If your family roots are somewhere in this part of Poland, the Prussian Poland Tour will take you there and provide with deeper understanding of this land and its history. Of course, if you wish, you can combine the Prussian Poland Tour with your [Genealogy Tour](#). This is what most (around 90%) of participants of other partitions' tours do. Also, if you already visited other parts of Poland and want to experience more, this tour will help you to fulfill your wish.

This 10-day tour includes the area of Poznań and the region of Greater Poland, Masuria, Pomerania with Gdańsk. As with all our regular tours, you can count on the best guides, whose origins are in those areas and who are passionate about its history and culture. As always, the group will be small (maximum 15 participants) and we always put a great emphasis on deep, contextual knowledge of visited areas at a slower pace than the typical tours dedicated to foreign guests.

Usually, our guests are also passionate genealogists, exploring their family history and having their origins in visited area, so you may find great companions with similar interests.

To make the long story short: if you are interested, please visit our website to find out more about the tours, itinerary, costs, and booking procedure.

For those of you who will decide to book the tour as firsts, we have prepared a discount!

Read more about the [Prussian Poland Tour](#)'s itinerary and cost.

And please do not forget about our other proposed tours:

Here are the dates for the [Galicia Tour](#):

Spring edition: June 10 – 20, 2018

This time spring tour is our best seller. This tour is already confirmed, so please hurry up if you are considering these dates.

Fall edition: September 23 – October 3, 2018

The [Kingdom of Poland Tour](#) is planned for September 7 – 17, 2018

Of course, our core competence and main area of interest remains genealogy and our [Genealogy Tours](#) in Poland and neighboring countries. Our calendar is filling fast, but we still have available dates and guides.

Feel free to contact us if you have any questions. Our e-mail address is [<tours@polishorigins.com>](mailto:tours@polishorigins.com).

Now, let's come back to the thoughts of our Independence.

This is so important to learn about Poland's history and to remember our former generations.

Thanks to those people, we can live in peace and relative stability in a free, independent country, we can travel wherever and whenever we want, use our language and enjoy our culture, both in national, local and regional scales.

Remember and celebrate 11th of November!

Best greetings from Poland,

Aga and the whole PolishOrigins Team

**** AN OVERVIEW OF RECENT PERIODICALS ****

Editor—This is an ongoing feature, meant to inform you of articles published recently in newsletters and journals that may interest you.

***Avotaynu*, Summer 2017, Vol. XXXIII, No. 2**, Avotaynu, Inc., 794 Edgewood Ave., New Haven, CT 06515, <<http://www.avotaynu.com>>.

- The Genetic Origins of Ashkenazi Jews, Harry Ostrer, MD
- Contested Origins of Eastern European Jewry: Clues from History, Linguistics and Onomastics, Alexander Beider, Ph.D.
- Map Websites for Central Europe and the Larger World: Gazetteers to Access Them, Edward David Luft
- ITS Bad Arolsen: A Breach in the Digital Dike, Peter Landé
- Book Review: *History of the Jewish Community of Schönlanke: 1736–1940*
- Researching Russian-Jewish Ancestry Step by Step, Anna Royzner
- Developing an Index of Jewish Records for Old Kiev Gubernia, Sarah Nadia Lipès

***East European Genealogist*, Summer 2017, Vol. 25, No. 4**, East European Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 2536, Winnipeg MB R3C 4A7, Canada, <<http://www.eegsociety.org>>.

- The Ukrainians: Under a Common Sky, Mirosław Nagielski, translated by William F. Hoffman
- An Index of Published Translations of Entries from the *Słownik Geograficzny*, compiled by Paul Lipinski, Chris Bukoski, and William F. Hoffman

***The Galitzianer: The Quarterly Research Journal of Gesher Galicia*, September 2017, Vol. 24, No. 3**, Gesher Galicia, 1522 S. Point View, Los Angeles CA 90035, <<http://www.geshergalicia.org>>.

- Brody's Memorial Books, Börries Kuzmany, Ph.D.
- Interview with Julian: From Palestine to Monte Cassino, Julian J. Busgang
- Synagogues of Galicia and Bukovina: Jewish Identities Revealed, Sergey Kravtsov, Ph.D.
- Map Corner—Moving Pictures: The Sokal 1854 Cadastral Map, Jay Osborn
- Symposium: Archives and Jewish Galicia, Warsaw, August 7, 2018, Tony Kahane
- 38th International Conference on Jewish Genealogy, Warsaw, August 6–10, 2018, Michał Majewski

***Project to Discover Schenectady County's Eastern European Roots Newsletter*, October 2017, Vol. 4, No. 4**, <<http://www.schenectadyhistory.org/resources/eer/>>, contact Phyllis Zych Budka <abudka@nycap.rr.com>.

- The Galick Farm, Gail Demcsak
- A Letter from Post War Poland, Ella Anthony Krajewski & Eleonor Anthony Monlea
- Introducing Leonard Chmieliński and His Wife Michalina Żbikowska, Sandy Chmielinski Dimke

- The Kalina Glee Club, Bernadine Dwojakowski Mastroianni
- Pani Katarzyna Kornacka: Part 10—Connections—The Twenties and Thirties, Martin Byster

Polish Eaglet, Fall 2017, Vol. 36, No. 2, Polish Genealogical Society of Michigan, c/o Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, 5201 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, Michigan 48202-4007, <<http://www.pgsm.org>>.

- Editor's Notes
- Parishes in Michigan's Upper Peninsula with Polish Roots, by Roger S. Laske & J. Wm. Gorski
- "Lest We Forget" – Reprint from St. Stanislaus Diamond Jubilee Book
- Early Surnames in St. Stanislaus Parish: Goetzville, Michigan, by Roger S. Laske
- Surnames in St. Stanislaus Cemetery, Goetzville, Michigan, compiled by Roger S. Laske
- The Galarowicz/Galarowic Family in Goetzville, Chippewa County, Michigan, by Roger S. Laske
- The Butryn Family Story of Sacred Heart Parish, Schaffer, Delta County, Michigan, by Kim Bellisle & Bonnie Butryn
- Joseph Schemansky, by Denise Lotan
- Vincent Kaptur, Sr.: Artist, Designer and Stylist, by Joseph F. Martin
- Jews in Suwałki, by Grzegorz Krupinski
- War Cemeteries in Western Galicia, by Aga Pawlus, Polish Origins Blog
- Jasiek - Jaskowski - Jaskoski, by Nancy (Jaskoski) Batterson
- 2017 PGSM Seminar Review, by Valerie Koselka

*** UPCOMING EVENTS ***

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

November 19, 2017

POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA QUARTERLY MEETING "Rising from the Ashes – Warsaw, Poland" Margaret Guzek

**Copernicus Center (King's Hall) • 5216 W Lawrence Ave • Chicago IL 60630
2 p.m. to 4 p.m.**

This presentation will also be offered as a webinar to members and non-members. Additional Webinar registration information will be posted on the PGSA Home Page <<http://www.pgsa.org/>>, in *PGSA Notebook*, and in *Rodziny* in advance of the meeting. Members and non-members are invited to attend.

Topic Summary – By the start of World War II, Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party were intent on razing Warsaw as part of the Pabst Plan to create a future “German” town. By the time of Warsaw’s liberation in January of 1945 from German occupation, the Wehrmacht had destroyed 85% of the city.

This presentation discusses the events leading up to the destruction of Warsaw and the Polish community’s meticulous post-war reconstruction, which includes the recognition of Warsaw’s restoration of its historic quarters as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Bio – **Margaret S. Guzek** is a writer and preservationist. She has written landmark nominations on architecturally and historically-significant properties for local preservation commissions and the National Register in addition to writing architectural surveys. Ms. Guzek’s paternal grandmother was a member of the Polish resistance and fought in the Warsaw Uprising, and her maternal grandfather was a member of the Second Polish Corps under the leadership of General Władysław Anders and fought in the Battle of Monte Cassino. Ms. Guzek holds a master’s degree in journalism from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University. An article written by Ms. Guzek based on this presentation appeared in the Fall 2016 issue of *Rodziny*.

To register to attend this webinar, click on the following link:

<<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4319868320717127683>>

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February 28 – March 3, 2018

Roots Tech February 28 - March 3, 2018 - “Connect/Belong”

For those who agree that the future of family history lies in technology and innovation, this event is probably a must. The program will highlight leading technologies and products from around the world. Registration is already open. For more information go to: <https://www.rootstech.org/>

[From the October 2017 issue of *PGSA Notebook*]

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May 7 – 20, 2018

THE ROAD HOME

A genealogy oriented trip to Poland and Ukraine.

With certified American and Polish genealogists Professor Jonathan Shea and

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Aleksandra Kacprzak.

The trip includes opportunities to visit your ancestral village.

The Road Home trip will leave from New York on 5/7/18 and return on 5/20/18.

The trip cost is \$2,995* per person, double occupancy if you sign up by November 1, 2017.

After November 1, 2017 the trip cost is \$3,195* per person, double occupancy. There will be an additional \$450 fee for single occupancy. The cost includes airfare between New York JFK and Kraków, hotels, three meals daily, professional tour guide, private tour bus, and admission to scheduled attractions.

You must sign up for the trip by December 20, 2017 and submit a \$300 non-refundable deposit and fill out the pre-trip questionnaire.

You must pay for your trip in full (non-refundable) by February 1, 2018. You must have a valid passport for this trip.

If you are traveling alone, would you want a roommate and save the single supplement charge? Please let us know if you would like a roommate and we will try to accommodate you.

****Price Subject to change due to change in exchange rates or airline fees.***

DAILY ITINERARY

May 7: Depart from New York

May 8: Kraków

May 9: Auschwitz/ Częstochowa May 10: Wadowice/Żywiec Brewery

May 11: Zakopane

May 12: Sanok/Solin/Polańczyk

May 13: Bieszczady/Przemyśl

May 14: Przemyśl/Depart for Ukraine

May 15: Lwów in Ukraine

May 16: Various towns in Ukraine

May 17: Zamość/Sandomierz

May 18: Krzyztopor Palace/Wieliczka Salt Mine May 19: Kraków/Wawel Castle

May 20: Depart to New York

INDIVIDUAL VILLAGE DAY TRIPS

There are a limited number of day trips available so you can travel to your ancestral village. There will be an additional cost for this service. The village must be within 75 miles of a city we are visiting. Requests must be submitted by January 2, 2018. We will notify you by January 31, 2018 if your trip is possible and the estimated cost for the trip. Payment for the village trip will happen the day of the trip in Poland.

Check us out on Facebook: The Road Home-Polish American Foundation.

To sign up or more questions e-mail: <dorena726@yahoo.com>

POLISH AMERICAN FOUNDATION OF CONNECTICUT

27 Grove Hill Street New Britain, CT

<<http://www.PAF-CT.org>>

Bring your family tree to life

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

<<https://www.blog.google/products/search/making-search-results-more-local-and-relevant/>>

In a note posted to the IAJGS Record Access Alert mailing list, Jan Meisels Allen pointed out that Google has changed the way its search engine handles requests specifying nations. It used to be, if you wanted search results focused on Poland, you could specify Google.pl, or Google.ca for Canada, and so on. Now Google will deliver results relevant to your location, no matter which domain you visit. You can adjust this by changing “search settings.” But Jan wanted to make sure people realize Google has changed the way it deals with this. The URL above gives Google’s explanation for the change.

<<https://fromshepherdsandshoemakers.com/2017/10/13/5-strategies-for-finding-living-relatives-in-poland/>>

Julie Roberts Szczepankiewicz continues to post great articles to her blog, “From Shepherds and Shoemakers.” This entry has some good ideas for finding living relatives. I particularly like her mention of social media such as <https://nk.pl/>, NK, short for Nasza Klasa, “Our Class.” This is a popular site among Poles and could help you find people with the right name in the right place. Facebook also has a surprising number of Polish members. Poles have become very active on social media, and this provides one more possible way of getting in touch with a person on the spot who can tell you things the experts can’t possibly know.

<https://issuu.com/travel.lovepoland/docs/travel_love_poland>

Ceil Jensen is contributing to “a new online magazine, written in English, and dedicate to all things Polish. It’s called travel.lovePoland and the premiere issue went online this month. You can download it at the above URL.

<<https://soundcloud.com/krynytsya/johnpihach>>

This URK takes you to an episode of “Криниця (Krynytsya) – The Well,” a monthly podcast hosted by Michael Buryk. In this episode, he interviews John Pihach, author of

Ukrainian Genealogy: a Beginner's Guide.” John is a very interesting man, and his book is an outstanding source for people who want to learn about ancestral roots in Ukraine. You can read more about it here: <<http://www.ciuspress.com/catalogue/reference-and-genealogy/112/Ukrainian%20Genealogy:%20A%20Beginner%27s%20Guide>>.

<<http://www.agoff.de/>>

Researchers with roots in central and eastern Europe and not intimidated by the German language might want to explore this, the website of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ostdeutscher Familienforscher, literally “Working Group for East German Family Researchers,” but a better translation is “Eastern German Family Research Association”). If you look at the map on the home page of their website, you will immediately realize they do not focus just on former East Germany, but rather on all the parts of central and eastern Europe where large numbers of Germans have lived over the last few centuries.

<http://warszawa.jewish.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/information_warsaw.pdf>

The 22 October 2017 issue of *Nu? What's New?* mentioned this document, created by the Jewish Community of Warsaw to provide information for English-speaking Jewish tourists going to Warsaw next August. That's when and where the IAJGS 38th International Conference on Jewish Genealogy will be held (see <<http://iajgs2018.org>>). The PDF is very informative for Jewish tourists, but there's material I found interesting as well. I thought it was worth passing along.

<<http://mailchi.mp/reclaimtherecords/bfvk8vew84-1573069>>

This link takes you to the 17th newsletter of the Reclaim the Records group, “Introducing the New Jersey Marriage Index, 1901–2016.” This group continues to have success prying genealogically relevant information out of the clutches of bureaucrats who feel they have the right to decide what vital records we may or may not access.

<<https://www.facebook.com/JewishGen.org/posts/1565925333429616>>

Bruce Drake posted a note to the JewishGen newsgroup about the common use of nicknames he had seen in *yizkor* or memorial books for different Jewish communities. He quoted one book for Chrzanów, Poland, “These nicknames were individually earned – some referred to one's occupation; others expressed physical qualities, while still others had to do with the owner's character.” He ended, “So, from “Bobe” to “Shivtser,” here's a list of monikers used by the townspeople of Chrzanów.” That's what this list connects to. It's worth noting that widespread use of nicknames was common among Polish Christians as well, to the point that many peasants went almost exclusively by their nicknames – some of which show up in records.

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