



# Gen Dobry!

**Gen Dobry! 31 January 2001**

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

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

to the latest issue of GEN DOBRY!, the e-zine of PolishRoots(tm). If you missed last year's issues, you can see them at the PolishRoots site. Issue 1 is at:

[http://www.polishroots.org/gendobry/GenDobry\\_vol1\\_no1.htm](http://www.polishroots.org/gendobry/GenDobry_vol1_no1.htm)

For issue 2 change the last part of the URL to "\_no2.htm," and so on.

Thanks to all who've taken the time to send me your comments, suggestions, and contributions. If you have something to contribute, or just something to say, please E-mail me at <WFHoffman@PolishRoots.org>.

Please don't forget to visit PolishRoots.org, the Website that brings you \_Gen Dobry!\_. One feature you might take a look at is:

<http://PolishRoots.org/research.htm>

There you can get information on certain services PolishRoots offers to aid you in your research.

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\*\*\* USING THE INTERNET FOR POLISH GENEALOGY: Sites, Tools and Netiquette \*\*\*

by Ceil Wendt Jensen <cjensen@oeonline.com>

[Originally presented at the Family History Center, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, October, 2000]

\* USING SURNAME BOARDS \*

Do you ever wonder how you can find long lost cousins? There is an easy way to remedy the situation. Read and post to the Surnames boards on:

<http://familyhistory.com>

and

<http://rootsweb.com>

[Editor's note: PolishRoots also offers a Surname posting feature:

<http://polishroots.org/surnamesearch.asp> ]

Are you frustrated when you visit a surname board and there are no "hits" for your Polish surnames? It's time for you to create that surname board. On Rootsweb there is no commitment on your part other than posting the first message. I have had success with all four of my grandparents' surnames since I created the surname boards.

Here are examples of postings to the surname boards that generated contacts with cousins. I've found that posting both the Anglicized and Polish versions of the surname brought the best results.

Message #11 Thursday, January 6

- > Subject: Maciejewski/Macheski/Macheske
- > Posted by: Felicia Macheske
- > Message: Hello. I have just started working
- > on my ancestry with my sister. We know our name
- > was originally Maciejewski, but was changed to
- > Macheske/Maciejewski. My great-grandfather was
- > Valentine Macheske. This was changed from Walenty
- > Maciejewski. We are from the Detroit, Michigan area.
- > My great-grandparents had 10 children.

Message #34 Monday, June 26, 2000

- > Subject: Valentine and Katherine
- > Posted by: Ceil Wendt Jensen
- > Message: Hi, I think we are related. My great aunt
- > Katherine Wojtkowiak (1860-1938) married Valentine
- > (Walenty) Maciejewski. The Detroit family changed
- > their name to Macheske.

Here is a posting for my paternal line and a response:

Message #58 Thursday, February 10, 2000

- > Subject: Cecelia Wendt from Michigan
- > Posted by: Ceil Wendt Jensen
- > Message: Irene, We have a Cecelia Wendt born in
- > Detroit in 1916. She was my father's cousin. Her father
- > was Adolph Wendt. Adolph, Franz (my grandfather) and
- > their sister Julia Wendt (Schewe) were from Muehlbanz,
- > West Prussia now Milobadz, Poland.

Message #66 Thursday, February 17, 2000

- > Subject: Cecilia Wendt
- > Posted by: Julie Mulligan
- > Message: I have a great aunt named Cecelia Wendt also.
- > She is the daughter of Adolph Wendt and his wife
- > Marcyanna Lieder Wendt. I believe that Cecelia is my
- > grandmother, Helen Wendt's sister. Please contact me
- > if you would like to share information. I recently found
- > them in the 1910 and 1920 Michigan Census.

Julie and I do share mutual ancestors. We first met at a local library to exchange information. We set a dinner date to meet and discuss Gaelic research with our husbands, since we both married Irishmen.

One outcome of finding living relatives online is sharing contemporary info. Your online cousins may have photos that complement the collection

you have. They may have a clue to lead you to the ancestral village. I have learned to share information with a caveat. I tell them I'll share the Gedcom if they agree not to submit this data to any CD-maker or website, as it is still "under construction." I started asking cousins to agree to this Acceptable Use Policy because I was "burned" by a relative who posted everything to the Internet -- as fact -- yet the info was in the hypothesis stage. I also make sure to "privatize" the living generations of the family. As our online relationship develops I will share information regarding the living family members.

Message #1 Thursday, July 27, 2000

> Subject: Agatha, Mary ZDZIEBKO Galicia>Detroit 1880s  
> Posted by: C Jensen  
> Message: I am searching for members of my  
> grandmother's family. Agatha Zdziebko married  
> Frank Wendt in 1899. When Agatha died in 1908  
> Frank wed her sister Mary. I believe Thomas  
> Jepko/Zdziebko was their brother. Henry Jepko  
> lived at 169 Rich - Thomas' house. They were  
> from Galicia now southern Poland.

Message #2 Saturday, December 09, 2000

> Subject: I know Henry Jepko's name, my direct line  
> Posted by: Patti  
> To Whom It May concern: I know the name Henry Jepko.  
> I believe that was my grandfather(ANDREW HENRY JEPKO)  
> DAD. My mother is Beverly Jepko. There was Jean & Andy  
> Jepko, Detroit area. Please E-Mail me as soon as possible!

Patti and I have been working online together since early December, 2000. We have found out that we are related through Thomas Zdziebko.

\* FHL REFERENCE \*

Another great online source is the availability of Salt Lake's Family History Library experts. Last February I was perplexed. I had both the Baltimore Index entry and ship manifest for my maternal grandfather, but the village cited, "Gr. Sensk," didn't exist. I first called 1-800-346-6044 (or you can e-mail <fhl@ldschurch.org>) and asked to speak with a reference librarian in European resources. The librarian who answered, Sonja, asked to see the actual document. I scanned the 1896 Baltimore Index and sent it as an e-mail attachment. Sonja replied:

> Meyer's Gazetteer  
> I checked the gazetteer again for Gross Sensk  
> and we can clearly determine that there is no

- > such place. I went through all the Meyer's
- > listings of Gross S----in the entire German
- > empire. I came up only with these:
- > Gross Samoklensk
- > Gross Schlanz
- > Gross Strenz
- > GROSS LENSKE
- > So I checked the IGI of names and found your name
- > coming from East Prussia (Ostpreussen), and so
- > narrowed down my scope to Ostpreussen gazetteer, and
- > found a place called GROSS LENSKE. The two letters S
- > and L are often confused, so I would try this.
- > Neidenburg kreis

I made sure I let her know she was a great help. I wrote:

- > Hi Sonja,
- > You were right. I ordered the films for Gr. Lensk
- > and found a complete set of PRZYTYLA ancestors. I
- > was able to go back to 1802. I have been working this
- > brick wall since Feb. 2000. Thanks again in helping me
- > find ancestral village. The village is now called Wielki
- > Leck.

\* GEOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS \*

RootswEB not only provides for surname boards but also for geographic locations. I linked my Familytreemaker website to the Wayne County MIGenWeb Project:

<http://www.rootswEB.com/~miwayne/wayne.htm>

Since posting the link I have reunited with one of my older first cousins.

When I began interviewing grandparents 25 years ago I didn't realize the value of collecting data on the extended family. I focused on the direct line. Now I know that the brother or nephew of a direct ancestor can be the key you are looking for.

In an effort to identify my paternal grandmother's nuclear family I extracted all the Zdziebko families in Detroit from 1890 to 1940. It has proved to be invaluable. As I found new information on an individual I am able to identify their family connection via their street address.

If you do not have access to City Directories you can ask an online colleague to do a "look-up"; e. g., Mike Zapolski who will do a look-up in

the Detroit City Directory for free! His website is:

<http://www.eticomm.net/~mzapx1>

To find other folks that will do free look-ups for you, visit:

<http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~angels/>

\* SEARCH ENGINES \*

I have been able to find unique databases online by using European Search Engines. If your ancestors came from East or West Prussia or Posen as mine did, you will benefit by searching with German search engines. An effective search tool is Copernic:

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

It lets you simultaneously consult the best search engines and bring back relevant results with summaries, and the software will remove duplicate information and dead links.

I can't read nor write contemporary Polish, but I can identify the information I need. I cut phrases from Polish WebPages and paste them into search engines. This gives me a greater range of hits. For example, in English I would search for the family that my ancestors worked for as: Raczynski. Using the sites at

[http://www.netmasters.co.uk/european\\_search\\_engines/poland.shtml](http://www.netmasters.co.uk/european_search_engines/poland.shtml)

and

<http://katalog.wp.pl/>

I submitted "Raczynskiego" and received a set of Webpages written in Polish that linked to other useful sites.

\* NETIQUETTE \*

When you post to the Internet and correspond by e-mail you need to pay attention to Netiquette, the etiquette of the 'Net.

+ Don't Flame: don't get on your high horse and chastise another poster.

+ Don't send SPAM: don't send Junk mail to other list members.

+ Don't forward, forward, forward: Learn to cut and paste the relevant

portions of an e-mail before you forward. [Editor's Note: Folks, PLEASE, PLEASE learn how to do this!]

+ Check attachment. Size: make sure you are sending a file that is small enough to easily transit on the Internet. If you scan a file at 8" x 10 " at 300 dpi you are creating a huge electronic file that will be a road hog on the digital highway.

+ Trim messages down to a few when you reply.

+ DO NOT USE CAP LOCK UNLESS YOU ARE REALLY YELLING!

+ Use spell check.

+ Be brief and to the point.

+ Use a subject: title.

\* MY FAMILY.COM \*

I have found the free space available at <http://Myfamily.com> to be a great vehicle to bring your extended family into the realm of family research. These password-protected sites allow you to share Gedcoms, family stories and photos on a private site. The downside? Well, you'll see a lot of advertisements -- but no more than you currently see on Rootsweb.com or Ancestry.com.

I found the My Family site allows cousins to warm up to the idea of sharing family information. It also allows the "black sheep" of the family to log in and catch up with family members without the high anxiety of a holiday dinner.

The site has the following features:

- Free protected websites
- An area for posting Recipes as well as Family News
- You can post Birthday and Anniversaries
- You can generate collaborative writing

I hope these tips help you in your research!

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\*\*\* BOOK REVIEW \*\*\*

In Their Words: A Genealogist's Translation Guide to Polish German, Latin, and Russian Documents. Volume I: Polish\_

Reviewed by Leonard F. Jakubczak, Ph.D., 9620 Shadow Oak Drive, Montgomery Village, Maryland 20886-1122, LJAKUB@GATEWAY.NET

[Editor's Note: printing this review is a tough call for me, since I co-wrote the book in question. But when Mr. Jakubczak wrote me to say he'd reviewed the book and would consider submitting it to *\_Gen Dobry!*, he asked if I felt this raised too great a conflict of interest. I decided it didn't: I would use the review, favorable or not, because I've used other articles by Mr. Jakubczak in the past, and they've always been well written and informative. He submitted it, and the only change I made was to update the ordering address. Here's his review. (Just between us, I'm relieved he didn't trash the book as a worthless piece of crap. I would have printed the review anyway, but it would have hurt like hell! -- Fred Hoffman).]

According to the old chestnut, give a hungry man a fish, and you feed him for a day; teach him how to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime. Jonathan D. Shea and William F. (Fred) Hoffman teach us to fish in the linguistic waters of Polish-to-English translation of genealogical records and documents. In their introduction, Shea and Hoffman state that an aim of the guide was to meet the need for a detailed work on Polish-to-English translation, dealing with more than just vital records, and written by linguists, who are familiar with the kind of Polish grammar and archaic vocabulary one finds in such genealogical records. To accomplish this, they planned to provide the necessary linguistic information, complete with sample genealogical documents that illustrate it. In my opinion, they have met their objectives, well and inexpensively.

In the introduction, the authors also urge genealogists not to be overwhelmed by all the information presented in the guide, but to use the guide's index extensively. Using the carefully prepared index, the user can bypass information that is not needed, and can focus on the exact issue troubling him or her. Shea and Hoffman provide as much information on translation as possible for those who want it. Those researchers who do not want details, however, can just read the translations, and omit the rest. The authors successfully accomplished this balancing act.

In Section I of the guide, the authors supply us with essential phonetic and spelling rules of Polish. Being thus fortified, we should be able to anticipate misspellings of Polish personal and place names by English-, German-, and Russian-speaking bureaucrats, as well as by some illiterate immigrants themselves, and look for possible alternative spellings of names that interest us. Thus, we can increase the chances of finding an ancestor in our research. The authors particularize the rules by presenting not only a table of the more common spelling errors that we may

encounter, but also diagrams and photocopies from actual obituaries, passenger lists, a census, and other documents. This section is short, but full of real-life examples of phonetic and spelling rules of Polish.

How these words are put together into larger meaningful units is the subject of Section II, where Shea and Hoffman give a brief sketch of Polish grammar. The authors admit that their overview of grammar is not complete, but hope that it gives just enough to help us decipher the Polish documents that we meet in our research. Particularly helpful in this decoding is the "Chopping Block", a table that lists the various endings of Polish nouns and adjectives, and their syntactic relationships to the other words in a sentence. Also, this section amply covers expressions of date and time, including the months of the Jewish calendar, and includes extensive lists of terms for family relationships and occupations.

I found these two sections easy, but I must confess, I grew up in a Polish-speaking home. Nevertheless, I do not believe that any knowledge of Polish is necessary to benefit from this guide. The authors successfully used their extensive linguistic, translating, and teaching backgrounds to make the guide as useful as possible.

As is well known, a prerequisite for any research in Europe is locating records in America that lead back to Europe. In Section III, Shea and Hoffman briefly suggest and exemplify categories of American church, government, and business documents that may help us find our ancestral village in Europe. In this section, as elsewhere in the guide, the authors again look at these documents from the point of view of practical linguists and genealogists. They warn us again of misspellings of names of people and places, and give examples. Likewise, the authors alert us to old spellings of first names. For example, today's "Maria" was "Marja", "Marya", or "Maryja" a century ago. These differences may be significant when we are looking for Grandma Maria's name in a list that is strictly alphabetized by first name, as in an index to passenger lists.

We do not have to go to Poland to face documents in Polish. We can find them on this side of the Atlantic in documents produced by various Polish-American organizations. These records include membership rosters and receipts, obituaries, cemetery inscriptions, consular records, documents of the Polish Army in America from World War I, and death claims to Polish-American insurance and fraternal organizations. Any of these records can give clues to our ancestral village in Poland, if only we can decipher them. In Section IV, Shea and Hoffman take us by the hand, and help us do just that. They present a broad array of actual records, warts and all, from their various clients, and help us to translate them. At the same time, they clarify the vocabulary and grammar peculiar to that class

of documents and time. The authors even give test cases to allow us to assess our understanding of their guidelines. Most of these types of records do not seem to have been presented by earlier guides to Polish genealogical records, especially in such an analytical and instructive way.

Shea and Hoffman warn that many places in Poland have the same name. Gazetteers, or geographical dictionaries, will help us find that ancestral village of ours. In Section V, the authors provide selected maps of Poland's seemingly ever-changing boundaries, describe and analyze the relevant Polish-, German-, and Russian-language gazetteers that are available, and provide us with the vocabulary and grammar to help understand and use them. Their brief handling of the German and Russian languages foreshadows the more in-depth treatments in future volumes of this series that will be dedicated to those languages, as well as Latin. In the second half of this section, Shea and Hoffman show us where and how to write to appropriate civil and religious institutions in Poland and surrounding countries, and how to read their responses. Although they and others have published some of this material previously, its inclusion here adds to the volume's ability to stand alone as an up-to-date reference.

Section VI is the heart of the guide, and deals with Polish-language records originating in Europe, especially the Russian partition of Poland. The authors cover the usual records of birth, baptism, marriage, and death, civil and ecclesiastical, Christian and Jewish. Included here are detailed translations of two Jewish marriage and death records that were recorded in paragraph-form. Shea and Hoffman also include rare samples of other types of documents, such as guides to archival holdings, indices to vital records, revision tax lists, population registers, a school diploma, military information sheets, passport applications, passports, and a certificate of guild membership. Genealogical treasure can be found anywhere! Other documents include an address book, a permit to own and carry a gun, excerpts from telephone, city, and business directories, a page from a parish census, a personal letter, and even a court order recognizing a widow's inheritance. The authors carefully translate each of these documents, providing the necessary vocabulary, and illustrating the appropriate principles of grammar and usage.

Section VII consists of about sixty-three pages of Polish to English vocabulary. It begins with two specialized vocabulary lists of titles in Polish, Latin, and English for nobles, clergy and commoners. The tabular presentations make the hierarchical relationships among the titles and ranks easy to understand. The main vocabulary list follows. Though not comprehensive, it focuses on terms seen in genealogical records and their meanings there. Many of the words are archaic, and do not appear in modern standard dictionaries. The words are not presented merely as isolated terms, but often within phrases where one characteristically finds them.

For the reader's convenience, the main list also includes the specialized word lists that have appeared throughout the guide. Frequently, the main list refers the reader to a specialized list where there is more explanatory text. Used in conjunction with the grammar hints given in Sections I and II, this vocabulary list provides a powerful aid to readers trying to decipher Polish-language documents. I found this main vocabulary list, as well as the others, detailed and easy to use.

A twenty-page section on first names is next. It includes, besides native Polish names, those of ethnic Germans, Lithuanians, Russians, Ukrainians, and others, as well as Polonized forms of Jewish names. This index is a shortened and simplified version of *\_First Names of the Polish Commonwealth: Origins and Meanings\_* (Hoffman and Helon, Polish Genealogical Society of America, 1998). This abridged version again shows the authors' sensitivity to the needs of translators. They give those names that genealogists most likely need when searching for their Polish roots. Each entry gives the standard Polish spelling of the name, its gender, linguistic origin, and relevant equivalents in other languages, as well as the liturgical feast days associated with it.

The authors asked many of their clients and other genealogists to offer their documents as samples to illustrate various points in this guide. These contributors are acknowledged and thanked in Section IX. Their documents imbue the guide with realism, and prepare the user for the real world of translating documents. This Section also provides an annotated bibliography that cites works that the Shea and Hoffman used and suggest to the reader. Unfortunately, there are books, articles, and other documents mentioned in the text of this guide that are not included in this bibliography. Throughout, Shea and Hoffman cite specific books, articles, and other documents that provided materials for this guide, and carefully identify the sources. These bibliographic details, however, are given fully only in the text, rather than in the bibliography, or more appropriately, either in a reference list at the end of the guide, or in footnotes. The arrangement used by Shea and Hoffman slows, but fortunately does not prevent, reading the text, or evaluating the range or adequacy of sources used in the guide, which some scholars like to do. Nevertheless, the present guide is a significant addition to the literature on Polish-to-English translation in genealogy, synthesizing it, and bringing it up to date.

As mentioned above, the authors urge genealogists to use the guide's index extensively. It is found in Section X, and consists of 13 pages that give more than just page numbers where each subject is mentioned. Some page numbers appear in italics, and refer to information found on maps or their captions. Other page numbers appear in bold italics, and refer to passages where terms are defined, or to the most comprehensive discussion of the

subject. These additional elaborations help the reader to find, quickly and accurately, the information sought in this guide. The index contains at least thirty references to Jewish subjects or Jews.

Some quibbles: In some places in the guide, captioning of documents, figures, and tables could be improved. Most of the time, they are clearly numbered and titled. At other times, however, the captioning seems incomplete, and the reader has to search for a description or explanation in the surrounding text. Also, there is the infrequent typographical or factual error that detracts from this fine guide. None, however, is a fatal flaw.

The authors were uniquely qualified to write, produce, and publish this guide. Shea teaches Polish in the Department of Modern Languages at the Connecticut State University, New Britain. He is an accredited genealogist, the founding president of the Polish Genealogical Society of Connecticut and the Northeast, the reference archivist and translator for that society, and the editor of that society's publication, *Pathways and Passages*. Shea is the co-author, with Hoffman, of *Following the Paper Trail: A Multilingual Translation Guide*. Besides being a translator of several languages, including Polish, German and Latin, Hoffman is the manager of the Language and Lineage Press; the publications editor of the Polish Genealogical Society of America; the editor of *Proteviai*, the journal of the Lithuanian Global Genealogical Society; and the editor of *Gen Dobry!*, the e-zine of PolishRoots(tm). He is the author of *Polish Surnames: Origins and Meanings*, and the co-author, with George W. Helon, of *First Names of the Polish Commonwealth: Origins and Meanings*. The current guide indeed reflects Shea's and Hoffman's vast experience in genealogy, translation, and publication.

According to its web site (<http://langline.com>) the Language and Lineage Press is an informal collaboration between Hoffman and Shea to publish information on Eastern European, and especially Polish genealogical research. It is a modest operation, intended to disseminate information. This approach to publication has provided us with an excellent, yet inexpensive, translation guide. Jonathan Shea and William (Fred) Hoffman truly teach us how to fish these linguistic waters. Future guides in this series will cover translation of genealogical records and documents in Russian, German and Latin. I eagerly look forward to them.

This volume can be ordered from the Language and Lineage Press, 737 Hartfield Drive, North Aurora IL 60542-8917, for \$30, plus \$5 postage and handling for delivery to addresses in the U. S. (cf., <http://langline.com>).

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\*\*\* FEEDBACK FROM READERS \*\*\*

Joseph Martin <martinjo@LEWISU.EDU>  
Re: Articles on Polish Records  
[posted to Genpol:]

The Nov./Dec. 2000 issue of Heritage Quest magazine has the article "A Look at the Censuses of Poland" by Gayle Schlissel Riley, which discusses Civil Census Records and Catholic Census Records that may be available in the Regional Archives of Poland.

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From: Peter Jassem <jassep@tdbank.ca>  
Re: Polish Press and Jewish Issues

There are lots of interesting articles in the Polish press. For example the last issue of Catholic weekly, Tygodnik Powszechny, has published a very good (and very long) article analysing anti-Semitism. You may find it at:

<http://www.tygodnik.com.pl/kontrapunkt/45/janion.html>

I regularly check these Websites:

<http://www.gazeta.pl/> - the daily Gazeta Wyborcza  
<http://www.rzeczpospolita.pl/> - Rzeczpospolita  
<http://www.tygodnik.com.pl/> - the monthly  
Tygodnik Powszechny  
<http://www.midrasz.home.pl/> - the Jewish  
monthly Midrasz

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

<http://members.nbci.com/makushome/atpc/link-subject.html>  
Maureen Morris <mmorris@itsa.ucsf.edu> forwarded this link to an impressive variety of sites with Polish-connected info.

<http://lisy2.archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/words.exe>  
The January 3rd issue of MISSING LINKS: RootsWeb's Genealogy Journal (Vol. 6, No. 1, 3 Jan. 2001), mentioned this site for an online Latin dictionary with words and phrases found in old documents.

<http://istg.rootsworld.com/newcompass/pcindex.html>

The January 17th issue of \_ROOTSWEB REVIEW: RootsWeb's Genealogy News\_ (Vol. 4, No. 3, 17 Jan. 2001) included an article by Myra Gormley on ISTG (Immigrant Ships Transcribers Guild). It mentioned this site, ISTG's guide to information about ships, lists, immigration and naturalization records.

<http://www.sakura.pl/gene/index.php3>

Onna <[onna@sakura.pl](mailto:onna@sakura.pl)> mentioned this site on [POLAND-ROOTS-L@rootswb.com](mailto:POLAND-ROOTS-L@rootswb.com). It is designed to assist those researching Polish ancestors with info on specific villages.

<http://www.genealogyunlimited.com/hofer.html>

Jerry Frank <[jkfrank@home.com](mailto:jkfrank@home.com)> mentioned on [POLAND-ROOTS-L@rootswb.com](mailto:POLAND-ROOTS-L@rootswb.com) that this site offers the Hofer series of maps, scale 1:200,000, with German /Polish place name equivalents right down to the small villages and an index. At present the series covers only the former northern Prussian and southwestern Silesian regions. Posen is promised in a few months and others are coming.

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[http://www.PolishRoots.org/GenDobry\\_signup.htm](http://www.PolishRoots.org/GenDobry_signup.htm)

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