

# *Rodziny*

**SPRING 2008**

**The Journal of the Polish Genealogical Society of America®**



*Thomas Sajwaj, 1703 Carroll Lane, Chattanooga, TN 37405, (423) 240-5231, <tesgen@comcast.net>, sent this wedding photo of his grandparents, Łukasz Sajwaj (b. about 1880 near Tarnobrzeg, Poland) and Anna Ordyk (b. in the early 1890s likely in Dzików, near Tarnobrzeg). They were married in Kansas City, Kansas, on July 12, 1909, at St. Joseph's Catholic Church. For more information, or to compare notes on possible relatives, contact Tom.*

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## POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA®

**984 NORTH MILWAUKEE AVENUE • CHICAGO, IL • USA • 60622**  
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PGSA's e-mail address is [pgsamerica@aol.com](mailto:pgsamerica@aol.com). Its Web site is at <http://www.pgsa.org>.

### Statement of Mission

The Polish Genealogical Society of America® (PGSA) exists as a national nonprofit educational organization to collect, disseminate, and preserve information on Polish and Polish-American family history and to help its members use that information in their own research.

### PGSA Publications Philosophy

The PGSA will consider for publication articles, books, edited documents, bibliographies, anthologies, reviews, and other writings pertaining to all aspects of Polish genealogical research from all parts of the world. The PGSA invites the submission of interesting and educational stories on genealogical research, including those acknowledging the efforts of helpful researchers, librarians, state and religious archives, or other persons and organizations. The PGSA also welcomes contributions that examine the historical and cultural heritage of our ancestors and families.

### Membership

Effective January 1, 2008, membership rates were increased by \$5, and the 3-year membership option was discontinued. Membership rates have been unchanged for several years, and during that time the costs of printing and postage have gone up. Of course, all current multiple-year memberships will be honored until their expiration date. Effective January 1, 2008, the new rates are:

	<i>1 year</i>	<i>2 years</i>		<i>1 year</i>	<i>2 years</i>
Bulk-rate mailing	\$25	\$40	Canada	\$30	\$50
First-class mailing	\$30	\$50	International	\$40	\$70

The mailing label states the expiration date of your current membership. If you have any questions, please e-mail them to [<PGSAmerica@aol.com>](mailto:PGSAmerica@aol.com). Renewal applications are available at [www.pgsa.org](http://www.pgsa.org). Please **send change of address or dues to the Membership Chairmen, Rich and Barb Szparkowski, 1603 E. Linden Ln., Mt. Prospect IL 60056-1529**. Make checks or money orders payable to “**PGS of America,**” in U.S. funds. Thank you!

### Meetings

Regular meetings of the Society are held on the second Sunday of February, August, and November, and the third Sunday of May, unless otherwise ordered by the Board of Directors. They are usually held at the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America facilities, 984 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago. An annual Society Conference with several speakers is held in the fall at a location in the Chicagoland area. A United Polish Genealogical Societies Conference is held in May biennially in Salt Lake City, Utah.

## NEWS AND NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

On behalf of the Polish Genealogical Society of America and its Board of Directors, I wish to apologize for any inconvenience experienced by the users of our Web site within the past few weeks.

Near the end of March, anyone trying to access our databases received an error message. Unfortunately, as frustrations built up, a week elapsed before the problem could be identified and corrected. I was informed that the problem was caused by our files becoming corrupted.

Subsequent to that event, the entire site was shut down for two days so that we could switch to a different server. The change was due in part to the project to update and redesign our Web site. In addition to having a new appearance, the redesigned site will incorporate drop-down menus, a members-only section, and the ability to pay online with a credit card for goods and

services. The excitement has built up for those involved in the project, and everyone is looking forward to the finished product. We have not been given a completion date as yet, but I expect that the work will be complete well before the end of the year.

This year is the 30th anniversary of the Polish Genealogical Society of America, and the PGSA Eagle has become well known and recognized. Through the years, more than one version of the Eagle has been used, with two versions appearing on our Web site. A decision was made to use just one version of the Eagle and to update it as well. Final approval of the new design is expected at the next Board meeting in May.

God willing, there will be more News and Notes in the next *Rodziny*.

*Edmund Iwanski* 🍁

### Letters to the Editor

**Subject: Surname/geographical assistance**

Hello. I am Andrew Osantowski. I am twenty years old, and I am currently in prison.

I am writing to you because I would like assistance in determining my surname's meaning. My last name is *Osantowski*. Before that it was *Osentowski*, but sometime in the mid-20th century, perhaps because of illiteracy, it was changed to *Osantowski*. However, going through my father's father's side's ancestry, which I am very proud of, we can go back to 1755, and my great-great-great-great-grandfather Joannis had the last name of *Osetoski*.

I paid for some genealogical help from the PGSA. They sent me a packet full of information, but they didn't actually tell me what my last name means. From the information they sent me, I broke it down to mean this:

*Oset* (thistle[s]) + *o* (of) + *ski* (from)

My guess is that it means "one from the place of the thistles."

My ancestors come from northwestern Poland in the town and area of Sierosław

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**William F. Hoffman** .....Editor

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## Letters to the Editor (cont'd)

and Świecie. That is on my father's father's side. The area of Świecie is filled with forests and farmland. My guess on my surname meaning is probable, but possibly not correct.

Could you provide me with assistance and geographical information on this area in Poland? Also do you have any information on any Osentowskis or Osantowskis? I never see my surname mentioning in *Rodziny* and I get disappointed about that.

Also, I am interested in writing to other people of Polish ancestry whether they reside in Poland, North America, Europe, or somewhere else in the world. I don't know how to go about that. Is there any way you can help me in this matter?

I'm very proud of my Polish ancestry and I want to learn the Polish language when I get out. My parents are actively involved with preserving Polish history in the area of Parisville, MI. My father owns the Parisville Hotel. As you may know, Parisville is one of the first Polish settlements in the United States. It can give Panna Maria, TX, a run for its money.

I also want to let you know that I have been locked up since I was seventeen years old and that was back in 2004. I was convicted of a threat of terrorism, using a computer to commit a crime (which the threat of terrorism stems from), and several weapons charges. You can confirm this information at <http://www.state.mi.us/mdoc/asp/otis2profile.asp?mdocNumber=540015>.

I have a deep love for my ancestry. If you don't care about your ancestors, then you don't care about yourself and your family and you lack a self-identity. I'm Roman Catholic and I attend church every Sunday and other church functions throughout the week. I am also involved with many classes and activities in prison. I work at the meat-processing plant across the street. I appreciate any assistance. Thank you!!

I don't mind if you publicize my address or information. Thanks again.

Andrew Osantowski #540015  
Parnall Correctional Facility  
1790 E. Parnall  
Jackson MI 49201-7139

**Editor:** I told Mr. Osantowski he'd analyzed his name well: the most common form in Poland is *Osentowski*, and "one from

the place of the thistles" is the most likely meaning. I gave him some background on the name's variants and some info on the Świecie area. Data from 2002 showed two females named Osentowska living in Świecie county; they just might be relatives!

I wanted to print Mr. Osantowski's letter so that any members with roots in that area, or family named *Ose[n]towski*, could contact him. Because of the nature of his crime, of course, he is not allowed Internet access, so his snail-mail address is the only way to write to him. I figure people who make bad mistakes when they're young often turn their lives around, especially if they're motivated. His interest in his family's roots should be encouraged and assisted, as pride in one's heritage can be a very positive force in life. I encourage anyone who might be able to share information with Mr. Osantowski to write him.

### **Subject: Accommodations in Kraków**

I'd like to start off by thanking you guys for the fantastic publication. Reading the stories of members' magical trips to Kraków is very inspiring to me, as I currently live in that city.

The reason I'm writing to you is that after recent changes in Poland (and even in America), Kraków has become rather expensive for tourists, and accommodations in the on-season can be difficult to come by. The building where I live offers short-term rentals on apartments, rooms, and even single beds. The location is amazing, simply the best in Kraków, and the price is very affordable.

The reason I'm informing you of this is because I have heard about genealogy tourists spending upwards of 300 *złoty* a night for a room! As my mother and I are the biggest fans ever of your society, I'd like to extend help to anyone who is coming over here with arranging a good place for them to stay, a place with a reasonable price tag. Is there a way you can help me get the word out?

Ryan Socash  
<Ryan@musiccorner.pl>

**Editor:** I think perhaps we just did!

### **Subject: Childhood in Chicago**

Just a note from a new member, to thank you for my first copy of *Rodziny*.

[Continued on page 11]



## The Journey to America

*Iwona Dakiniewicz, Łódź, Poland;  
e-mail: genealogy@pro.onet.pl*

*[with translation assistance from William F. Hoffman]*



They all departed in fear of the Unknown: fear of losing their way, of being stopped at the border, of arrest, of the hordes of swindlers, of the voyage by ship, and of the fate that awaited them on a new continent. Nonetheless, their great hope for a better, more decent life was stronger than all their fears and anxieties. They set out with no possessions other than their health and their family.

During the years 1840-1920, more than four million citizens departed from Poland. There was an all-encompassing determination: the emigrants were fleeing poverty in their native land, which furthermore was a land enslaved by foreign partitioners. They felt they were slaves in their own land. They lived in wretched conditions, often more than a dozen to a single hut, abused by their employers, with little chance of bettering their lot. But there were other motivations as well: escaping military service, curiosity about the world, or, finally, the ordinary desire for personal freedom.

The motivations of emigrants can also be differentiated on a geopolitical map. In each of the individual partitions, Prussian, Russian, and Galician, a different kind of repression prevailed against the native inhabitants.

In Prussia, they were tormented by the policy of Germanization. In fact, in that partition, things went so far as a school revolution. The police jailed thousands of rebellious Poles. But the more people they jailed, the higher the flame of vengeance rose. The weary ones who dreamed of a normal life became emigrants.

Also worth mentioning are two other Prussian issues. The earliest wave of emigration from Prussian Poland was the result of natural disasters and years of famine during the period 1844-1847. The second factor was the result of an 1848 Prussian decree that ordered men ages 17-25 to present certificates to military authorities

attesting that they would not dodge military service. Because of this, many young men left illegally.

Those who left overpopulated Galicia were fleeing high taxes and starvation wages. Some 50 thousand people died each year from starvation. Harsh reality prevailed: the averaged Galician farm was no larger than five Austrian *mórgs*, and workers were paid pitiful wages. If you had a horse, you were a rich man.

In the Kingdom of Poland, on the other hand, unemployment was rampant. People from the Russian partition ran off to Prussia to find seasonal labor there. Often they took the place of Prussian emigrants who had already settled in America. Empress Catherine poured oil on the fire when she issued a ukase liquidating the Uniate Church in 1873. Religious repression became a rape for these communities, and at the same time an essential cause of emigration. Desperate Greek Catholic believers had two choices: to conduct their church services in the woods at night, or to travel a long way to the nearest church. Many of them traveled on foot to Kraków.

One can give many numbers and statistics regarding the scope of emigration, but what is most interesting here is the human factor—how each of these individuals experienced the parting and the voyage across the ocean.

Emigrants were more or less informed about the obstacles and difficulties of the trip to America. News came to them in letters.

The first obstacle to overcome was collecting the necessary sum of money: for the trip to the railroad station, then for train tickets, ship tickets, other expenses on the road, and a minimum to help them get off to a start in their new country. The total cost of the trip could range from 150 to over 200 marks or rubles, depending on where the trip began.

How difficult it was to save the necessary funds is illustrated by the situation of a typical married couple living in a Prussian village with several children in the 1840s. Both husband and wife, employed in physical labor at the nearby manorial farmstead, could not hope to attain a combined income of more than 40 dollars annually (the equivalent of about 120 marks later). At the most, they could save perhaps 10 dollars a year.

At first, several families would contribute to buy a single ticket to America, in the hope that the one chosen to go would quickly find work and repay the loan, thus providing financial assistance to those departing subsequently.

As of the years 1888-1889, a ticket from Bremen to New York cost 150-200 rubles, or 120-200 Austrian crowns, and about the same amount in German marks. A trip from Poznań to Chicago cost 30 dollars in American money, by the rate of exchange at the time. The firm Red Star offered a competitive price: 21 dollars for a trip from the Prussian partition to many American ports.

The Polish emigrant often had a tragic view of the price of ship tickets, for he was sure that they wanted to cheat him. Although the prices were fixed, he felt he would not waste the money and would be very cautious and frugal with it.

The first to go were strong, healthy men, who went as a sort of advance guard, to get familiar with the new land and estimate the chances of bringing the family on over as soon as possible. Those who were particularly resolute and determined sold off their lands, houses, or share of inheritance from their parents. I noted interesting cases in which the same land was sold to two different purchasers. By the time the truth came out, the cunning farmer was already beyond the reach of the local jurisdiction.

The departure from home was a very solemn day for the family, and sometimes an event for the whole neighborhood. Best wishes were accompanied by tears of joy mixed with fear. Usually the wives, children, and grandparents remained on the farm. Over the course of the next year, the whole family would follow in the steps of their fathers, brothers, or cousins. Those who remained in Poland were usually the old folks, or those who had been assigned the role of guardians of the family nest.

Emigrants usually got ready for the trip

very carefully. They planned their departure to fit the work schedule on the farm and in the field. They worked out plans beforehand with their relatives or neighbors for a trip together. They chose those who were hard-working, healthy, and upright. For the trip they collected spare underwear, warm clothes, long boots, a blanket, tobacco, liquor for bribes, *pierzyny* [quilts, typically of goose down], photos of family and patron saints, simple work tools, seeds, pots, cast-iron pans, everything needed for pickling, and smoked or pickled food products. The more informed they were regarding material needs in the new land, the more things they assembled. Instructions came in letters from America. Among other things, they were advised to bring woolen belts to wear on the lower abdomen during the voyage, so that in case of dysentery (bloody diarrhea) they could maintain a consistently warm temperature in the belly area, which alleviated the unpleasant effects of this illness.

Things were packed in wooden trunks padlocked or nailed shut. These trunks also served as stools for seating on the ship. Later on, however, the rules didn't allow for the use of padlocks or nails, because of customs controls.

The Prussian border was the next obstacle on the way, and not always in regard to formal considerations. Along the whole eastern border of Prussia, there were hordes of swindlers of every kind: fake guides, agents offering phony ship tickets or money exchange "at a bargain rate," con artists collecting payment for half-free lodgings for the night, the usual thieves, and even bandits. In general, the black market and corruption flourished in the areas near the border. Almost everyone took bribes, from the *wójt* who issued departure certificates to the soldier who guarded the border. Most often the bribes were in money, but nobody turned down vodka or tobacco.

The paths of emigrants from Galicia and Russia came together in Prussian border points in Mysłowice, Oświęcim, Ostrów Wielkopolski, Ilów, Prostki. The trip across Germany lasted two or three days.

The railroad trip took them first to Berlin, where they had to transfer to another train. The first contact with a foreign country was worrisome; the emigrants' lack of knowledge of a foreign language caused them stress. But they had to exchange

money, buy the next ticket, and find a place to stay for the night. Still, the hardest times lay before them.

The seaports during the times of peak emigration were swarming with thousands of emigrants stuck at the docks for two or even three weeks. In Bremen and Hamburg, ships sailed twice a week, on Wednesday and Saturday. The emigrants were forced to wait for the ship on the spot. They crowded railway sidings, barracks, eating establishments, or churches; or they just wandered around the town, worried about their fate, lost in a foreign place, and left to their own resources. Provisions cost 2½ marks a day, payment for a bed was 1 mark. When there were no beds to be had, people slept under the open sky.

The ports full of foreigners were also heaven on earth for crooks, who took advantage of the naïve emigrants at every opportunity.

Reporters also came to the ports and published their stories in national and regional newspapers. In one of these articles, the author wrote: "All remember their homeland with tears in their eyes, in view of the fact that they were leaving, not bliss, but poverty..." (*Kurier Polski*, 1890, no. 168).

The voyage itself filled the emigrants with terror but also attracted them with its exoticism. The last stage of the trip was the most exciting and most terrifying at the same time. Fear of the Great Water must have been a significant psychic barrier. None of the emigrants had ever traveled across the ocean by ship before. The most severe voyages were experienced by the early emigrants, those who traveled on sailing ships during the 1870s. The length of the sea voyage made the situation even worse; the first sailing ships took as long as 15 weeks. They carried 200-500 passengers. The passenger sailing ships were unstable, and had primitive decks and cabins devoid of all comforts. There were deaths, drownings, and even suicides on almost every voyage.

In the 1880s, a new era began—that of steamships. The number of passengers rose to as many as 2,000, and the length of the trip was shortened to 9-11 days. The largest ships, for instance, the *Imperator* or *America*, had a displacement of 50 thousand tons. Shipowners were compelled to build their ships according to the require-

ments of American immigration officials. Among other things, they had to guarantee a minimum amount of space per passenger, appropriate sanitary conditions, and three meals a day. These requirements were strengthened in 1883; there had to be a doctor on every ship (in view of the more and more frequent deaths).

The German ships had the worst reputation, as well as the English. Of the ports, the one in Liverpool supposedly had the worst reputation.

Poles, who were the poorest, traveled on the cheaper German ships, on which they bought the cheapest spots, on the tween-decks. Many of them had particularly bad experiences during their voyages, and the statutory social requirements repeatedly deviated from the norm.

Henryk Sienkiewicz, the Polish Nobel Prize winner, described his impressions of a voyage thus:

In general this is a large, dark room, where the light of day penetrates, not through glass-covered openings in the deck, but through the usual small windows in the sides of the ship. There are no cabins; beds are pushed all the way to the wall, and the corner designated for women is set off only by a separate rail. In stormy seas, the waves strike the windows with a boom, filling the hall with a gloomy, greenish light. The smell of cooking and of people combines with the sharp odor of the sea, tar, and the wet ship ropes. All in all, it is stifling, humid, and dark there ... It is in rooms such as these that the emigrants travel. If you were to ask them from where, the answer would be "from under the Prussians," "from under the Austrians," "from under the Muscovites." Despair, fear, and longing for their homeland are their lot.

The end of the voyage did not mean the end of worries and problems; adapting to life on American soil was not the easiest thing to do. But horizons of a better future seemed more and more close and real, and the painful separation from their native land found an outlet in maintaining contacts by letters with their relatives in the old country and preserving their national traditions on American soil—as attested by the number of Polish confraternities, clubs, and organizations that remain active to this day in almost all the states of the U.S. 🍀

# Moikrewni.pl—A Review of a Polish Genealogical Web Site with Surname Mapping

Robert P. Sliwinski, M.S., e-mail <robert\_sliwinski@sbcglobal.net>

Genealogical Web sites designed for Poles are becoming fashionable these days, because of an emerging interest in family history in Poland. One recently developed site catering to Polish citizens and allowing them to create family trees online is [www.moikrewni.pl](http://www.moikrewni.pl) (Figure 1). This site, written in Polish, has a unique feature that may also benefit Polish-American genealogists: its surname mapping.

The very existence of this site is an interesting development because, for the longest time, Polish citizens were very private and did not like providing any personal information online. Sites that do give such information are protected, and you need to register to build your tree. There are, however, typically some features that are available to all without registering.

In Polish, *moi krewni* (pronounced *mo'-yee krev'-nee*) means “my relatives.” The site’s title, therefore, uses appropriate Polish words to describe its theme.

Worth noting, however, is the fact that this site is just one of a family of genealogical Web sites created by OSN Online Social Networking GmbH, based in Hamburg, Germany. Similar sites were designed for other languages, including English, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Brazilian Portuguese. The English version, <http://www.itsourtree.com/>, is very similar to the other Web sites, but there are slight differences between the various language versions.

Moikrewni uses the basic “let’s build a family tree” idea as its starting point. Additionally, it provides a forum, contact information, and a section regarding the company’s policies. As I said, though, the feature most valuable for Polish-Americans is the “Mapa nazwisk” or “surname map” at <http://www.moikrewni.pl/mapa/>. Mapping of surnames in current-day Poland can potentially be a useful tool to locate lost relatives in the old country. It is especially useful for uncommon surnames.

Remember, however, that the site is geared toward the Polish speaker, and a name you type into the “Mapa nazwisk” box could be only partially correct. The Polish

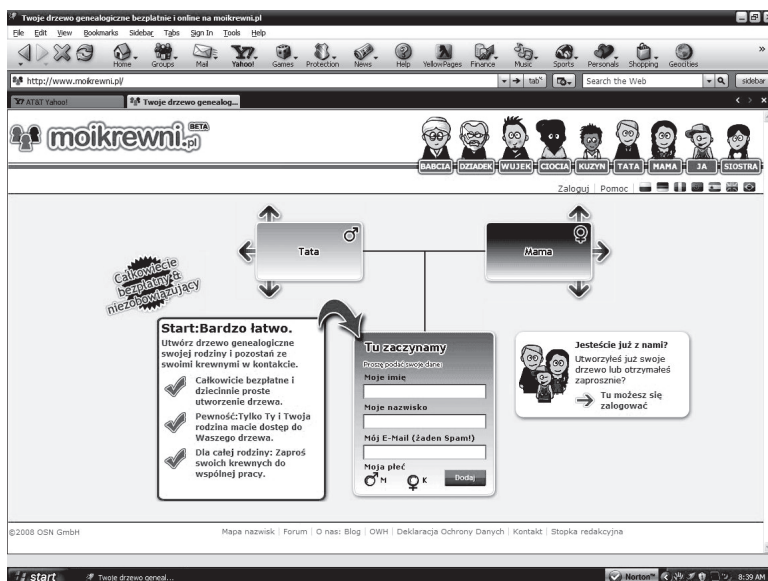


Figure 1. Home page of [www.moikrewni.pl](http://www.moikrewni.pl) (all screen captures used with permission of the Moikrewni webmaster).

diacritical marks are very important on this site, and the database may contain numerous, slightly different variants of surnames with diacritical marks. For instance, if you type in *Sliwinski* in English and click on the button that says “Szukaj” (Search), you will get a map for Sliwinskis in Poland; but this map will be misleading and incomplete.

In Polish the standard spelling of this name is *Śliwiński*, with acute accents over the *s* and *n*. Variant spellings of the name include *Śliwinski* and *Sliwiński*. To illustrate, a search for *Sliwinski* tells you that as of 2002 there were nine Polish citizens who were listed under that name in the database of PESEL (a Polish government agency) from which these figures were compiled. There were 31 entries for *Śliwinski* and 119 for *Sliwiński*. A search for *Śliwiński*, on the other hand, shows you there were 8,955 Poles who spelled it that way. The diacritical marks make a difference!

What’s more, Poles use feminine forms of many surnames, including those typically ending in *-ski*, *-cki*, *-zki*, and *-ny*. The standard feminine form is *Śliwińska*, and 9,570 Polish citizens went by that form as of 2002—not something you’d want to overlook. The variants *Sliwinska*, *Śliwinska*, and *Sliwińska*, though not technically correct by Polish spelling rules, should not be



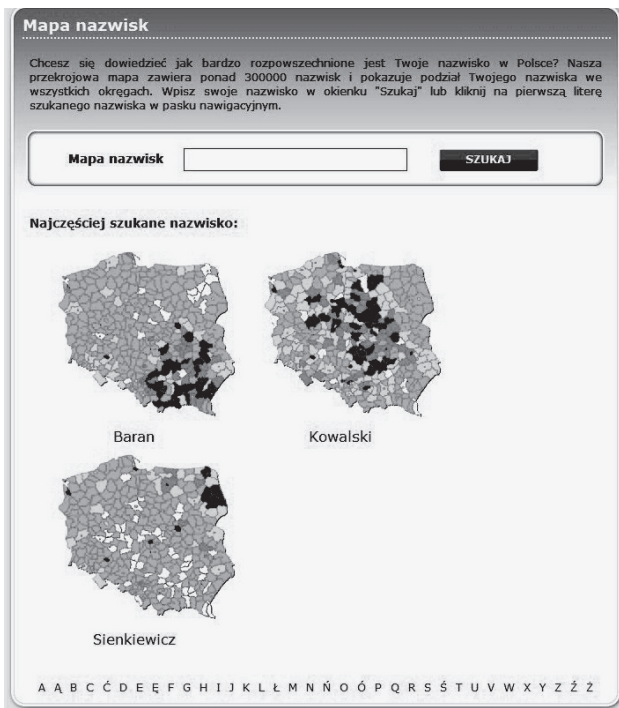


Figure 2. "Mapa nazwisk" page with Polish alphabet.

ignored, either. It just might be that *your* relatives, for some reason, are among those listed under one of those variants.

So to achieve a full understanding of a specific surname in Poland, you really need to review all maps associated with all variants of that surname. There are also hyphenated surname combinations to be reckoned with; a study of *Śliwiński*, for instance, should also include *Śliwinski-König*.

Although the diacritical marks present a challenge, there is a convenient alpha-

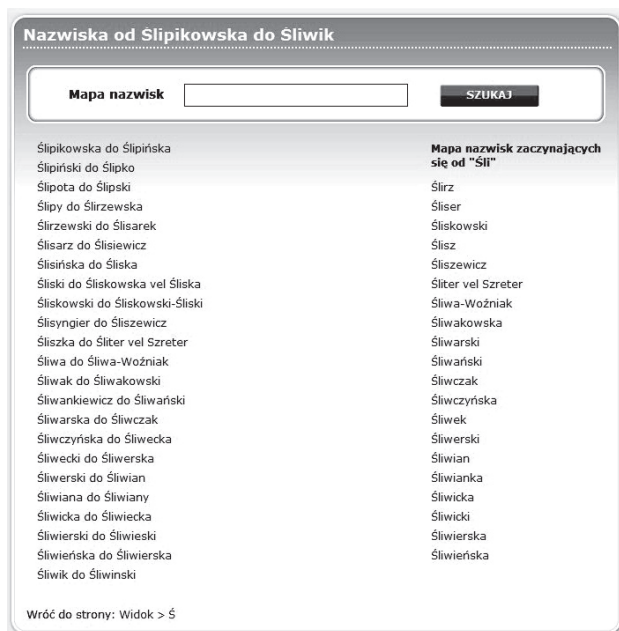
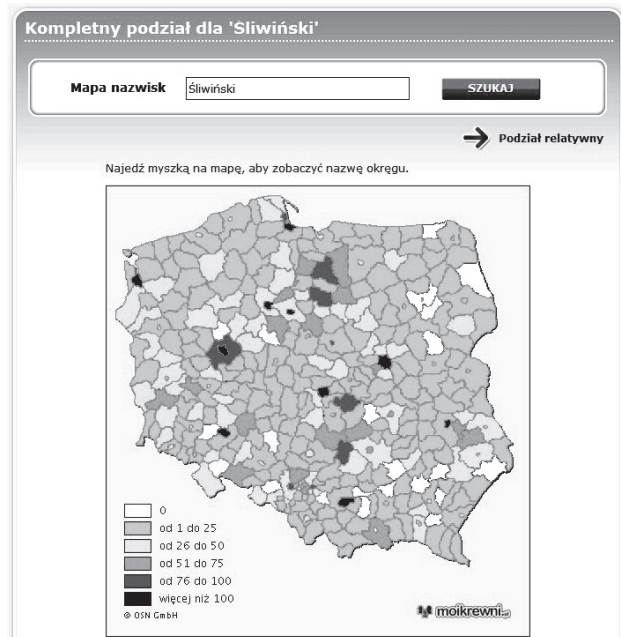


Figure 3. Searching for surnames.

Figure 4. Map of the surname *Śliwiński* showing its wide distribution in Poland.

betic aid located at the bottom of the "Mapa nazwisk" page (Figure 2). All possible first letters of surnames are represented, and clicking on any letter lets you start searching for names beginning with that letter. It sounds straightforward, but it can take a little longer to find your particular surname when searching a list from one spelling to another, and yours might be in between (Figure 3). Plan on searching several times at different locations. You may need to page patiently through successive lists, narrowing the possibilities down as you go, until you get the exact form you want.

If the name you want doesn't include any diacritical marks, you can go straight to the page with your name by inputting the URL <http://www.moikrewni.pl/mapa/kompletny/XXX.html>, substituting your name (no capital letters) for the XXX. Thus <http://www.moikrewni.pl/mapa/kompletny/kowalski.html> takes you straight to the map for *Kowalski*, and <http://www.moikrewni.pl/mapa/kompletny/kowalska.html> to the map for *Kowalska*. This does not work, however, if names include diacritical marks. Thus <http://www.moikrewni.pl/mapa/kompletny/śliwiński.html> will not work. Those Polish characters must be coded a specific way: <http://www.moikrewni.pl/mapa/kompletny/%25C5%259Bliwi%25C5%2584ski.html>.

The name *Śliwiński* is very widely distributed, and high concentrations are associated with big cities (Figure 4). Although this is interesting, it does not point to a

specific region in Poland and thus provides no starting point for researching the surname. I've established that there are a number of unrelated families who bear this name. Therefore, old-fashioned document searches offer a better chance of finding an ancestral village for my family.

Some surnames, such as *Czopor* (from my mother's side), have no separate feminine form and no diacritical marks, and therefore there is only one map for that surname (Figure 5). Since *Czopor* is an uncommon name, this map has proven to be very useful. This surname shows high concentrations in southeastern Poland.

The data from the "Mapa nazwisk" search engine is comparable to the data from the searchable database at <http://www.herby.com.pl/indexslo.html>, which some call the "Rymut site," after Kazimierz Rymut, the Polish professor who first compiled and published the data. Both sets of figures came from the Polish government agency called PESEL, and both show the frequency and distribution of surnames borne by Polish citizens—the Rymut site with data from 1990, Moikrewni with data from 2002. For some time it has been possible to create surname maps by taking data from the Rymut site and plugging it into the applet at <http://www.genpol.com/Mapa+main.html>. But that mapping program is not as sharp and easy to use as Moikrewni's.

It's interesting that Moikrewni shows 1,710 more Śliwińskis than the Rymut site does. [Editor—Rymut said the 1990 data lacked figures for about 7% of the Polish population, so the more accurate 2002 data will often show larger numbers.] The Rymut site combines the figures for the masculine and feminine forms, whereas Moikrewni gives separate maps and pages for each form, and the total is up to you to calculate.

The Rymut site breaks data down by the 49 provinces of 1990, whereas Moikrewni's numbers are broken down by current counties or *powiaty*, not the 16 current provinces. The greater detail of Moikrewni's data, and the ability to place your mouse over a location on the map and see a county or city name pop up, are particularly valuable to anyone not too familiar with Poland.

Genealogists looking for all variants and all data during searches may wish to consult Rymut's *Dictionary of Surnames in Current Use in Poland at the Beginning of the 21st Century*, a CD published in

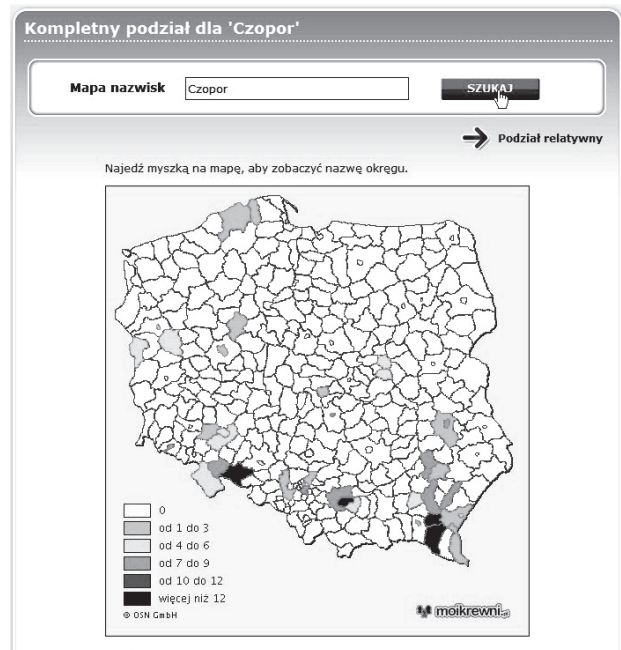


Figure 5. Map of *Czopor* surname showing its comparatively limited distribution in Poland.

2002 by the Polish Genealogical Society of America (formerly sold by the Society, but now out of print). That CD gives complete breakdowns of PESEL's 2002 data for every county in which a surname appears, whereas Moikrewni lists data only for the 10 counties in which a name is most common. Moikrewni's maps, however, illustrate data for all counties, not just the "top 10."

Moikrewni also allows you to incorporate the surname maps it generates into your blog or family Web site. Naturally, the map includes the Moikrewni logo as a reminder of where it came from.

The forum portion of the Web site is helpful for those with very good Polish writing skills. Fortunately, as mentioned earlier, there is an English-language version of the Web site, <http://www.itsourtree.com>, and it provides contact information that will respond to questions in English. The folks there were very helpful with my inquiries. The English site does not have a surname mapping feature, but you can access the Moikrewni site by clicking on the Polish flag near the top right of the home page.

Polish-language family tree Web sites are aimed at the growing number of Poles interested in genealogy. These sites attract new clients by offering different free amenities that make the experience potentially more fruitful. With a little bit of assistance, Polish-Americans can also use these free amenities to benefit their research. 🐾



# A Warsaw Cemetery Adventure

**Phyllis M. Sternemann, 74 Shore Rd., Manhasset NY 11030 <genjeo@gmail.com>**

By a stroke of good luck and after hours of planning, I was able to arrange child care for my son and daughter in order to take a brief trip to Warsaw in January of 1998. My father's 76-year-old cousin Łucja was excited at the prospect of seeing me again, since my previous visit of just 20 years prior. Aside from a quick catch-up with Łucja, my other goal was a cemetery visit to photograph graves of my ancestors.

After dropping off my bag at the hotel, I skipped a chance to rest so I could get as much accomplished as possible in only three days. I met my prearranged translator in the lobby, and off we went by cab with a bouquet for Łucja. The wonderful visit included nibbling cookies with tea, a review of her old photograph albums, and enthusiastic exchanges about the "olden days." Then I wrote down the name of the cemetery (Powązki) where her husband, Jerzy, was buried and, way across the Wisła River, the cemetery where her parents lay (Bródno). Because of poor health, Łucja had not been able to visit any graves for several years—not even for the special commemoration of All Saints' Day, when pilgrimages across Poland by family members lead to graveside reunions and cause horrendous traffic congestion. I thought it would be a nice gesture to photograph Jerzy's grave and send a copy to her.

Leaving her apartment while chattering with the translator about various ways to seek out dusty old records at the local archival offices, I realized I had forgotten to ask Łucja for the burial plot locations.

Early the next day, armed with my bus map, city map, Berlitz Polish phrase book, itchy wool sweater, down coat, ugly hat, and clunky snow boots, I stuffed my camera, wallet, passport, notepad, pen, water bottle, and seven granola bars into my backpack. Along with the names of these two cemeteries and emergency provisions, I felt prepared to find the final resting places of my ancestors. I had no idea what was in store for me.

Sure, the first cemetery, near the middle of the city, was easy to find, since the bus quickly stopped right at the main gate. Walking past the snow-covered graves of



Above: A photo of Łucja Półtorak, 1938. Below: Her mother, Gizela Rychlewska Półtorak.



famous artists and writers, I sought the caretaker's office. Along the quiet path between the rows of elaborate vertical monuments, my muffled footsteps allowed the crispness of the chickadee's "bee-bee-bee" to sound out.

The birds flitted from pine branch to tombstone and back again, escorting me, a lone visitor on a weekday morning, through this still place. One landed atop a tall stone, and I thought to photograph it, a small form of life in this silent gray stone yard. But the bird would not stay still long enough for me to dig through my pack and adjust the camera. I walked on.

Scanning each marker in the next row for names carved into the granite, I stopped abruptly at lettering which, surprisingly, spelled out Jerzy Kędzierski. How startling to see the very name I was looking for, right there after the chickadee's antics. Now, was it the correct Jerzy Kędzierski? After all, that surname is extremely common. A quick review of the dates, since the other Polish words were too hard to decipher, showed that I had indeed found the grave of Łucja's husband. The stone letters had been filled in by shaky hand with black paint, perhaps to aid the visually impaired. I adjusted the camera and took a few shots from different angles and a close-up.

After repacking my bag and putting my gloves back on, I bid farewell to this man whom I had only met once, whose stories were kept secret since World War II. Perhaps to be contemplated later, since I had yet another cemetery to travel to. The days are shorter in winter.

Three buses and two hours later, I was over the river and past the zoo. The map showed that this bus should turn left soon, unless it's the wrong bus. After the auto repair shops and stone quarry, my stop would be just ahead, where clusters of fat candles and plastic flowers were sold outside the gate of Bródno Cemetery. People were eager to earn even a few *złoty* from sales such as this. Yet they would only brave the cold if the sun was shining.

The cemetery office staff attempted to help, but the language barrier was too high. My poor pronunciation of the surname was ridiculed as one worker mimicked to another my exaggerated vowels in the name Półtorak. Without the exact year of death,



Above: A photo of Bródno Cemetery on All Saints' Day. The original is available at [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Br%C3%B3dno\\_Cemetery?uselang=pl](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Br%C3%B3dno_Cemetery?uselang=pl).

they were unable to look up the grave's location on their computer. I did not want this long trip to be wasted; after all, who knew when I might be able to return?

So I decided to call Łucja. By myself, using my trusty Berlitz book. But where to find a phone? And how to obtain the coins or token needed? At least I had her number and some paper *złoty* with me. It was worth a try. The office worker politely waited as I mangled the Polish for, "Where is a pay phone?" She used the ever popular international gestures to accompany her words, letting me know that a post office was down the block, with a phone inside.

Off I went, Berlitz book in hand, past the candle sellers, briskly now, as I would not wish to remain in this neighborhood after dusk. In line at the post office, eyeing the gruff unshaven man behind the counter, I waited uncertainly. My goal was to convey a need not for stamps, but for the use of a pay phone. Only for a local call—or does one have to dial a certain prefix? A smile came to me as I realized the people in line behind me were in for quite an event. Here's a woman who can't speak Polish, trying to buy a phone token, taking too long to make her request, and even if she is successful in procuring the desired phone token, the biggest question becomes: Who on earth would she be trying to call since she doesn't speak Polish?

So, I was next, and I used every polite phrase I could. The sweat trickled along my



brow as my wool had done too good a job while I was walking briskly to the overheated building. The postal man responded by holding up a plastic card, with a picture of a phone on it. I was so happy. Then, before handing it to me, he produced a huge sentence that I could not understand for the life of me. It had nothing to do with all the words swirling about in my head which I had looked up while waiting—words such as “phone,” “cost,” “local call,” and the like. I was forced to produce the only fluent sentence in my repertoire: “I’m sorry, I do not understand.” At that moment, his gruffness faded while he snapped off the perforated corner of the card to activate it for me. “Thank you,” I replied, in Polish, of course.

Then I waited for the chattering girl who was in the phone booth to finish her eternal call. The sun was lower. The melted snow would be freezing again, forming slippery patches. When was the last bus going back? And where does it stop for me to board?

I was grateful to close the door to the phone booth, thereby ending the show for the other patrons. I juggled my pen, notebook and Berlitz book while balancing the phone on my shoulder. I inserted the card, first upside down, then backwards, and finally correctly, and dialed Łucja’s number.

She was very surprised to hear my voice. I was able to convey that I was at the cemetery and I wanted the “grave of her mother.” In fractured words, of course. She thought I was at the cemetery where her husband was buried.

“No, Cmentarz Bródnowski,” I replied.

“Oh, *uwaga!*” she exclaimed, a warning to me, as the neighborhood was not so safe. I quickly wrote the way she said the numbers for the row and plot and the alphabet letter for the section. If only I had taken time to learn numbers in Polish, I would not have had to write them phonetically to look up in my handy book.

I thanked her and tried to convey that I would be careful. I walked back to the cemetery, energized by my newly gathered information, certain of success in my quest.

Section D was far into the center of an expansive field. I stopped and looked out into the open area beyond the trees that lined the perimeter, seeing that only the main path was clear. The snow seemed deeper on this side of the river. The little markers for Section D were tall enough to stand out, but there had to be other low signs and markers for rows and plots that I couldn’t possibly find under the snowy blanket. This blanket spread over every grave, covering hundreds of names and identities.

There were no tall monuments, no high stones, only low plaques, all obscured by winter’s fallen flakes. The huge fluffy white blanket could not be folded over to uncover those ever important names and dates for which I searched. And I could not pay my respects at the graves of the ancestors who had chosen not to emigrate as my grandparents had done.

I thought of many possibilities as I walked slowly to the bus stop, scattering my granola bar crumbs for the birds. Maybe the chickadees would find them. ❀

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## Letters to the Editor (cont’d)

What a wonderful, interesting publication! I especially enjoyed reading “A Child’s Recollection,” which brought back memories of my childhood in Chicago. Living on Culbertson and Leavitt St. in the area with the vaulted street. Not knowing why the street was raised until later on in life, just accepting life the way it was. Living in a neighborhood where everyone spoke Polish and some speaking half-Polish and half-English. The cold water flats, Saturday night baths in the galvanized tub. Summer evening sitting on the front concrete porch talking with neighbors until bedtime. Flats with no hot water, no heat, only by coal or oil

stoves, no air-conditioning, no refrigeration, and yet we survived. Could the children in this day and age do the same?

Looking forward to the next publication, keep up the good work.

Loretta (Majerczyk) Nemec  
<dornoblady@aol.com>

**Editor:** I’m pleased you enjoyed that article. I knew it was a good article when I found myself enjoying it—and I didn’t even grow up in Chicago!

**Subject: Lithuanian Heritage magazine**

I just received the latest edition of *Rodziny*. I read it cover to cover and enjoyed it greatly.

I always find the “Articles of Interest” section such a teaser that I decided to check the Internet for some of the publications mentioned. Since my great-grandparents Wincenty and Helena (Bodanowicz) Woroniecki were Polish speakers from the Wilno area, I am particularly drawn to the Lithuanian resources.

It appears the Web address for *Lithuanian Heritage* magazine should be **www.lithuanianheritage.com** (instead of .org).

Thank you for the great journal.

Joe Zadrozny  
currently of Berlin, Germany  
<genealogist@mail.nu>

**Editor:** I appreciate your kind words, and you’re absolutely right about the proper URL for *Lithuanian Heritage*—a very fine publication, incidentally. Thanks for the correction!

**Subject: Galician Railroad**

I’m a longtime PGSA member and wanted to drop you a note to say how much I appreciate the continuing high quality of the *Rodziny* journal and the articles that appear therein. I was especially impressed with the piece on the “Galician Railroad” by Iwona in the Winter 2008 issue.

Railroad development in the 19th century is a topic about which I would like to see additional follow-up articles, especially regarding the various railroad travel routes that were available to emigrés transiting to Atlantic seaports with ships sailing for America. It would be informative to learn something about the logistics of how Polish immigrants from the rural countryside became aware of their travel options to America, where they bought tickets, etc. I’m sure this would be of interest to many readers of *Rodziny*.

Lastly, I would like to put in my request for a translation of the *Słownik geograficzny* entry for the regional town of Jasło in southeast Poland. I don’t think I’ve seen this entry translated as yet, but it’s my impression this is a major regional town and might be of broad interest to PGSA members.

Chet Szerlag, Woodridge, Illinois  
<CTSzerlag@aol.com>

**Editor**—I passed your words on to Iwona, and I’m sure she’ll do what she can to give us more on this subject. She said

the main sources she used on her article are as follows:

Bissaga, T.: *Geografia kolejowa Polski*, 1938.

*Dziesięciolecie Polskich Kolei Państwowych 1918-1928*, Ministerstwo Komunikacji.

Golsdorf, K.: *Koleje w Austrii 1837-1918*.

Wierzbicki, L.: *Rozwój sieci kolei żelaznych w Galicji, 1847-1890*.

As for the SGKP entry for Jasło, I translated it years ago for the Polish Genealogical Society of Texas, and you can read it—enhanced with nice photos—on their Web site at <http://www.pgst.org/places/jaslo.htm>.

**Subject: Iwona!**

I desire to advise you of how much I enjoy the articles by Iwona Dakiniewicz in *Rodziny*. I also wish to advise you of the wonderful professional relationship I have had with her for a few years now. She has performed some really detailed research for me during these years, and I have always been more than satisfied with her work performance. In the family research she has done for me, she has always been diligent, thorough, helpful, and reasonable. I wish to commend her highly to you and to anyone who wishes to have family research and/or guide-travel-tour assistance work done for them. She is a wonderful researcher and very considerate.

Daniel Kobylarz-Hughes  
<djkh@wowway.com>

**Subject: Germans/Poles in Memel**

Perhaps you can point me in the right direction. In doing family research, I am trying to find facts to support a family story.

The story is that Frederick William’s (born 1801) father and mother moved to Memel from (possibly) Poland because they had a Polish name. His father said to the family that from then on, their name would become Licht (German for light) because “Now we are Germans.” They were Protestants. He was a tailor. His wife’s name was Henrietta.

In doing a bit of online research, I can guess that one of the Polish rebellions (either 1794 or 1831) brought them to Memel. Or perhaps (considering his first and middle names) they were part of the 20,000

refugees from Salzburg, or other areas, who were invited to settle in this region by Frederick William I.

Would my guesses be accurate? Do you have any other thoughts on Polish-named people in Memel during the late 1700s to early 1800s?

Thanks for any help.

Joanne Rodgers  
<joanne.rodgers@gmail.com>

**Editor**—I can't answer this, but perhaps one of our readers can.

**Subject: Where is Wrzonca?**

I am having trouble locating my grandfather's place of birth in Poland, and I hope one of the readers can help.

My grandfather, Josef S. Gembicki, came to the United States in 1913. He arrived in New York on November 6, 1913, on the *SS Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse*. He came through Ellis Island, his place of birth is listed as "Wrzonca, Russia/Poland." I have checked old maps and new maps of Poland, and I cannot find this city. I have come to the conclusion that I am reading it wrong on the passenger record, or maybe it is misspelled. Can anyone out there help?

Karen Glynn  
51718 Red Mill Rd  
Dowagiac MI 49047-8775

**Editor**—I'm printing your letter in hopes other members can help more. In the meantime, I might be able to help a little.

I used the Steve Morse Web site, [www.stevemorse.org](http://www.stevemorse.org), to view the manifest for Josef Gembicki's arrival in 1913, and you have read his place of birth correctly, in my opinion. It does indeed seem to say "Wrzonca," and gives his country of origin as "Russia"—presumably that part of Poland seized by the Russian Empire in the late 18th century. "Wrzonca" is also the place indicated as his previous residence.

The problem is, there is no place in Poland called Wrzonca! But a little familiarity with the Polish language solves that mystery. In Polish, the nasal vowel written as *ą* is pronounced much like *on*, and it was not at all unusual for people to spell names phonetically with *on*, especially if they were not familiar with Polish. For that matter, even Poles sometimes did this. Universal literacy is a comparatively recent development in Poland, and there was not always

a consensus on the "right" way to spell a name when there was more than one phonetically accurate version. So while *Wrząca* is the "correct" spelling these days, in older records and letters it wouldn't be odd to see it as *Wrzonca* sometimes.

That's the good news. The bad news is, there are nine places in Poland named *Wrząca*, and six of them were in Russian Poland. *Wrząca* can be a village of some 60 people in Gostynin county, Mazowieckie province; a village of some 350 people in Pabianice county, Łódzkie province (near Łódź); a village of some 660 people in Siemradz county, Łódzkie province; a village of some 110 people in Kalisz county, Wielkopolskie province; a village of some 270 people in Turek county, Wielkopolskie province; or a village of some 480 people in Koło county, Wielkopolskie province. There were also places by this name in the German partition, but I think you can ignore those, since the manifest says your grandfather was a citizen of Russia, not Germany.

Without further information, there is simply no way to tell which *Wrząca* your ancestor came from. All I can suggest is that you keep digging, in hopes of finding some document that mentions the name of the nearest large town, or the county seat. That would allow you to focus in on one of those places. Otherwise, your only hope is to take them one at a time and dig around, hoping that you'll get lucky and he came from the first or second one you check, not the fifth or sixth!

Incidentally, keep your eyes open also for documents that mention people named *Gębicki*, because *Gembicki* is a variant spelling of that name. We're dealing here with the other Polish nasal vowel, *ę*, which sounds like *en* usually, but before *b* or *p* more like *em*. In modern Polish, *Gębicki* is the more common spelling; as of 1990, some 1,438 Polish citizens spelled it that way, as opposed to 390 who spelled it *Gembicki*. Of those *Gębickis*, 198 lived in what was Łódź province in 1990; another 109 in former Płock province (in which the *Wrząca* in Gostynin county was located in 1990); and 86 in Konin province (in which current Turek county was located in 1990). So the surname is spread all over, and we can't point to any one of those places named *Wrząca* and say "that's the only place in Poland where we find people named *Gębicki*/*Gembicki*." ❧

# ASK THE RETOUCHER

*Eric Basir <questions@abetterreality.net>*

*He's worked in darkrooms—both digital and conventional—newspapers and studios. He runs Photo Grafix, a humble photo-retouching studio in Evanston, Illinois (USA), helping genealogists restore and preserve photos and documents with their computers. If he doesn't know the answer, he won't rest until he finds it. Eric Basir is at your service. With each "Ask the Retoucher" column, he'll help you successfully tackle your digital photographic preservation and restoration problems.*

*Please send your questions and problem photos, your location, and genealogical society affiliation (if appropriate) to [questions@abetterreality.net](mailto:questions@abetterreality.net) for future "Ask the Retoucher" columns. You can learn more about Eric and his work online at [www.abetterreality.net](http://www.abetterreality.net). He has also enhanced many of the photos in issues of Rodziny. Thanks, Eric!*

**Question**—Tom (USA) asks: "I have heard about various clear sprays that are designed to protect color photos against UV damage. How effective are these sprays, and can you suggest one or two that work especially well?"

**Answer**—Tom, I have had no experience with any UV protection sprays. I treat UV sprays the same way I do nutritional supplements: they might help prevent problems, but—in many cases—they are not as good as a commonsense diet with exercise.

You certainly deserve a more detailed explanation, since your photos don't eat or move. So, a commonsense diet with exercise for your photos would be:

1. Keep them out of sunlight. Period. That is, direct or indirect sunlight.
2. Keep them behind a glass frame with matt-board.
3. Use archival-quality framing materials.
4. Keep them away from any kind of smoke or moisture.
5. Use real photographic prints (which can be done even with digital images). If you use an inkjet printer, use only the manufacturer's ink and paper; HP ink and paper for HP printers, for example.

If you do all of these things, I don't believe you'll need the UV spray. You will also save money, your lungs, and the environment by not using the spray. Regarding the frame, I highly recommend a professional framing service or archival and/or scrapbook supply service. They are trained in the latest archival techniques and use the best quality supplies. In the worst case, you can purchase a frame with its own matt-board from a local retail store.

**Question**—Lee (USA) asks: "I have a vast amount of picture albums that I would

love to put on CDs for sake of space. Which CD is the best? The CD-R or the CD-RW? I have heard that after a few years they will not be gone from the CD. Is this true?"

**Answer**—Lee, all recording media evolve throughout the years. From stone tablets, cave walls, and papyrus to audiocassette, CD, and flash memory, the best way to preserve them is to transfer to the latest technology and create multiple copies. This should include digital and hard copy (prints) or analog (tape). It sounds a bit fanatical—having various copies of everything—but it's worth it.

Organizing it can become a headache, however. So it's important to start out with the basics before establishing an elaborate archiving system. The most basic system should consist of an external hard-drive with almost twice the capacity of your computer's hard-drive and a high-quality DVD writer. First, copy your entire photo archive onto the external drive. Then, transfer the collection onto CDs or DVDs, as appropriate. I also recommend you create one extra copy of each CD or DVD of your photos and store the extra copies in another location outside of your home. This process will greatly reduce the risk of losing your collection.

I suggest using DVD-R for archiving family photos. I'm only recommending DVD-R because its capacity is six times the capacity of a CD-R. CDs can hold about 650 megabytes. DVDs can hold about 4,500 megabytes. Besides that, either one should work fine. Avoid using RW (rewritable) media because the surface is not stable enough for archival purposes. The slightest scratch or sneeze might render it useless (smile).

I use CD-RW and DVD-RW for sharing files and burning MP3s for playing music (which I then later overwrite, since all the



originals are on my computer and backup drives). There is an emerging dual layer DVD technology also available. These DVDs are recordable on both sides, thus increasing their capacity twofold, from four gigabytes to eight. However, because they're so new, I don't recommend using them for your archives at this time.

Finally, I recommend you read the "CD Longevity Notes" on our Web site. Go to <http://www.abetterreality.net>, click on "Ask the Retoucher," and look for the file in "Downloads for our Readers." In this folder, you'll find articles from various points of view about CDs and DVDs.

Housekeeping note for our readers: To improve distribution of downloadable content, we have moved our files to different servers. So any links in past articles will not work. Everything has been moved to the "Ask the Retoucher" section at <http://www.abet->



[terreality.net](http://www.abetterreality.net). Please send an e-mail message to [questions@abetterreality.net](mailto:questions@abetterreality.net) if a file you need is not in the downloads list.

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### ATTENTION ALL PGSA MEMBERS

The PGSA Board needs your help and support in selecting the recipients of the Wigilia and Gwiazda Awards for 2008. As you know, the PGSA recognizes the work of an outstanding individual or an institution at our annual meeting. There is a strong feeling that we need more input from our membership in finding those worthy of these honors. Please help us by suggesting people for each of these awards. Simply submit a nomination letter in which you describe your reasons, in as much detail as possible, for selecting your candidate. Indicate for which award(s) you are nominating the individual. Also, let us know how to contact you, if we have any questions. Please send the nomination letter to:

**Richard Stanowski, PGSA Awards Chairperson, 1648 Ash Avenue, Woodstock, IL, 60098-2589**

Another option is to submit your selection to the Awards Chairperson via e-mail: [<rstanowski@owc.net>](mailto:rstanowski@owc.net).

We need your selection(s) no later than April 30, 2008. If you have any questions, you may also contact Richard Stanowski at 815-337-5835. The basic guidelines are given in the following paragraphs:

Annually, the PGSA Board selects a recipient of the Wigilia Award for outstanding service to the field of Polish-American genealogical research. It is given to an individual who has made, over a period of time, noteworthy contributions to the field. The award may also be given to a public or private institution that has made a significant contribution to Polish-American genealogy.

A second award, known as the Gwiazda Award, is given to a volunteer who has given freely of his or her time and talents to the Polish Genealogical Society of America. The recipient should be someone who has a record of meritorious service to the Society, is supportive of the Society's goals and endeavors, and can be depended on to successfully complete any task undertaken.

## FOLLOW-UP TO IWONA'S GALICIAN RAILROAD ARTICLE

*Margaret Wolan Sullivan <hjmcs@optonline.net>*

I want to tell you how delighted I was to read about the Galician railroad in the Winter 2008 edition of *Rodziny*. My father always told me that my grandfather worked as a carpenter for the railroad in the era before World War I, but I knew very little else about it.

One thing that your article did not mention is that railroad employees and their families were given passes for riding on the railroad. I don't remember my father saying whether these were "free rides" or just reduced fare. What makes them very special to me is that they were photo IDs. They are the only photographs I have of my paternal grandparents, Antoni and Katarzyna (nee Sanecka) Wolan, and one of the few childhood photos of my father, Julian. You can see that my grandfather's photo/pass was used because it shows creasing and more wear than the others. My father recalled that he was about seven or eight when the photo was taken, which would make it about 1918. He said my grandfather worked for the railroad before and during World War I, starting about 1910. They lived in a small village just outside the small town of Strzyżów in what was then Rzeszów province, where they had a farm.



What makes them passes is the official stamp of the National Railroad, which you can see in the attached scans. With these, the family were able to travel from near Strzyżów to Kraków, where two older brothers lived and worked, and presumably to receive visits in return.

*Margaret Wolan Sullivan*

## MY GREAT-GREAT-GRANDMOTHER WAS AN ENEMY ALIEN!!

**Kenneth P. Nowakowski** <kenpol@earthlink.net>

On May 5, 1891, the first of my direct ancestors to arrive in America, my great-grandparents, Jan and Agnieszka Wardynski, with their six-month-old daughter Stanisława, disembarked the Nord-deutscher Lloyd passenger liner *Karlsruhe*, were ferried from the pier in Hoboken, New Jersey, to the southern tip of Manhattan, and filed through Castle Garden. They had left a rural existence in the Poznań area of Prussian Poland to seek freedom in the United States to carry on their Polish traditions without the restrictions imposed upon them by German autocrats. Their names as listed in the manifest of the German ship were Johann and Agniska Wardenski. Although in the ship's records they both were declared as farmers, they would soon reinvent themselves when they arrived by train in the state of Illinois.

They settled in the twin towns of Peru-LaSalle, located on the northern bank of the Illinois River in LaSalle County about one hundred miles west-southwest of Chicago, where a large Polish population was already beginning to thrive. They chose this area as their home and remained there for the rest of their lives. St. Hyacinth, a Polish Roman Catholic Church, was founded in LaSalle in 1875 as an alternative parish to St. Joseph's in Peru, which was mostly attended by those of German descent. Now the Poles who settled in the Illinois River Valley had a religious institution that offered Mass in their native tongue. After the original church was consumed by fire in 1890, a new building was completed the following year—the same year that the Wardynskis arrived (since they were now Americans, I suppose we should drop the accent from the *n*). The new red brick Gothic-style building stood proud and tall on 10th Street. Its twin steeples with bells named for the three Polish saints, Hyacinth, Stanisław, and Wojciech, rang out to call all the Polish families in the area to Mass.

Unfortunately, the first religious ceremony performed in the church for the Wardynski family in the year of their arrival was a funerary mass for their baby daughter, Stanisława, who took sick and died on September 14, 1891. She was buried in

an unmarked grave in St. Hyacinth Cemetery. This had to be a devastating time for 20-year-old Agnes and her 25-year-old husband. But now, every child born to the couple would be born on American soil.

On March 10, 1892, Agnes gave birth to another daughter, Josephine. She was raised as a small-town girl with an all-American attitude toward life and a warm and pleasant disposition that made everyone who met her feel at ease. But she was truly a child of two worlds; she could read, write, and speak Polish with the best of the newly arriving immigrants. This child, who the family nicknamed Josie, would grow up to marry an ungainly Polish immigrant named Władysław Nowakowski, and the two of them would raise a family of eight children, the second of which was my father, Chester, who was born in Peru in 1910. It wasn't until 1926 that Władysław, now known as Walter, and Josephine decided that perhaps employment opportunities in the big city of Chicago appeared more hopeful, and they and their family, which now numbered seven children, left Peru. Over the years, some of the Wardynski brothers and sisters moved to and settled in other Illinois towns, and some left to raise their children in the big cities of other states; but only Josephine moved her family to Chicago.

In the 1950s, I remember my great-grandfather, John Wardynski, from trips down to Peru with my grandmother. There were weddings and funerals, a family picnic, and great-grandpa's 90th birthday party in October of 1955. John Wardynski was a small, iconic figure of a man around whom family members were always eager to gather for picture taking. And well they might have, since without him all of us wouldn't have been here. As a child, I could never approach him without apprehension; this man was genuine family royalty. When attending the wake for my grandmother's brother, Bernard, at the Ptak Funeral parlor in Peru in March of 1956, my father walked up to his grandfather and, seeing the saddened look on his face, tried to cheer him. John Wardynski looked up from the deeply upholstered chair in which he was



At right: A photo of the house at 1325 Walnut St. Below: A Wardynski family picnic. All photos courtesy of the author.



seated and said, "I am not so much mourning the death of my son as I am worried about outliving all my children. Will there be anyone left to see me to my grave when I die?" This was a man who truly loved his family. He died on January 19, 1963, at the age of 97; he had outlived two wives and all but five of his thirteen children.

In working on the family genealogy, I have developed a special appreciation for my great-grandfather. He accomplished all that other Polish immigrants did in their relocations to the United States, but with an amazing speed of purpose and unerring direction. In the 1894 city directory he was listed as already working for the Illinois Zinc Co., one of the largest employers in the area. The company operated a huge rolling mill on the riverfront that manufactured



sheets of zinc and ran mines that provided coal for its blast furnaces. On June 12th, 1897, with three children already added to his family, John Wardynski signed to purchase a lot from the Roman Catholic church in what would soon be the First Ward of the town of Peru. The church had already built a school building in 1891, and in September of 1899 the Polish Church of St. Valentine's was completed just one half of a block from the Wardynskis' new home on 1325 Walnut St. Now, both Peru and LaSalle had churches offering services in Polish. Soon that ward, located between a ravine and the eastern town line that abutted the western limits of LaSalle, would become a Polish community where bartenders and shop owners could welcome the hard-working laborers into their establishments with an enthusiastic "Dzień dobry!" John might stop for a beer at Kulikowski's Saloon while Agnes could shop at Urbanowski's Grocery, Meat, and Hardware Store. In October of 1904, John Wardynski's naturalization papers were finalized at the County Court building in the town of Ottawa, and he and Agnes could proudly acclaim themselves as American citizens.

On April 12, 1894, the *SS Amerika* arrived in Baltimore Harbor with six passengers aboard who had declared their destination in the United States as Peru, Illinois. Jan and Michalina Skrzypczak were the parents of Agnes Wardynski. With them



came her four younger sisters, Katha, Marianna, Magdalena, and Josepha. I'm sure that John and Agnes provided some or all of the money needed to finance their trip. The family had sailed from the port of Hamburg after leaving a village named Topola on the outskirts of Środa.

Today, with only a few of my aunts and no uncles still living, the Skrzypczaks were pretty much a forgotten family. Michalina Skrzypczak had first introduced herself to me in the early days of my genealogical journeying when I was on one of my late-night treks through ancestry Web sites. I was delving into the 1920 census taken in the town of Peru, Illinois, when this 77-year-old woman appeared as the last entry in a list of family members living at 1501 Walnut St. This was the residence of my grandmother's sister, Pearl, who lived there with her husband, Joseph Wyciskalla, and their three young children, Edmund, Joseph, and Mary. That census listed Michalina as a boarder who had arrived in America in 1894 and was never naturalized.

Two things first came to my mind when I discovered this household shared by a Skrzypczak and the Wyciskalla family. First, this address had to be a nightmare for postal delivery. Wyciskalla is a difficult enough name, but Skrzypczak is a pronunciation nightmare devoid of almost every vowel. It is misspelled at the rate of about 80 percent whenever it appears in legal documents, city directories, and newspaper obituaries. One must never assume that one can find this name in any form similar to its proper spelling. The second thing came in the form of a question. Why was this elderly lady living in the residence of my Great Aunt Pearl, who was obviously busy building a family in the early years of her marriage? My assumption was that she had to be a close relative.

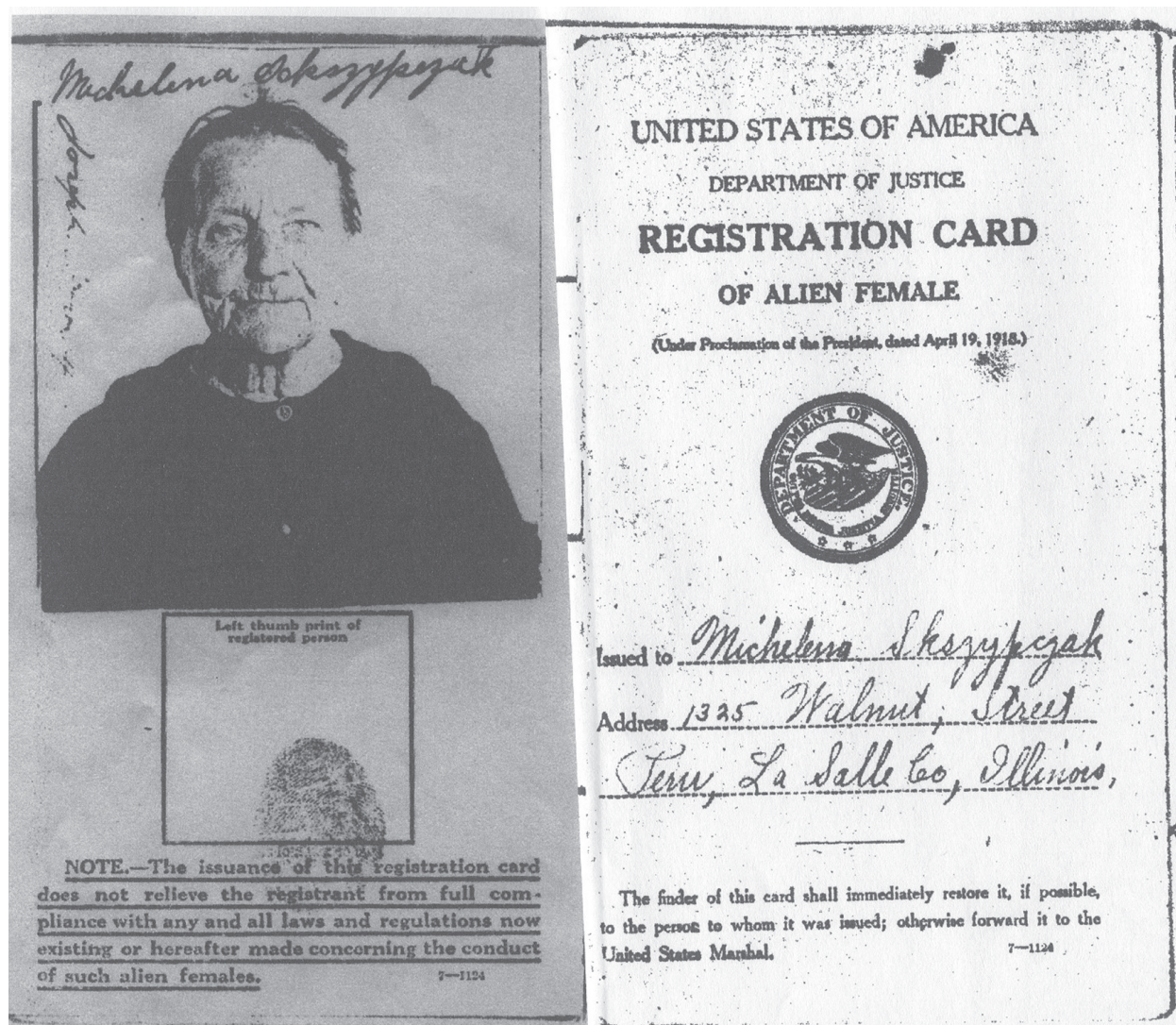
Over the years, I was able to unearth all the ships' manifests, the baptismal and marriage records, and the government papers that substantiated the Skrzypczaks' relationship to my great-grandparents. They were my only great-great-grandparents to have emigrated from Poland and settled here in the United States.

But then, one night about a half-year ago, while I again was surfing the Net, checking out sites that might disclose the Wardynskis' origins in German Poland, I typed the their name into Ancestry.com and

began scrolling down through the different areas. Eventually I came to Ancestry World Trees and, to my surprise, the names John and Michalina Skrzypczak appeared. And though that surname was misspelled (Skszypczak), I knew that this couple linked with the names of John Wardynski and his wife Agnes Skrzypczak added up to my grandmother's parents and grandparents. And not only was Michalina listed but also her parents, Joseph Maciejewski and Brigida Wozniak.

In what turned out to be the greatest freebie of my probing into the past, I realized that someone had handed me the names of my great-great-great-grandparents. My next step was to discover who had taken the time to construct this family tree online. After spinning around through several revolving doors, I came up with the name Mary Zukowski, who lived in LaSalle, Illinois. Because of the research I had been doing in the LaSalle-Peru area, I had become a member of the LaSalle County Genealogy Guild. The guild is located on Glover Street, just a few blocks south of the Illinois River, in a great little building filled with library tables that offers lots of area for research, a plethora of old books and documents (church records, city directories, obituaries, microfilms), and an exceptionally helpful staff. I first became a member of this organization in 2002. Since Mary Zukowski lived in LaSalle and was genealogically astute, I assumed that she was a fellow member of this organization, and in searching through the Guild's 2006 Surname Index, I found her listed as member # 43. I am member # 4033. I obtained Mary's address from the Guild Index and then looked up her phone number in the LaSalle-Peru telephone directory.

Each step in this genealogical discovery process would bring me nearer to my understanding of the Wardynskis. This family bypassed the opportunities of settling in the big city of Chicago where there was an abundance of jobs and housing. Instead they opted to come to the town of Peru, Illinois. Why? In May of 1891, when Jan and Agnieszka arrived in the Midwest, a great white city was being constructed in Jackson Park on the southernmost city limits of Chicago that two years later would open as the World's Columbian Exposition. Chicago was crying out for immigrant labor! Why didn't the Wardynskis follow the over-



Registration card, with photograph, of the enemy alien (see page 22).

whelming tangle of steel rails into Chicago instead of heading southwestward into the Illinois River Valley?

In my late Tuesday morning telephone conversation with Mary Zukowski, all my questions were answered. Mary had been involved in researching her family genealogy for 25 years. I found out that her grandfather, Wojciech Maciejewski, had been born on March 27, 1853, in the tiny town of Brzeziak, in the parish of Maczniki, which was located near Środa, a city just southeast of Poznań. He emigrated in 1880 and settled in LaSalle, Illinois. On November 16, 1884, he married Mary Gniewkiewski at St. Hyacinth's Church in LaSalle. Mary Zukowski's father, John, was born in 1887 in Peru as the second of their children. Mary's father wed Sophie Tomaszewski in 1913, and Mary was born in 1926. But Wojciech—or Albert, as he was later

known—was the maternal uncle of Agnes Wardynski. After he had come to Peru, Illinois, he most likely exchanged letters with his sister Michalina Skrzypczak, who still resided in the Poznań area of Poland. Those letters probably were filled with the promise of many job opportunities that awaited members of the family in the Illinois River region of America, and most likely led to the emigration of Jan and Agnieszka in 1891, and eventually of Agnieszka's parents, Jan and Michalina Skrzypczak, and their four younger daughters, in 1894.

Several weeks after our conversation, a packet arrived at my door with information on the Maciejewski family. Mary and I shared the ancestors Joseph Maciejewski and Brigida Wozniak. They were her great-grandparents and my great-great-great-grandparents, which makes us second cousins, twice removed. Of them and their



July 8 1918  
(Date.)

THIS REGISTRATION CARD MUST BE CARRIED ON THE PERSON

(PENALTY)

Any one required to register shall not, after the date fixed for her registration and the issuance to her of a registration card, be found within the limits of the United States, its territories or possessions, without having her registration card on her person, under liability, among other penalties, to arrest and detention for the period of the war.

7-1124

This certifies That

Michalina Skrzypczak  
(Name of registrant.)

residing at 1325 Walnut Street  
(Street and number.)

City of Peru  
(City, town.)

La Salle, Illinois  
(County.) (State.)

whose photograph and signature, and / or other mark of identification, appear hereon, has registered at

Illinois La Salle  
(State.) (County.)

Peru Second  
(City, town.) (Precinct.)

as a person required by law to register under the Proclamation of the President of the United States, dated April 19, 1918.

Michalina Skrzypczak  
(Signature or mark of registered person.)

Joseph Potthoff  
(Registration officer.)

Chief of Police  
(Official title, police or post office.)

7-1124

Pages from the registration booklet.

10 children, only Michalina and Wojciech had come to the United States. Included in the paperwork were charts for the families of Joseph and Brigida Maciejewski and Wojciech and Mary Maciejewski, with birth, death, and marriage dates and town names for all these events in their children's lives.

Mary and I have kept up a correspondence now for about five months. I sent her ship's records that I had found for the Wardynskis and the Skrzypczaks and also a copy of a photo of Agnes Wardynski and four of her children that had been taken in the front of their house on Walnut Street in Peru circa 1905. She recently mailed me an obituary for Helen Noramczyk, who died in Peru on November 14, 2007, at the age of 99; she was the second wife of my grandmother's brother John Wardynski. In reading through the death notice, I found that my father's cousin, Romana Jasiak, and her husband, Stanley, are still living

in Peru. After I told my father's youngest sister, Frances Kempa, about this, she sent a letter to their residence and received a friendly reply. I feel as if a lot more genealogical information is on the way now that I have contacts in the towns where my father and my grandmother were born and raised.

When Michalina Skrzypczak and her husband John arrived in 1894, he was 60 years old and she was 52. Mary Zukowski told me that even though he was of an advanced age, he accepted employment in a coal mine where he later became the victim of some on-the-job injury. For a long period of time, with John unable to work, the couple depended on their family for support, and there is even some indication that they lived out of state in Missouri with one of their daughters for a few years. But they were back in Peru when John died on November 20, 1910. After this, Michalina must have moved in with the Wardynskis,

where she helped Agnes with the family chores in a household that seemed never to stop growing. On February 8, 1923, at the age of 53, Agnes died at home after suffering a cerebral hemorrhage several days before. Her mother, Michalina, died of a stroke on August 7, 1925, in the LaSalle County Home where she was then living. She was 83 years old.

Of all the information I received from Mary, the greatest surprise came in a photo taken of Michalina Skrzypczak. The 76-year-old woman looked as if she had been backed up against the wall of a police station. Beneath the picture was her thumb print. The photo was part of an alien registration card issued on July 8, 1918, when she was living with John and Agnes Wardynski. And to top it off, the card was

signed by the Peru Chief of Police. In the 16 years he lived in the United States, John Skrzypczak had most likely never applied for citizenship, and no one could ever have predicted the consequences his wife would have to face owing to this seemingly insignificant inaction.

It was only then I realized that while the First World War was raging throughout Europe and young men in this country, many of them the sons of immigrant parents, were preparing for battle to ensure that our foreign allies would not lose their fight against the invading German forces, the United States of America had declared that my great-great-grandmother was an enemy alien.

[Article to be continued if Homeland Security provides original documents.] 🍷

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## WHAT DOES THE -WICZ MEAN IN POLISH SURNAMES?

BY KEITH KASZUBIK

The title of this article is an onomastological question which I am often asked in Polonia. The answer requires a little explaining and is far more complex than most people realize. Rather than reply to numerous people on an individual basis, it is better to utilize the medium of a newsletter reaching thousands of people simultaneously. It is also important to render my hypotheses in writing for future onomastologists who may be able to augment my research.

The suffix in question is not necessarily *-wicz*, as is so often erroneously assumed, but is rather the compound suffix *-owicz* (or *-ewicz*). Naturally, there are instances in which surnames have been abbreviated (along with surnames formed from toponyms that have been abbreviated), perhaps partly because of which syllable is accented, and the preceding vowel *o* or *e* has dropped out, leaving only *-wicz* after a consonant or vowel other than the aforementioned. Another exception is surnames in which the final consonant was *w* before the patronymic suffix *-icz* was added to it (e.g., *Borowicz* [from *Borowy* + *icz* and/or *Bor* + *-owicz*], *Kawicz* [from *Kawa* + *icz*], etc.).

As a matter of clarification, the word *patronymic* is derived from the Greek πατήρ [*patēr*], “father” + ὄνομα [*ónoma*], “name”

and denotes hereditary descent from a parent or ancestor. Patronymic and metronymic surnames are generally polygenetic.

The compound suffix *-owicz* (or *-ewicz*) denoting “son of” is composed of the possessive suffix *-ów* (or *-ew*) and the patronymic suffix *-icz* (or *-ycz*). Modern Polish orthography dictates that the vowel *i* is rendered as *y* after the digraphs *cz*, *rz* (*ż*) and *sz*. Comparatively few Polish surnames terminate with the suffix *-ów* (or *-ew*), although many East Slavic surnames do, especially Russian.

According to several scholars, the suffix *-icz* is said to be ultimately of Russian origins and was first used, around the time of the 11th century, by the Polish minor nobility in the eastern borderlands. The suffix was originally *-ic* (or *-yc*) and was expanded over time to the modern *-icz* generally beginning in the 15th century (see Rospond, Stanisław, *Gramatyka historyczna języka polskiego* [Grammatical History of the Polish Language], Warszawa, 1971, p. 209). Aleksander Brückner (1856-1939) also mentions the suffix *-ic* as having been used as a diminutive.

Because the patronymic suffix originally was *-ic*, and taking into consideration that toponyms are generally much older in formation than surnames, it is no wonder that many toponyms formed in Poland, and



other Slavic territories, bear the characteristic plural patronymic suffix *-ice* (e.g., *Czapiewice* ["place of the sons/children of Czapą"], *Kiedrowice* ["place of the sons/children of Kieder"] (*Kieder* = *Teodor*), etc.). Toponyms today also bear the modern plural patronymic suffix *-icze* (cf. *Katowice*, which was documented as *Kątowicze* in the year 1598).

Found in numerous toponyms in formerly Slavic territories, which have been Germanized and/or Germanicized over the centuries, and also in numerous former German forms of toponyms in Poland and other Slavic countries, is the characteristic spelling *-itz* (also *-itze*, *-itsch*, *-itzsch*, *-ize* [cf. Germ. *Horovitz* versus Czech *Hořovice*, Germ. *Kattowitz* vs. Pol. *Katowice*, etc.]). Numerous surnames have developed directly from these toponyms (indicative of an ancestor's place of habitation), but they do not have the usual adjectival suffix *-ski* denoting "from or of" as is often found in Polish toponymic surnames (e.g., the surname *Urbanowitz* instead of *Urbanowski*).

In surnames, the suffix *-itz* is also a German and/or Germanic transliteration of the archaic *-ic* (and often *-icz*), although a transliteration of the modern *-icz* would be more properly represented today with the German combination *-itsch* (phonetically rendered in English as *-ich* or *-ych*). The latter is not so frequently found in surnames but apparently is better known in surnames originating in Saxony. The diminished numbers may be partially attributed to a German (and by later extension to our somewhat similar English) subconscious habit of continuously rendering surnames with *-itz* over the centuries. It may also be attributed to the Germans' long contact with the numerous Slavic tribes located to the west of the Poles, many of which were quite absorbed or obliterated by the 15th century, before the advent of the expansion to the modern *-icz*.

It also must be taken into consideration that certainly some perfectly orthographically acceptable Polish surnames such as *Lukaszowic* ("son of *Lukasz*") were in turn modernized, sometime after their initial formation, to *Lukaszowicz*, and sometimes further changed to *Lukaszewicz*. There also are surnames that still survive among the Poles today that continue to bear the archaic suffix *-ic*. Perhaps some historical

eloquence is found or assumed in the antiquated spelling.

Before names became fixed hereditary surnames, it was also possible for each generational branch of a particular family to bear a different name. For example, if *Lukasz* had a son named *Daniel*, he might be known as *Daniel Łukaszewicz* ("Daniel, son of *Lukasz*"). If that *Daniel* in turn had a son named *Michał*, he might be known as *Michał Danielowicz* ("Michał, son of *Daniel*"), and so on. This was especially true among those of Jewish extraction.

In the past, there has been a vacillation between the patronymic suffix *-icz* and the adjectival suffix *-ski* in Polish surnames (cf. *Lukaszewicz* versus *Lukaszewski*) with one form winning out over the other, perhaps partly because of harmonious pronunciation. This vacillation renders the apparent patronymic polygenetic origins of a particular hereditary surname quite ambiguous, the suffix *-icz* having been indiscriminately added to surnames formed from toponyms in place of the suffix *-ski*. In this way, and also on its own merit, the suffix *-icz* may be indicative of a former ancestral place of habitation. The linguistic route of a surname is not always self-evident.

The phonetic similarity between the Anglo-Norman French patronymic prefix *fitz-* (e.g., *Fitzsimmons* ["son of *Simon*"]) and the element *-wicz* in the Slavic compound suffix *-owicz* (e.g., *Szymonowicz* ["son of *Simon*"]) appears to be nothing more than a peculiar linguistic anomaly.

In conclusion, patronymic surnames among the Poles throughout the world exist in great abundance. The traditional spelling of a surname ending in *-wicz* is easily recognizable to all Poles as a member of our brethren, someone with whom we acknowledge kinship, a fellow Pole. ♣

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site for changes and  
improvements!**

**<http://www.pgsa.org>**

## From the Słownik Geograficzny

*This translation, by William F. Hoffman, was requested by PGSA member Christine Bucko. Members are welcome to request translations of Słownik entries to be printed in Rodziny at no charge, but they should provide information specifying exactly which place is meant.*

**Tarnowiec**, a village in Jasło county, on a hill 268 meters above sea level, in the basin of the river Jasiołka, by the railroad between the stations of Jasło (9 km) and Jedlicze space (6 km). It has a Roman Catholic parish, an elementary school, a railroad station, a postal and telegraph office, a poorhouse, and a *gmina* loan association with capital of 54 Rhenish złotys. In the district are 84 houses, 6 manorial, with 553 inhabitants, 534 Roman Catholic and 19 Jewish. The major estate\* (owned by Konst. Piliński) has a distillery and an inn, 459 *mórgs*\* of farmland, 104 of meadows, 7 of gardens, 17 of pastures, 82 of forests, two unused, and three with buildings, for a total of 675; the minor estate [land owned by peasants] has 209 *mórgs* of farmland, 71 of meadows and gardens, 24 of pastures, and 6 of forests. The current church, of brick and stone, was built in 1804 by Rev. Wal. Rawicz Karwowski on the site of the old one. The document of its creation by Piotr Rokosz, Knight of Malta, in 1313, which is preserved as a transcript in the parish records, is a forgery; a parish in "Tharnowiecz" existed as early as the 15th century (Długosz, *Liber beneficiorum*, II, 286 and III,

42). In Długosz's day, the hereditary owner of the village was Kruszyna of the Mądrostki coat of arms. The peasants paid a tithe valued at 4 pence to the dean of St. Florian's in Kleparz. In 1581 (Pawiński, *Małopolska*, 120), Tarnowiec was the property of Paweł Skotnicki, Halicz standard bearer; rents were paid on 6 peasant *łans*\*, 2 crofts without land, 1 tenant farmer with cattle, 3 tenant farmers with no cattle, 1 craftsman, and an inn with a quarter *łan*. The following belonged to the parish: Brzezówka, Potakowa (today Potakówka), Glinnik (Gliniczek), Wrocanka, Tarnóweczek, and Unieszcz (today Umieszcz). We see Dobrucowa mentioned in a list from 1665 (Pawiński, *Ibid.*); Gosówka and Sadkowa were created later. The shelter for four poor people, foundation unknown, has a house of brick and stone and a meadow. Each year the manor contributes 9 *kopas* [1 *kopa* = 60 sheaves] of grain, a wagonload of hay, 10 wagonloads of wood, a field of cabbage, and 24 Rhenish złotys. Tarnowiec is bordered on the south by Umieszcz and Potakówka, on the west by Czeluśnica and Gliniczek, on the north by Sadkowa and Dobrucowa, and on the east by Brzezówka. It was here that on August 14, 1610, Stanisław Stadnicki, called *Dyabł* [the devil], with a gang of thugs and ruffians of various tribes, fought a battle with the people of his enemies, Łukasz Opaliński, Crown Marshal, and Anna, princess Ostrogska. About 6,000 people were involved in the battle. Stadnicki was killed along with 500 people, and the rest scattered. — *Mac. [Dr. Maurycy Maciszewski]*, Vol. 12, pp. 206-207.



This is a segment of a map of the area east of Jasło in southeastern Poland, showing Tarnowiec and other villages mentioned in the text. The map is from the Web site [www.mapywig.org](http://www.mapywig.org). The scale is roughly 1 inch = 2 km.

## EXPLANATION OF UNFAMILIAR TERMS

*łan*—a unit of land measurement used in Poland since the 13th century, originally used as a description of a full-sized farm a peasant received from his lord, in return for work on the lord's land. In Małopolska, the Franconian *łan* was used, 23-28 hectares; in Mazovia and Podlasie the Chełmno *łan* was 16.8-17.0 hectares; and in the Kingdom of Poland, the New Polish *włoka* was about 16.8 hectares.

major estate—Polish *posesja większa* or *posiadłość większa* refers to land owned by nobles, whereas “minor estate,” whereas *posesja* (or *posiadłość*) *mniejsza*, is a collective term for land owned by peasants.

*mórg* or *morga*—unit of land measurement; according to Gerald Ortell's book on Polish parish records, in the Russian partition 1 *mórg* = 1.388 acres, in the Prussian 1 *mórg* = 0.631 acres, in Galicia 1 *mórg* = 1.422 acres. 🌿

## From the Library:

## BOOK REVIEW

Virginia Witucke <Witucke@aol.com>

**Mills, Elizabeth Shown. *Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace*.** Genealogical Publishing Company, 2007. ISBN 978-0-8063-1781-6. \$49.95.

This book may be most appreciated by experienced genealogists, but its basic message is one we should all be heeding: “We cannot judge the reliability of any information unless we know

- exactly where the information came from; and
- the strengths and weaknesses of that source.”

Genealogists need to learn how to weigh Aunt Kasia's memories against census records against historical letters, etc. The first section of *Evidence Explained*, “Fundamentals of Evidence Analysis,” explores the nature of research and the use of sources. The 25-page text is readable but requires concentration. The bulk of the book (and it **is** bulky) examines types of sources, organized by chapters:

- Archives and artifacts
- Business and institutional records
- Cemetery records
- Census records
- Church records
- Local and state records: courts and governance
- Local and state records: licenses, registrations, rolls and vital records
- Local and state records: property and probates

- National government records
- Publications: books, CDs, maps, leaflets, and videos
- Publications: legal works and government documents
- Publications: periodicals, broadcasts and Web miscellanea

The first contribution of *Evidence Explained* may be to expand the concept of what sources can be used in family and historical research.

Mills describes the content and organization of sources and gives a form for citing them. As an example, the chapter on cemetery records starts with pages noting how to list a cemetery, then the full records description for the cemetery, and subsequent shortened references. These examples are printed on gray pages, making it easy to turn directly to them. These gray pages are followed by a section on guidelines and examples—cite the cemetery as the author equivalent, rather than the gravestone or record book. When identifying a grave by means of a letter received from the cemetery reference, the source in such a way that it is clear that you don't have first-hand knowledge.

Mills' manual on how to cite myriad sources may sometimes seem too specific for your needs; even so, it broadens and informs our typical approach to sources. It is an expansion of an earlier work, *Evidence!: Citation and Analysis for the Family Historian*; updated with a laminated guide entitled *QuickSheet: Citing Online Historical Resources Evidence Style*.

Apart from the first section, *Evidence Explained* is for reference rather than cover-to-cover reading. For most of us, access to a library copy would be sufficient. For the most serious researchers/writers, the vast amount of information is worth the price. 🌿



## PGSA FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR 2007

***submitted by Joy Mortell, PGSA Treasurer <PGSAmerica@aol.com>***

In February 2007, the PGSA Board of Directors voted to publish the PGSA's financial statements in the *Rodziny* in the first issue after the close of each calendar year. The first and most important reason the Board wanted to do this is because this is the members' money and you should know what you have. Also, the Board is responsible to the members for what it does with your money and you should know what your money is spent on. Lastly, and frankly, the PGSA lost a little money each year for a few years, and we felt that if we knew that the financial information was going to be published we'd be a lot more careful. The goal was to at least break even in 2007. Well, it worked better than we expected. The PGSA ended up with a net profit for 2007.

The most important reason was that the conference made a profit this year compared to losses for the past few years. Vice President and Conference Chair Linda Ulanski deserves all of the credit, because she was able to find corporate support for the annual conference. Also, Linda decided to forgo having a speaker from Poland because of the weak dollar and the cost of travel. Although there was a small net loss from the costs associated with Membership, primarily because of increased postage expenses, the increase in membership fees starting in 2008 should offset that and, we hope, whatever postage increase goes into effect later this year.

Now that we are certain that the PGSA is in a good financial position, we are making plans to expend the funds that we have on projects to benefit PGSA members. The first item that will be implemented in 2008 is an updated web site. The PGSA Board of Directors decided that the Web site needed to be updated and online functions incorporated into the site. This project would be too complicated and time-consuming for the volunteers that the PGSA has always relied on for running the Web site, so the PGSA has engaged a professional Web site

development company. The new site will be much easier to navigate and a lot more fun to use. Details about the new site will be made available when it is ready to launch. We hope that you think this will be a worthwhile investment of your money.

If you have any questions or comments about the financial statements, please contact Treasurer Joy Mortell at <PGSAmerica@aol.com>. Thank you. 🌸

### **Balance Sheet As of December 31, 2007**

Assets	
Checking and Savings	\$58,247
Inventory	<u>13,643</u>
Total Assets	71,890
Liabilities and Equity	
Retained Earnings	65,319
Net Income	6,571
Total Equity	71,890
Total Liabilities and Equity	\$71,890

### **Income Statement For Year Ended December 31, 2007**

Income	
Membership	\$36,955
Book and CD Sales	11,133
Library and Research	5,852
Conference	17,295
Other	2,186
Total Income	\$73,421
Expenses	
Membership	37,888
Cost of Book and CDs Sold	6,349
Library and Research	2,346
Conference	14,559
Other	5,647
Total Expenses	<u>66,849</u>
Net Income	\$6,571

## Articles of Interest

*Here is a listing of selected articles from other societies' publications that may interest the Polish genealogical researcher.*

**Avotaynu, Winter 2007, Vol. XXIII, No. 4**, Avotaynu, Inc., 155 N. Washington Ave., Bergenfield, NJ 07621, [www.avotaynu.com](http://www.avotaynu.com).

- Report on a Research Trip to the International Tracing Service, Sallyann Amdur Sack

- Did They Really Meet on the Boat?, Kathy Sefton

- Age Makes a Difference, Rabbi Shalom Bronstein

**East European Genealogist, Fall 2007, Vol. 16, No. 1**, East European Genealogical Society, P. O. Box 2536, Winnipeg MB R3C 4A7, Canada, [www.eegsociety.org](http://www.eegsociety.org).

- Canadian Immigration Policy Towards Poles and Ukrainians, 1836-1939, Part I, Joanna Matejko

- The Roman Catholic Collection in the Central State Historical Archive in L'viv, Ukraine and the LDS Microfilm Project, Brian J. Lenius

**Landsmen, December 2007, Vol. 17, No. 3-4**, Suwalk-Lomza Interest Group for Jewish Genealogists, Box 228, 3701 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20008.

- Special Section on Rajgrad
- My Father's Town of Vishtinetz, Arthur Friedman

**Lithuanian Heritage, November/December 2007, Vol. 14, No. 6**, Baltech Publishing, P.O. Box 225, Lemont IL 60439-0225, [www.lithuanianheritage.com](http://www.lithuanianheritage.com).

- He Fought for the Freedom of Three Countries [article on Kościuszko]

**PGS of California, Bulletin, Vol. 20, No. 1, January 2008**, P. O. Box 307, Buena Park CA 90621-0307, [www.pgscsca.org](http://www.pgscsca.org).

- Kielno, translated from the *Słownik geograficzny* by Helen Bienick

- Surnames from Marriage Records of Kielno Parish, compiled by Karen Chorney

- Serfs of Poland and Russia, Part IV, Robert S. Sherins, M.D.

- Celebrating Poland at the Table—Cuisine, Culture and Diversity at the Wisła River, Kazimierz Krzysztofek

*Note: The PGS-CA honors requests for reprints at a minimum charge of \$3.00 per article.*

**PGS of Connecticut and the Northeast, Pathways & Passages, Vol. 24, No. 1, Winter 2007**, 8 Lyle Rd., New Britain CT 06053-2104, [www.pgscne.org](http://www.pgscne.org).

- Finding Little-Known Pieces of the Genealogy Puzzle, Jean Nudd

- Ask Aleksandra: The History and Current State of the Polish Archive System, Aleksandra Kacprzak

- The Hunt for Obituaries, Barbara Gancarz

**PGS of Minnesota, Newsletter, Vol. 15, No. 4, Winter 2007-08**, 5768 Olson Memorial Hwy., Golden Valley MN 55422-5014, [www.rootsweb.com/~mnpolgs/pgs-mn.html](http://www.rootsweb.com/~mnpolgs/pgs-mn.html).

- *Drobne Echa*, Installment #13, Dateline Bowlus, Greg Kishel

- Beginning Polish Genealogy: Techniques and Tips, Greg Kishel

- SS. Peter and Paul Church Records from Lipinki, Poland

**Polish Nobility Association Foundation, White Eagle, Fall/Winter 2007**, Villa Anneslie, 529 Dunkirk Rd., Anneslie MD 21212-2014, <http://pnaf.us/>.

- The Katyn Massacres: Class Genocide and International Cover-up

- In Memoriam: Elfi von Dassanowsky

- Polish-Americans' Family History Slander, by Judge Theodore P. Jakubowski (Retired)

### FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ENGLISH!!

An English translation of *Kaszëbë pod Widnem, Kaszubes at Vienna*, is now available. Written by Hieronim Jarosz Derdowski "on the Occasion of the 200th Anniversary of the Liberation of Germans and Christianity from the Turkish Yoke in AD 1683," it has been translated into English by Blanche Krbecek and Stanisław Frymark. The price is \$6.00 US per book plus \$2.00 shipping and handling per book. Make check payable to Blanche Krbecek. Mail to: 2041 Orkla Drive, Minneapolis MN 55427.

**PGS of Texas, Polish Footprints, Vol. XXIV, No. 3, Fall 2007**, P. O. Box 820386, Houston TX 77282, [www.pgst.org](http://www.pgst.org).

- History of PGST, 1982-2007, Teana Sechelski
- Footprints in Time [a photo retrospective of PGST's 25-year history]
- Melchior Kowalik: An Original Silesian Immigrant to Texas, Janet Dawson Ebrom

**Przyjaciel ludu Kaszubskiego (Przëjòcéł lëdu kaszëbsczégò), Vol. XI, No. 4, Winter 2007**, Kashubian Association of North America, P. O. Box 27732, Minneapolis MN 55427-0732, [www.KA-NA.org](http://www.KA-NA.org).

- The Village of Lipusz, Peter von Pazatka Lipinsky
- A Visit to Gmina Sierakowice, Home of My Paternal Ancestors, Richard Warmowski 🌹

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For a complete listing of books and CDs and a convenient order form, visit [www.pgsa.org](http://www.pgsa.org).

1. **ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISHES IN THE POLISH PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC IN 1984** by Lidia Müllerowa (English version edited by Stanley R. Schmidt and William F. Hoffman) **\$20.00**  
This book helps you locate parishes in modern Poland by diocese and deanery. There are 58 b&w maps, an 88-page index of towns and villages shown on the maps, and a guide to the names of Polish parishes. Published 1995, xi + 157 pp., 8½ x 11".
2. **THE LATIN CHURCH IN THE POLISH COMMONWEALTH IN 1772** by Stanisław Litak **\$17.00**  
The maps and index of this book identify approximately 6,500 parishes and branch churches of the Latin rite in Poland before the first partition in 1772. It also encompasses Silesia, Moldavia, and the Duchy of Courland. Published 1990, 48 pages (8½ x 11") along with 24 foldout maps (11 x 16").
3. **POLISH SURNAMES: ORIGINS AND MEANINGS, SECOND EDITION** by William F. Hoffman **\$25.00**  
Twelve chapters explaining the origins and meanings of Polish surnames are followed by an index of some 30,000 common surnames, organized by the roots they came from, with indication of how many Polish citizens bore each name as of 1990. Published 1997, 592 typeset pp. (xii + 580), paperback, 6 x 9".
4. **FIRST NAMES OF THE POLISH COMMONWEALTH: ORIGINS & MEANINGS** by W. Hoffman and G. Helon **\$20.00**  
An introduction and three chapters of historical and linguistic background are followed by a 300-page list of names used in the old Polish Commonwealth. Published 1998, vi + 426 pages, paperback, 6 x 9".
5. **POLISH PARISH RECORDS OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH: THEIR USE AND UNDERSTANDING IN GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH (NEW EDITION)** by Gerald A. Ortell **\$12.00**  
This expanded and updated version of one of the most widely praised references for Polish genealogical research discusses baptismal, marriage, and death records in detail, and lists names, occupations, causes of death, Polish saints' days, and much more. Published 1996, 112 typeset pp., perfect bound softcover, 8½ x 11".
6. **SŁOWNIK GEOGRAFICZNY KRÓLESTWA POLSKIEGO [GEOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF THE KINGDOM OF POLAND]**, edited by Sulimierski, Chlebowski, and Walewski, CD version conceived and edited by Rafał T. Prinke — **CD-ROM** **\$25.00**  
This CD contains compressed graphic images of every page of this 15-volume, Polish-language gazetteer published 1880-1902. Published 2003, runs on most platforms (Windows, Mac, Linux, etc.). *Note: \$35.00 for nonmembers of PGSA living in the U. S.; \$28.00 for members (\$38.00 for nonmembers) living in Canada; \$30.00 for members (\$40.00 for nonmembers) living outside North America. These prices include postage and handling.*
7. **IN THEIR WORDS ... VOLUME 1: POLISH**, by Jonathan D. Shea and William F. Hoffman **\$35.00**
8. **IN THEIR WORDS ... VOLUME 2: RUSSIAN**, by Jonathan D. Shea and William F. Hoffman **\$35.00**  
PGSA is now selling these acclaimed translation guides. Written with the Polish genealogist in mind, they reproduce and analyze in detail dozens of documents in Polish and Russian. These are the kinds of documents your research is likely to turn up—and not just birth, marriage, and death records but also passports, obituaries, population registers, military service records, and so on. In addition, each book gives information on the language's alphabet, spelling, pronunciation, and standard handwriting; lists thousands of of the terms most often encountered in documents; provides information on how to locate records in America and Europe; offers a series of maps illustrating the history of Poland; and includes a whole chapter on using gazetteers to locate your ancestral villages and thus determine which archives are likely to have documents relating to your family, along with contact information for those archives and help writing letters to them.

## ORDERING INFORMATION:

- List by item number and name. All prices are in U.S. dollars. PGSA members should discount the BOOK total by 10%.
- Residents of Illinois, please add 9.25% sales tax to the price of the book(s).
- Add postage and handling for one book to a U.S. address – \$3.50 (\$4.50 to Canada, \$6.00 overseas) – for each additional book add \$1.25. (Note: for item #6, postage and handling are included in the price.)
- Please send check or money order, made payable to "Polish Genealogical Society of America," to:

Media Orders c/o PGSA, 984 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago IL 60622.



## **MARK YOUR CALENDAR— PGSA's CONFERENCE**

Be sure to mark September 19th and 20th, 2008, on your calendar as PGSA celebrates our 30th conference, "Honoring Our Ancestors."

The conference will be held at the Meadows Club, 2950 West Golf Road, Rolling Meadows IL 60008. We also have arranged blocks of rooms at The Doubletree Hotel and Extended Stay America.

This year the conference will be two days, Friday and Saturday, with a special, optional dinner on Friday night.

Guest speakers include Jonathan Shea, Beau Sharbrough, Orvill Paller, Robert Sliwinski, and more!!!

Check our Web site, [www.pgsa.org](http://www.pgsa.org), for upcoming conference details and hotel rates.

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