



Polish Profiles

The Jagiellonian University

By: **Kaya Mirecka Ploss**, Ph.D., Executive Director
Jan Karski Institute, Baltimore, MD

Poland had many good and wise kings and queens in the early 14th century. Poland had a ruler who was affectionately nicknamed "King of the Peasants". Historians, however, added another adjective to his name, King Kazimierz the Great.

He ruled Poland wisely for 33 years. He started new towns by turning peasant groups into communities. He established schools and gave the country fair taxation and a new monetary system.

And it was King Kazimierz the Great who passed a law, the first such law in Europe that gave the Jewish people who lived in Poland freedom of movement and freedom to study and to choose any profession they desired.

King Kazimierz the Great also established a town on the banks of the Vistula River called Kazimierz Wielki. There he built enormous granaries to store grain to be used in times of need. That same town exists till this day and its picturesque beauty is like a monument to the memory of that great king.

The Last of the Piasts

In the last six years of his life, King Kazimierz the Great laid down the foundation for a university in Krakow. He died, childless, in 1370. With his death, Poland's first royal dynasty, the Piasts, died out.

The Hungarian Princess

In faraway Hungary ruled a cousin of the late King of Poland. The advisory council to the Polish crown decided that the 11 year old daughter of the Hungarian King, Princess Jadwiga, should become Poland's next Queen. She was brought to Poland and a year later at the age of 12 she was crowned the Queen of Poland.

A crown is a burden to anyone, but for this 12-year old child the crown became unbearable. Many a night her Hungarian nanny rocked her to sleep, singing songs from her native country.

The young Queen Jadwiga's hand was promised when she was still a child to a German Prince. She counted the days until she would be betrothed to this man. Perhaps the burden of the crown would be easier for her to bear. But this never happened.

By the time Queen Jadwiga had reached the age of thirteen, the Polish Advisory Council to the Crown decided to marry her off to a 33-year old Lithuanian Duke, Władysław Jagiello. The young queen rebelled and tried to escape. It was explained to her that by her marriage to the ruler of Lithuania the whole Lithuanian country would be annexed to Poland; thus Poland would become a great and strong empire. In addition, the young queen was told that Lithuania, still a pagan country worshiping pagan gods, would accept Christianity if she agreed to marry the Lithuanian ruler.

Queen Jadwiga asked for time to pray. For hours she knelt beneath a black crucifix in the Palace Chapel. When she emerged from there she declared to the anxious Council, "I am ready".

The Jagiellonians

The young queen and her much older husband learned to love and respect each other. They made wise decisions that were always in the best interests of Poland.

Queen Jadwiga died at an early age while giving birth to a baby girl. Her husband, the former Duke of Lithuania, now King Władysław Jagiello, mourned for her deeply and for a long time. Though he later remarried, he never took off the ring that betrothed him to Queen Jadwiga. And he also fulfilled Queen Jadwiga's greatest wish to finish the Krakow University that King Kazimierz had started.

King Jagiello not only built the University into a full-fledged institution of higher learning, but he added to the original plans a school of philosophy, a school for liberal arts, and a school of medicine. He also named it the Jagiellonian University.

Illustrious students

Together with his new wife Ann, who was a cousin of his first wife, they established the

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East meets West - Part 2

Justyna Ball

Lazy days of summer in the small town near Warsaw with mandatory "after dinner rest" and cousin Michał reading "Lemonade Joe." Joe was a character in a popular book based on a Czech film from 1964. It was a parody of western movies. He drinks "kolaloka," and cleans the town of whiskey-drinking cowboys. What a role model...

It was at that time for us to play the role of great explorers almost like Lewis & Clark, and we pretty much traveled across the States, and sometimes all in one day. I (an artist) was in charge of legal issues like passports as it required drawings of our likeness...and we thought that we needed passports to cross from one state to another. Michał (creator and technician) set up our RV. It was actually a group of small blankets neatly lined up on the grass on the "polana" with a cab and each blanket representing a different room. To get from one room to another we moved as if there were some invisible walls.

Grandma's dog, Ajax, did not understand the rules at all and often walked through the walls, laying down halfway in and halfway out.

We used old wooden apple crates as our seats. Grandma set up a rule that we had to take our RV in before the rain.

Cousin Michał was "Mike," and I was Jackie. My idol was...Jackie Kennedy whose style I knew (and adored) from copies of old French Paris Match magazines. My grandma got those from her sister who lived in France, and at that time there were a lot of pics from Jackie's wedding to tycoon Ari Onassis.

We traveled each day, fulfilling our dream, while... not moving at all. In 2007, it took my family three days to make it to New Mexico.

Although we did not need passports, there were two checkpoints, one at Hoover Dam and another when we entered California. An officer from the California Department of Agriculture asked if we had any fruit plants, cherries or live animals. Our daughter's cat stayed in Boston and was going to be shipped later. Would they take away Frosti if he were with us? He could just play dead.

Would he be allowed to fulfill his lifetime dream of becoming a Californian cat? We will never know.

On the sixth day of our trip, we drove from Prescott, a rodeo town in Arizona to Peach Springs (last town before the canyon), on the edge of the Hualapai Indian Reservation. Hualapai people traditionally inhabited an area of... 5 million acres. It stretched from the canyon southward, all the way to the "pine forest of the San Francisco peaks." The area was rocky with Joshua trees scattered all around. Our Honda's rusty orange complimented the color of the sun burnt terrain.

There were times that we drove alongside the endless line of a train with every car marked CHINA SHIPPING, the biggest container vessel from... Shanghai. It was one of two sights that I did not appreciate during our trip. The other one was the sight of the Exxon sign all throughout every state. Sometimes in the least expected places.

It was one long dusty road after another with only cattle resting at water towers. They seemed to be there from the very first day of their lives, breathing fresh, untainted air, roaming the steppe... till the very last day, the trip to the meat processing plant day. How different their life is compared to animals squeezed tightly at factory farms and fed hormones. If I have to come back as a cow, I want to return as an Angus - 1st Quality! Before I became Certified Angus Beef, I'll spend my lazy days in the Arizona prairie.

We paused at another "shortcut," which was unpaved surface for the next... 60 miles.

Thanks for the warning.

Of course we turned around.

The afternoon sun reflected in our car's windows.

It was the last intersection, and we were heading straight into one of the seven natural wonders of the world, the Grand Canyon.

The only other route had a sign "unpaved surface for the next 20 miles."

Soon we discovered what it meant. The road was long, bumpy and unbelievably dusty. And we were on it... completely alone. Where was all the traffic? We passed one of those Chinese buses that ship spectators from Vegas. They had a flat tire.

And again, nothing for miles. Our tiny Honda jumped on every bump, our teeth

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Calendar of Events

Sep 15 - 16, Sat and Sun. Dożynki, Pope John Paul Polish Center in Orange County - 3999 Rose Drive - Yorba Linda. Please see advertisement on page 16.

22, 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. "History of Ellis Island and the Immigrant experience", info: www.pgsc.org - Info: (310) 378-0877

23, NOON. Dożynki - River's End Park in Saugus. Information: (310) 305-8687.

28 - 30, The 2007 Paderewski Celebration, in Paso Robles, information: 213-821-1356 or polmusic@usc.edu.

29, Sat, 5 p.m. Polish Festival - Laguna Woods. Clubhouse 2, Information: Irena Lawyer 949 206 9122.

30, Sun, Our Lady of Bright Mount Bazaar - 3424 W. Adams Blvd. - Los Angeles. Information 323-754-5249

Oct 4 Thu., 4:00 p.m., Dedication of the Paderewski Monument at USC followed by reception and the Annual Paderewski Lecture-Recital. Free admission

13 and 14, Sat and Sun - San Diego area - Polish Festival - St. Kolbe Maximillian Polish Church 1735 Grand Ave. - Pacific Grove. Information: (619) 249-9502.

14, Sun, 12:30 p.m. Children's Medical Care Foundation Fundraiser - A Day at the Races - Santa Anita Park. Contact Phil Brewster at 800-367-2347 or email: Philip.brewster@wachoviasec.com

14, Sun, 3:00 p.m. Film "Mazowsze" Clubhouse Three - Polish Club of Laguna Woods; info: Irena 949-206-9122

Nov 4 Sun, Noon Mass followed by a worldwide celebration of the Pope John Paul II Foundation will be held in the Our Lady of the Bright Mount Parish Hall. Dinner will be served at 1:30p.m. followed by "A Program of Memories of Karol Wojtyla and Pope John Paul II." For information and reservations, call (626) 281-4456, (818) 956-5865, (949) 859-5125, (714) 544-3329.

11, Sun, Polish Children's Rainbow Fund has its annual bazaar in Szarotka, 3400 West Adams Blvd., Los Angeles, CA, Information: Natalia Kaminska 626 282 4686.

11 Sun, Poland's Independence Day Celebration, John Paul II Polish Center in Yorba Linda.

18 Friends of John Paul II Foundation Annual Meeting, Our Lady of the Bright Mount Polish Parish, 3424 W. Adams Blvd. in Los Angeles Info: (626) 281-0516

24 9:30 a.m. - Polish Genealogical Society - CA Meeting, Info: (310) 378-0877

28 Luncheon - Polish Club of Laguna Woods info: Irena 949-206-9122.

Dec 2 Sun 11:00 a.m. - Polish Women's Alliance's Children Christmas Party - Encino Country Club

2 Sun, 2:00 p.m. - Polish American Congress Oplatek luncheon and Polonia Awards presentations - Our Lady of the Bright Mount Church Hall.

15, 5:00 p.m. - Christmas Eve Dinner - Polish Club of Laguna Woods in the Clubhouse Seven, information: Irena 949-206-9122.

Please send information for the calendar to Bish Petryka - e-mail: zbykoopet@aol.com ★

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Tel: (626) 577-9797 Fax: (626) 449-3331

E-MAIL - polishnews@earthlink.net

Editor in Chief: Betsy Cepielik

Polish Section, Editor-in-Chief: Zbysław (Bish) Petryka (626) 795-9520

Contributing writers

Justyna Ball
Zbysław Petryka, Ph.D

Fr. Lucjan Kamiński, SDB
Iwo Cyprian Pogonowski

Columnists:

Kaya Mirecka Ploss - Profiles
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