

Ask Our Man in Warsaw

Kindly airmail all Polish related queries to:

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Q: I'm wondering which groups gained the most freedoms from the Third of May Constitution?

JAMES CONROYD MARTIN,
jmartin@marianchs.com

A: The burghers (middle-class townfolk, merchants, craftsmen, etc.) were given the rights similar to those of the nobility and were allowed to acquire landed holdings, something once reserved for the gentry. Serfdom was not abolished, but peasants were placed under legal protection, meaning that their masters could no longer treat them inhumanely with impunity. The Four-Year Sejm also appointed a committee to define the rights of minority groups including Jews, but the crushing of the Kościuszko Insurrection by the Russians put an end to its activities.

Q: I write a weekly column for the Quad City Times of Davenport, Iowa, in which people send me photographs of unusual antiques and collectibles that they have acquired. Recently, one of my readers sent me a photograph of a Polish art print that he has acquired. My mission is to tell him "the rest of the story." I speak no Polish so could you let me know what the inscriptions say?

DOUG SMITH, Vipurr93@mchsi.com

A: These look like prints published in the between-the-wars period (1918-1939) in Poland. The names of two printing-publishing firms are visible and could be translated as:

–Issued by the A. Chlebowski's Świt (Dawn) Publishing House in Warsaw

– No. 23 Printing and Lithography by p.f. Jan Cotty in Warsaw.

Q: Many years ago I attended a Polish Catholic grade schools, where I learned a Polish poem that went: "Szlachetne zdrowie, nikt się nie dowie, jako smakujesz aż się zepsujesz..." I have tried many sources to find the rest of it and where it came from, but no such luck. Can you help me solve this mystery?

NORMAN ZDROJEWSKI, 3616 Bicsak Drive, Warren, MI 48092

A: This is a poem by Poland's great Renaissance poet Jan Kochanowski (1530-1584). You can view the remaining stanzas online at:

<http://www.ewa.bicom.pl/chwile/s70.htm>

Q: I am a Polish American, but grew up at a time when my mom forbade my Busia from teaching us Polish. I will be going on a mission trip (Lutheran) to Kraków this summer. I need a hostess gift for my host family. Should I look for something made in America. Or do you have any suggestion for something appropriate from the Polish Art Center? My Busia passed away years ago, as did my ties with the "Old Country". I thank the Polish Art Center in Hamtramck, MI for keeping me in touch with my heritage.

A N D R E A C H O B A N ,
choban.choban@verizon.net,
Bloomington, IN

A: A lot depends on who your host and hostess are – their age, occupation, educational background, whether you know their likes, dislikes and interests. Off hand, I would say to get them something typically American – maybe a desk-top Statue of Liberty, a typically American landscape (Manhattan skyscrapers, Grand Canyon, etc.) or some Indian folk art (just make sure it doesn't say "Made in China" on the bottom). If you know the kind of music they like, a CD might be good. Or a picture album (coffee-table book) showing scenes of typical Americana (big cities, small towns, farms, rodeos, great outdoors,

etc.). If they read English, some books might be in order. If not, maybe the Polish art Center would have some books on America written in Polish.

Q: No idea of grandparents' history before they left Horyniec, Poland. I live in western Canada and I have been having a time in getting my Grandparents Baptismal records translated into English. They departed from Hamburg in 1912. What I found in the ships records was what I consider to be a possible German translation of a Polish name and then it was translated from German to English when they landed in Canada. My father in grade three changed the spelling to Palchynski (to simplify it, as he put it) from Powczynsky which I found that to be the English version from the ships records in German which was Palczynskij. Any help in this would be so amazing because my generation will be that last for the name to live on as there is no living sons beyond me that I know of.

R. MARTIN, Western Canada

A: With Palczynskij, the "-skij" ending is a dead give-away that this was originally a Ukrainian surname. In Polish, it would have been written Palczyński. A strictly phonetic German transcription would have been Paltschinskij but in popular usage it would have probably been Paltschinsky. The clerks and petty officials doing the transcribing back then were not professional linguists so a confusing hotchpotch often resulted; especially when Cyrillic names were differently transliterated into the Latin alphabet by Poles, Germans, Canadians and others. As for translating your ancestors' vital documents, I would strongly recommend professional translator Andrew Gołębiowski of Buffalo, NY: phone (716) 892-5975; e-mail: andywbuffalo@yahoo.com. He can translate documents from Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, German and Latin.

Q: I heard you have published a cookbook. Is it in English? If so, how can I purchase it?

THERESA KRAWIEC,
brimstone17@msn.com

A: I have written two Polish cookbooks, both in English. They are: Polish Heritage Cookery (a fairly exhaustive, general-purpose Polish culinary compendium containing 2,200 recipes on 900+ pages) and Polish Holiday Cookery (traditional recipes for Christmas, Easter, weddings and other special occasions – 248 pages). Both are available through the Polish Art Center: raymond@polartcenter.com.

Q: I was told the "wicz" at the end of a Polish name means "son". I thought that the word for son is "syn" and that's what my dictionary and online translation services say.

NAME WITHHELD ON REQUEST,
Port Jefferson, NY

A: The "-wicz" ending is not the word for son but a patronymic indicator. In other words, the original Stasiewicz was the son of some Staś, Janowicz's dad was named Jan, etc. In English surnames of patronymic origin include Anderson (Andrew's son) as well as Andrews. The "s" in Andrews is not the word for son but it does indicate the surname's patronymic origin. Incidentally, Andrzejewicz and Andrzejczak would be two of the Polish equivalents of Anderson or Andrews. □

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POLISH NEWS BYTES

Compiled by: **Robert Strybel**

Our Warsaw Correspondent

Poland and other EU newcomers were largely instrumental in persuading the European Union to help bail out debt-ridden bankrupt Greece. Germany, the European Community's biggest cash contributor, had been opposed to the aid, but finally succumbed. Now Portugal, Spain and possibly Italy are in the same dire straits as Greece. With the EU diverting aid money to Athens, Poland may get less funding from Brussels for its own. As a ricochet effect of the Greek crisis, the zloty was temporarily weakened in May when its value plunged overnight to 3.30 zlotys to the US dollar. A short while earlier, the dollar was worth only 2.80-2.85 zlotys.

This year's presidential election, moved forward from autumn to June 20th following the tragic death of incumbent Lech Kaczyński, got off to a gentlemanly start. Still in shock following the loss of his twin brother, Jarosław Kaczyński initially conducted a low-key campaign, and his chief rival, Acting President Bronisław Komorowski, also put on a more civilized face than is the norm on Poland's usually rough-and-tumble political scene. Surveys show that Komorowski is easily favored to win, but if Kaczyński started catching up, observers feel he would sharpen his tactics. Kaczyński heads the conservative, solidarity-minded, pro-Catholic Law and Order (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość) party, whilst Komorowski represents the now ruling center-right pro-business Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska).

Poland and Latvia want more NATO on their soil, the two countries defense ministers agreed during recent talks. Subject to half a century of Soviet domination, they remain wary of Russia's expansionist foreign policy. Polish Foreign Minister Bogdan Klich said that the Atlantic Alliance is still divided between old and new members and complained that NATO institutions were unevenly distributed between Western and Central Europe. Both Poland and Latvia joined the North Atlantic Alliance in 1999.

Polish troops marched in Moscow's victory parade marking the 65th anniversary of the defeat of Hitler's Third Reich. In a gesture of Russian solidarity following the recent crash of Poland's presidential plane on Russian soil, the Poles were invited to march in front of the contingents from the US, Britain and France. This marked a major departure from the 60th-anniversary celebration, when then President Vladimir Putin snubbed the Polish delegation by failing to mention the war effort of the Allies' fourth largest army.

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Automotive Poland**The Polish national industry that wasn't**

By: **Robert Strybel**,

Our Warsaw Correspondent

WARSZAWA—The 90-year story of Poland's auto industry is barely known, if at all, to the vast majority of Polish Americans. Maybe that is because no other Polish industry has been plagued to the same extent by economics, geography, history and politics. Those factors seem to have teamed up to prevent the full development of an automotive sector a country of Poland's size might expect.

Europe's automotive development was well under way in pre-World War I Europe, when there was still no Poland on the map. Germany, or Prussia as it was known back then, was in the forefront of automotive development with such names as Daimler, Benz and Maybach and regarded occupied Poland as mainly an agricultural area. Native Polish entrepreneurs generally lacked the capital, experience and know-how to become serious players in the swiftly developing motorcar sector.

But soon after the dust of World War I and the 1920 Bolshevik invasion had settled, the first car to be built in free Poland was the SKAF, a tiny two-seater weighing a mere 660 pounds, whose one-cylinder engine propelled it to a top speed of 26 mph. It was the creation of Polish engineers Stefan Kozłowski and Antoni Frączkowski who named their roadster after their initials S.K. and A.F. Unfortunately, not a single vehicle has survived, and the only vestige of that undertaking was a snapshot of the two carmakers and their vehicle.

A more sophisticated automotive initiative was launched by Count Stefan Tyszkiewicz who produced hundreds of Ralf-Stetysz autos in the years 1924-1928. It boasted an interesting innovation, a differential-blocking device that facilitated driving the axle-deep mud of Poland's country roads. It is unknown how that project may have developed, because the count never recovered from a mysterious blaze that gutted his factory in 1928.

A number of Polish fly-by-night makes appeared at that time, including the Iradam, As and Polonia, but a serious automotive venture was launched by CWS (short for Centralne Warsztaty Samochodowe=Central Auto Works). The CWS was a large, elegant, six to seven-passenger vehicle weighing 2.5 tons and meant largely for aristocrats, wealthy businessmen, high government officials and diplomats. In the same size class as the Rolls-Royce Phantom, it cost nearly 8,000 zlotys, more than the average Polish

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Polish American Congress

Southern California Division

Invites you to attend our monthly meeting

Sunday, - August 8 - noon

Pope John Polish Center

3999 Rose Drive - Yorba Linda

Non-members are welcome to attend our meetings.

You can observe the projects we are working on for Polonia.

Some projects include: Poland Forever presentation, Year of Chopin events, Father Popiełuszko Beatification, Pope John Paul II Beatification. .

The Polish American Congress has Divisions in 28 states.

If you would want to help achieve what is in the best interests of Polonia, Please come and visit us at our next meeting.

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