Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota NEWSLETTER

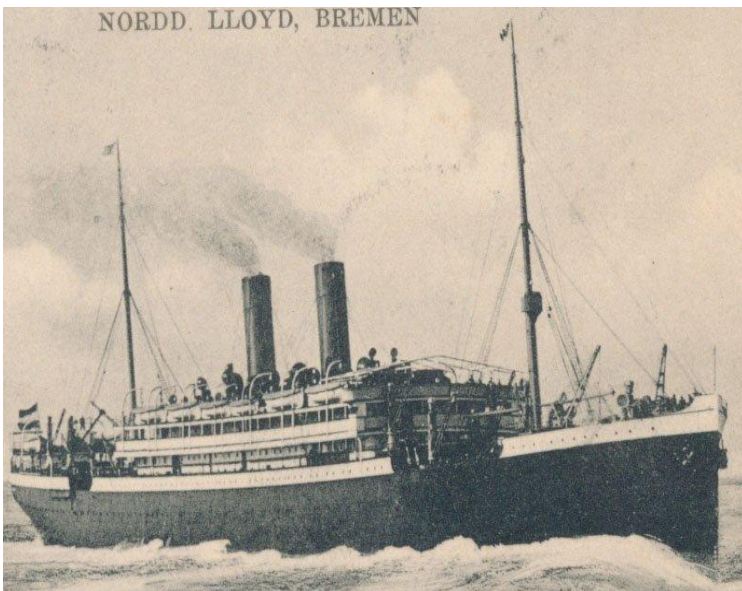## Six Ships to America

by Jerome V. Biedney

The immigrant ancestors of Jerry and Betty (nee Bartkowiak) Biedny came to America between 1883 and 1910. This coincides with the largest immigration wave in American history. By the 1880s, the American Civil War was over, the world economy was being fueled by colonialism, and trade was picking up between North America and Europe. People were moving from one country to another within Europe and immigrating overseas to the Americas and Australia. In response to this, the passenger lines began ordering new ships to handle the traffic. In 1904 alone, by ship 2,000,000 people immigrated to the U.S. This article describes three of the largest passenger shipping firms of the day and details the six ships they owned that brought my family to the shores of America.

The Firms

The **Hamburg America Line** was formed in Hamburg in 1847 as the first transatlantic, packet-shipping joint stock company. It quickly grew into Germany's, and at times the world's largest shipping company. Its name in German is *Hamburg Amerikanische Paketfahrt Actien-Gesellschaft* and it is often referred to by these initials: HAPAG. The line was known for its efficiency and regularity of service. Its largest passenger ships were some of the fastest in the world. It pioneered the use of twin screw propellers, building some of the first in the world. Its *Deutschland* won the Blue Ribbon crossing time prize in 1900, 1901, and 1903 taking it from the SS *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse*, a masterpiece of its close competitor, North German Lines.

Six Ships *(continued on page 6)*

President's Letter

Happy Anniversary! We have met our crystal jubilee. It was 20 years since the newly formed Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota (PGS MN) officially came under the umbrella of the Minnesota Genealogical Society of Minnesota (MGS). We know many of our readers are founding members and we salute your long involvement.

In our first Newsletter in 1993, it was clear that the Society was founded to serve members with roots in all of Minnesota's Polonia: small town and big city. For two decades, the newsletter's several Editors' in Chief pulled together four issues per year. The exact timing of each issue might vary somewhat, but the content has always been stellar and related directly to our state's interests. There have been long series of parish church histories, English translations of historic Polish language newspaper articles, and many great member-researched family histories.

In our first years, our books and maps were housed in the MNS Library just south of Interstate 94 in St. Paul. The collection then moved to Golden Valley, near Highways 100 and 55. Then it moved to our current home on Concord Street in South St. Paul. At each location we offered times each month staffed by researchers that can help you with your specific search.

Our four to six member meetings per year also offer lively speakers on topics from "getting started" to the specific history of Nor'deast Mpls.

We will continue to provide a great newsletter, a fine research collection, personal help, and informative lecture meetings. We also will roll out an updated website this year- hopefully easier to use and with more content. Keep an eye on your Society as it starts its next 20 years. And… join us at the Annual Meeting this month to celebrate the last 20.

Jerome Biedny
President

The Bulletin Board

Correspondence ... **Komunikacja**

A renewing member suggested some changes to the page of this newsletter on which the MGS Library information in printed.

Editor says, thanks for the input. It is very welcome and greatly appreciated. Unfortunately, I ran out of time before the print deadline to work on those changes. I'll get them done for the next issue. Thank you!

Recently at PGS-MN Meetings

"Northeast: Polish Diaspora (Polonia) in Minneapolis," November 3, 2012 combined meeting of PGS-MN and the Pommern Regional Group.

Presentation was made by John L. Rys, PGS-MN member who spent many of his formative years growing up in north-northeast Minneapolis. John presented a well illustrated slide show about the Northeast Minneapolis area where his grandparents settled in the 1910s and where he spent many of his formative years.

The term "Diaspora" is from the Greek word meaning "the movement, migration, or scattering of people away from an established or ancestral home". Polonia" is from the Latin and refers to people of Polish origin who live outside Poland.

The following is the bibliography from John's presentation. It is arranged in the sequence as used in the presentation.

Books and Articles on Minnesota Polonia

Kruszka, Waclaw, A History of the Poles in America to 1908: Part IV – Poles in the Central and Western States. Catholic University Press. Washington, D.C.1981. p. 113-139.

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Libera, Paul, *"Polish Settlers in Winona"* Polish American Studies, Vol. XV. No. 1-2, p. 18-29, January-June 1958.

Prokott, Robert *"Silesia to America – A Heritage: Polish Silesian Settlement in Central Minnesota"*, Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota Newsletter, Winter 1996-97, vol. 4, No 4, p. 8-9. (also www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mnbenton/silesia.htm)

Kowles, John*"Polish Settlements in Minnesota by County Pre-1880."*, Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota Newsletter, Vol. 12, No.2, pgs. 1, 24-26, Summer, 2004.

Radzilowski, John, Poles in Minnesota. The People of Minnesota Series. Minnesota Historical Society Press, St. Paul, MN, 2005.

Renkiewicz, Frank, "The Poles" Chapter 19 in the book: They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups. June Drenning Holmquist, editor. Minnesota Historical Press, St. Paul, MN, 1981, p. 362-380.

Books and Articles on Northeast Minneapolis Polonia

Hage, Christopher and Rushika February, Nicollet Island: Images of America Series. Arcadia Publishing Co., 2010.

Wikipedia Encyclopedia Entry for "Northeast Minneapolis" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Northeast,_Minneapolis)

Rev. Edward A. Chmielewski, *"Polish Settlement in East Minneapolis, Minn."* Polish American Studies, Vol. 17, No. 2, p. 14-27, Jan-June, 1960

Rev. Edward A. Chmielewski, *"The Founding of Holy Cross Parish in Minneapolis"* Polish American Studies, Vol. 17, No. 2, p. 82-93, July-Dec, 1960

Rev. Edward A. Chmielewski, *"Minneapolis Polish-American Community 1886-1914"* Polish American Studies, Vol. 18, No.2, p. 84-93, July-Dec, 1961

Rev. Edward A. Chmielewski, *"Holy Cross Parish Minneapolis, MN 1886-1906"* Polish American Studies, Vol. 18, No.1, p. 1-18, Jan-June, 1961

Rev. Edward A. Chmielewski, *"Minneapolis' Polish Priests, 1886-1914"* Polish American Studies, Vol. 19, No.1, p. 27-35, Jan-June, 1962

Rev. Edward A. Chmielewski, *"Minneapolis Polish Fraternals 1886-1914" (Fraternal Insurance Lodges)* Polish American Studies, Vol. 19, No. 2, p. 91-99, July-Dec, 1962

Rev Stanley J. Maslowski, *"Towers of Faith: A History of Holy Cross Parish",* Section from: Holy Cross Centennial Book - 1886-1986, p. 11-24, 1986.

Galush, William J., For More Than Bread: Community and Identity in American Polonia, 1880-1940. East European Monograph Series, Boulder, Colorado. Distributed by Columbia University Press, New York, 2006.

Rog, Frank, Let me be Frank. Growing up on the Mississippi River – Northeast Minneapolis, 1936-1950. self published book. Epilogue is dated 2002.

Kieley, Genny Zak. Roots and Ties: A Scrapbook of Northeast Memories. Nodin Press. Minneapolis, MN, 2003.

Churches of Northeast Minneapolis
 (Date the church was formed)

Polish (Roman) Catholic Churches
- Holy Cross (1886)

- St. Philip (North Minneapolis) (1906)
- St. Hedwig (1914)
- All Saints (1916)
- Sacred Heart Polish Nat'l Catholic (1914)

Other Eastern European (Roman) Catholic Churches
- Ss. Cyril and Methodius (Slowak) (1891)
- St. Maron (Lebanese-Maronite Rite) (1903)
- St. John Byzantine (Rusyn) (1907)
- St. Constantine (Ukranian) (1913)

Eastern Orthodox Churches
- St. Mary Orthodox (Russian)
- St. Michael and St. George Ukrainian (1907)

Other Roman Catholic Churches
- St. Anthony Padua (1851)
- St. Boniface (1858)
- Our Lady of Lourdes (1887)
- St. Clement (1902)
- Our Lady of Mount Carmel (1938)
- St. Charles Borromeo (1938)

Upcoming Meetings, Programs, Events….

2013 PGS-MN Member Meetings

January 19 – Annual Membership Meeting

March 2 – topic: Adoption

April 6 – topic: Poland travels

May 4 – topic: TBD

September 7 - topic: TBD

October 5 - topic: TBD

November 2 - Joint meeting w/ Pommern group

Genealogy Topics at Minnesota Historical Society MHS

Saturday, February 9, 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
"The Census: Federal Population Schedules"
"The Other Census Records: Federal Non-Population Schedules and State Census"
Instructor: Lois Abromitis Mackin, Ph.D.

Genealogy 101 Classes at Minnesota Genealogy Society MGS Library

Genealogy 101 is a series of five beginning genealogy classes. You may register for the whole series for $70, or just the sessions you're interested in for $15 per session. See class descriptions below.

Instructors: Lois Abromitis Mackin, Ph.D., John Schade, David Suddarth, Peggy Larson.

For online registration, go to http://www.mngs.org/blog/ and click on "Classes and Events" in the top menu. Scroll down to Genealogy 101 (Spring 2013) and click on the link to register. Hope to see you there!

Saturday, February 16, 1 – 4 p.m.
"Step 1: Write Down and Organize What You Know"
Learn to recognize and gather information from personal knowledge, family members, and genea-logical sources you find at home. Learn how to organize information about families in family group sheets and pedigree charts, and review effective ways to organize paper and electronic files.

Saturday, February 23, 1 – 4 p.m.
"Step 2: Decide What You Want to Learn"
Genealogists often scatter their research efforts, resulting in incomplete information on many family lines. This session shows how to focus research efforts by selecting an achievable research objective and creating a research plan. It also provides an overview of the library and online resources you can use to answer your research questions.

Saturday, March 2, 1 – 4 p.m.
"Step 3: Locate a Useful Source"
Beginning genealogists need to master five essential types of genealogical sources: birth, marriage, and death records; census records, church and cemetery records; immigration records; and naturalization records. View examples of each type; learn where to find them in original form, in print, and online; and practice tools and techniques for identifying gaps in your research of these records for each ancestor.

Saturday, March 9, 1 – 4 p.m.
"Step 4: Learn from the Source"
Learn how to take useful notes and capture the source information you need. Practice extracting information from records, creating source citations, getting the most out of each record, and identifying clues for further research.

Saturday, March 23, 1 – 4 p.m.
"Step 5: Use What You Learned"
Learn how to correlate evidence from new records using timelines and spreadsheets and identify next steps for your research. Practice evaluating the genealogical evidence you find and resolving conflicts as you learn the five components of the Genealogical Proof Standard (GPS) and apply the GPS to a sample research report. **PGS-MN**

February 2013

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16 Step 1 1 - 4 p.m. "Organize What You Know"
17	18	19	20	21	22	23 Step 2 1 – 4 p.m. "What You Want to Learn"
24	25	26	27	28		

March 2013

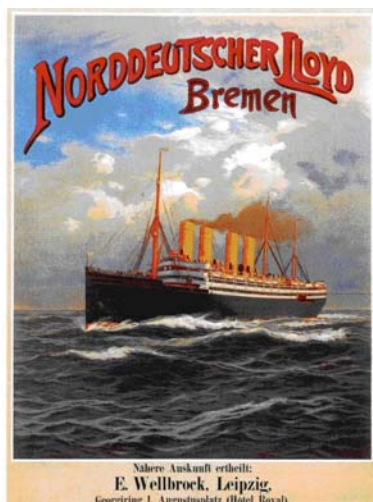| Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Step 3 1 – 4 p.m. "Locate a Useful Source"
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16 Step 4 1 – 4 p.m. "Learn from the Source"
17	18	19	20	21	22	23 Step 5 1 – 4 p.m. "Use What You Learned"
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Six Ships *(continued from page 1)*

Starting off concentrating on connecting Hamburg with American ports such as Hoboken, New Jersey and New Orleans, Louisiana, the Hamburg America Line eventually established lines connecting Europe with every continent. The ships to America would leave Hamburg and stop in either South-ampton or Plymouth, England, before a final call to load at Cher-bourg on the Norman coast of France. The Bartkowiak family, my earliest immigrant ancestors, came to America in 1883/4 aboard two sailings of the **SS *Suevia***. Then 20 years later, Joe Dobosz came aboard the **SS *Batavia***. By then, the Hamburg American Line had over 100 ships and they called at the immigration station at Castle Garden in New York Harbor. When Castle Garden closed in the early 1890s, they came to its successor: Ellis Island.

The **North German Lloyd** line was created in 1857 and competed directly with *Hamburg American Line*, *The Red Star Line*, and the *Holland-American Line* servicing the immigration trade to America. In German the name is *Norddeutsche Lloyd* (NDL) where here 'Lloyd' means "shipping company" and should not be confused with the British insurance giant - Lloyd's of London. NDL grew out of an earlier German-American joint venture called the Ocean Steam Navigation Company. Fed by excellent rail connections, NDL was instrumental in developing Bremen and the port at Bremerhaven into one of Europe's busiest shipping stations. In 1870,

building on its early connection to the tobacco markets, it partnered with the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad to offer coordinated passage to Baltimore.

In the 1880s, NDL was awarded numerous mail routes in Europe and the Far East. This fueled the construction of new ships with large Steerage Class capacities. By the 1890s, they had almost 70 ships and controlled 30% of all German shipping. Even in Cabin Classes (First and Second) it carried more passengers than Britain's *Cunard* or *White Star Lines*. In 1897, NDL launched the SS *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse* - the largest and fastest ship in the world at the time. She was a four screw, four funnel monster. She was so successful that the Line ordered three sister ships within a few years. So, the 1900s was the "decade of the Germans" in passenger traffic. By 1909, these German ships gave the speed title over to the British ships HMS *Lusitania* and HMS *Mauretania* of the Cunard Line. By then the NDL ships had already transported hundreds of thousands of immigrants to America.

My great-grandmother Mary Ann Barnas came to Baltimore aboard the **SS *Barbarrosa*** in 1903. My great-grandfather, John Fyda came aboard the maiden voyage of the **SS *Kaiser Wilhelm II*** in 1904. In 1910, his wife and daughter traveled on the **SS *Wittekind***-an older and smaller ship of the line. My family's immigration trips were complete before the building of the White Star Line's legendary ships: *Titanic, Olympic*, and *Britannic*. By then our families were setting up homes in Buffalo, NY with the one or two weeks at sea just a memory.

By 1920, the requirements for German reparations from WWI hobbled both the Hamburg American and North German Lloyd Lines. They would rise again only to be cut down after WWII. They both rebuilt in the late 1940s and as the passenger traffic slowed to a trickle, focused on cargo. In 1970, these two rival titans merged to form HAPAG-Lloyd AG. The combined company was then purchased by the Hannover-based travel and leisure conglomerate TUI AG. Moving in a different direction by 2012, TUI sold its HAPAG-Lloyd unit to Albert Ballin, a consortium of banks and

businesses including the City of Hamburg. This brings the ownership full circle and back to the roots of the company on the northern German coast.

Not all Polish immigrates came on German ships. In Philadelphia in 1871, the International Navigation Company was organized and ordered three ships be built for transatlantic passenger trade. The next year, while still under construction, these ships where pledged to an Antwerp, Belgian based firm. In 1893 the two firms began operating under the banner: **Red Star Lines**. The following year Red Star absorbed the American Line and strengthened its service between New York, Liverpool, and Antwerp. The **SS *Zeeland*** was one of the last ships ordered under an independent Red Star Line. My great grand-parents Stanley and Margaret

S.S. ZEELAND, 1901 Red Star Line
Courtesy The Peabody Museum of Salem

Biedny and their two small children came to New York aboard that vessel in 1901.

At the turn of the 20th century, J. Pierpont Morgan, the American financier, had been busy creating empires. He bought U.S. Steel from Andrew Carnegie and made it the first billion dollar company in history. He had also been active in railroading trusts. In 1902, he turned his attention to shipping to create not only a company, but a system, to monopolize the shipping trade between Europe and America. He started by bankrolling the amalgamation of several lines under the **International Mercantile Marine Company (IMM)**. He
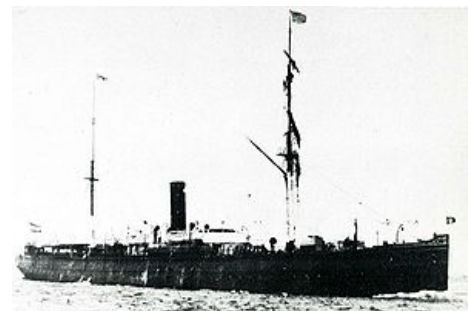
negotiated and acquired first the *American* and *Red Star Lines*, then the *Atlantic Transport* and *Dominion Lines*. Concurrently, he turned to Britain. As an American he was barred by law from directly owning British ships. So, he owned the companies that owned the ships instead; he acquired the *Leyland Line* and *White Star Line* in this way.

Obsessed with the idea of a monopoly, and overestimating its possible revenues, he largely overpaid for his acquisitions. The company spent decades trying to right itself. Upset by the loss of the White Star's iconic *Titanic* in 1912, and Morgan's death in 1913, IMM got a brief financial respite during WWI, but went into receivership by 1915. It emerged from bankruptcy as the *United States Line* (USL) but never became the powerhouse its creator envisioned. USL was defunct by 1986.

With this corporate back drop, enjoy the stories of the ships that brought my ancestors to America. Learning about the ships helped me to imagine how the journey felt. These old photos evoke a sense of hardship that this jet age society does not associate with travel.

Bartkowiak family aboard SS Suevia, 1883/4

The **SS *Suevia*** was built for the Hamburg American Line by the Caird & Company yard in Greenock Scotland. She was launched on 1 June 1874 and under the German flag, took her maiden voyage, to New York via Havre, France on 21 October 1874. She served the transatlantic crossing service between Hamburg, Germany and New York City and had a rather uneventful career except for a foggy night in 1889. On 13 April that year, she collided with the much smaller U.S. Pilot Boat *Commodore Bateman* which thereafter sank killing two of its crew. The *Bateman* had only recently been launched the year before.

The **SS** *Suevia* could accommodate 100 first-class passengers, 70 second-class, and 600 in third-class (steerage). Originally built with two masks, it was upgraded with new steam boilers in 1884 and that made the trip shorter. It then served the Hamburg American Line ten more years with passenger service, some between Naples and New York. It was sold to French owners in 1896 and renamed *Quatre Amis*. After she stranded in the River Scheldt near Antwerp, she was scrapped in Marseille, France in 1898 at the tender age of 24.

Jacob Bartkowiak came to America aboard an April 1883 sail before the ship's upgrade. When Margaret and the children traveled in June 1884 the ship was moving faster as a steamer. On each voyage, the family travelled in steerage, crowded in third-class accommodations. These passages were during the first decade of increased immigration which had slowed to a trickle during the American Civil War but roared back by the 1880s.

Statistics: Passenger Ship. 360' long, 41' wide, 3609 gross tons iron construction. First rigged for sail, and then converted to single screw, steam power to 13 knots. One funnel, two masts. Crew of 115.

Biedny/Antkowiak family - SS Zeeland, 1901

The **SS** *Zeeland* was built for the Red Star Line by John Brown & Co. in Clydebank, Scotland. She was launched on 24 November 1900 and, under the British flag, had her maiden voyage from Antwerp to New York on 13 April 1901. By 1902, Red Star

was part of the huge International Mercantile Marine Company (IMM) a shipping trust that eventually owned the *Titanic*. The **SS** *Zeeland* was

RED STAR LINE S.S. ZEELAND.
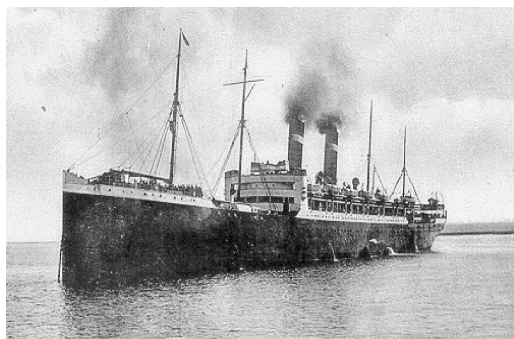Length, 580 feet.   Tonnage, 11,904.

the sister ship of the *Vaderland*, sailing opposite her once she saw service in 1902. She was also 'near' sister ship to the *Finland* and *Kroonland* all of the same line, but built in the Philadelphia yards of William Cramp and Sons. While being used as a British troop ship in 1915 during WWI, *Zeeland* had her name changed for five years to SS *Northland*.

From 1901-1911, she sailed the Antwerp to New York route for the Red Star Line, but was eventually used on other IMM lines including the: White Star, White Star-Dominion, International Navigation Co., American Line, and the Atlantic Transport Line. During the war years, she shifted to Liverpool and various Canadian and American ports. After the war and a refitting in 1920, she returned to the Antwerp-New York route. In 1927, her name changed from *Zeeland* to the SS *Minnesota* and offered tourist service between London and New York. After her final voyage in 1929, she was scrapped at Inverkeithing, Scotland in 1930.

When Stanley Biedny and Margaret Antkowiak brought their two small children aboard on 13 April 1901 the ship was gleaming and brand new. They experienced this maiden voyage with 342 first-class, 194 second-class, and 626 fellow third-class passengers. It was three times the size of the *Suevia*

that brought the Bartkowiaks to America almost 20 years before. This was a large ship of the line,
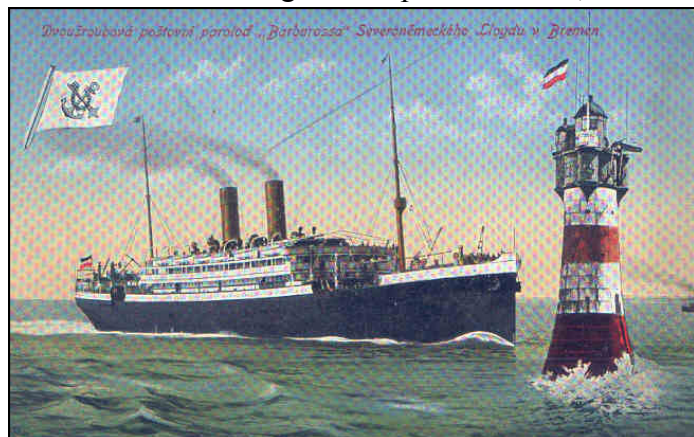

ready to bring thousands of immigrants to America at the height of the immigration wave.

Statistics: Passenger/ Cargo ship. 562' long, 60' wide, 11905 gross tons, steel construction. Two quadruple-expansion, 1627 horsepower, steam engines driving twin screw propellers to 15 knots. Two funnels, four masts. Crew of 121.

Barnas family - SS Barbarossa, 1903

The **SS *Barbarossa*** was the first of her namesake class, built for the North German Lloyd Line by Blohm & Voss in Hamburg, Germany. Launched under the German flag on 5 September 1896, she

provided passenger service on the North Atlantic crossing and eventually on the Bremerhaven to Australia route. At the outbreak of WWI, she took refuge at Hoboken, New Jersey until America entered the war on 6 April 1917.

Her crew had inflicted some damage to the ship before she was seized, but that was repaired and she was renamed the USS *Mercury*. Starting in the summer of 1917, she transported some 18,000 passengers to Europe. After the war, she brought

20,000 troops back. She was decommissioned in 1919 and after some other military uses, was scrapped in 1924 after 28 years of hard work.

She bears the nickname of the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick I. Built to move lots of lower fair passengers, she could accommodate 300 second-class in cabins and 2,400 third-class passengers - that is more than double the capacity of the *Zeeland*! When Mary Ann Barnas boarded on 16 April

1903 she must have felt like just another number in the midst of the thousands of others under decks. Her passage was about $25 and she probably had less than that in her pocket. But she was moving through this experience with others that took the southern train lines from Austrian Poland to Hamburg and the ten-day sail to America.

Statistics: Passenger/ Cargo ship. 544' long, 60' wide, 19500 gross tons, steel construction. Steam engines driving twin screw propellers to 15 knots. Two funnels, two masts. Crew of 494.

Dobosz family - SS Batavia, 1903

The **SS *Batavia*** was built for the Hamburg American Line by Blohm & Voss in Hamburg, Germany. Under Germany's flag, she was launched on 11 March 1899 and took her maiden voyage from Hamburg to Baltimore on 30 May 1899. In 1906 she was enlarged by 10% and sent back to passenger service. Excitingly, on 11 June 1909 she

Six Ships

Celebrating 20 Years

THE POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF MINNESOTA

Annual Membership Meeting

Saturday, January 19, 2013

Gasthof Restaurant
2300 University Ave NE
Minneapolis, MN
(612) 781-3860

11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

$20 (payable at door)

So we are sure to order enough food, please **RSVP** to **Jay Biedny (651) 266-2257**.

Everyone within driving distance is encouraged to attend – especially past office holders – as we will be collectively celebrating the 20th anniversary of our Society being under the Minnesota Genealogy Society umbrella of genealogy groups.

Come have lunch and a pierogi

Vote for your Board

Meet new people

Catch up with old friends!!

Get Active!

We have some people retiring from active Board membership this year and we would love some new blood in our leadership. We need people to plan and execute program meetings, work with computers, etc. Ours is a working Board where everyone gets a little job to do, but you can usually self-select that job.

Whether you have been a member for years, or are rather new to our organization, please consider getting just a bit more involved.

The current Board meets quarterly for about an hour. The other work is transacted via email and on your own. It is pretty low key. You will be helping everyone with your involvement.

Think it over then call Jay at 651.266.2257 for more details. **PGS-MN**

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Learning Polish!

Which Polish word is the translation for the English word?
a. watch __ulica __droga __zegarek
b. money __pieniądze __pokwitowanie __lotnisko
c. menu __jadłospis __zupę __potrawę
d. rooms __rozmowy __pokoje __śniadanie
e. car __samochodem __objazdem __godziną

(Answers on page 17)

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Election of
Polish Genealogical Society MN
Board of Directors

The PGS-MN Board of Directors consists of a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and four member directors designated as Director I, II, III, and IV.

All terms are for 2 years. Elections rotate in a cycle. President, Vice President, Director I, and Director III are elected in odd-numbered years; Secretary, Treasurer, Director II, and Director IV are elected in even-numbered years.

The current board members are listed here:

Position	Current	Next Election
President	Jay Biedny	**2013**
Vice President	Richard Theissen	**2013**
Secretary	Dana Halberg	2014
Treasurer	Michael Eckman	2014
Director I	Jeremy Biedny	**2013**
Director II	Dori Marszalek	2014
Director III	Jason Waldowski	**2013**
Director IV	Janet Mitchell	2014

At this year's Annual Membership Meeting on Saturday, January 19th the positions up for election are:

      President
      Vice President
      Director I
      Director III

      Secretary*
      Director IV*

*Secretary Halberg and Director Mitchell have both announced they need to give up their board positions one year early as personal time constraints are not allowing them to volunteer at this time.

Celebrating 20 Years!

Editor's Note: For the 20th Anniversary, a stroll down memory lane seems appropriate, doesn't it? So I'm re-publishing a few of the articles from the very first newsletter the Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota published in the winter of 1993. Learn some history and/or enjoy the memories!

Witamy!

Welcome to the first edition of the *Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota Newsletter*. Like many new productions this one is late and probably incomplete. The latter will depend on your definition of what a newsletter for a genealogical society such do. In an attempt to avoid philosophical statements, at this point let's just say that a newsletter should provide some assistance to members in working on their family histories. To that end the newsletter staff is open for suggestions for any addition, deletions, or changes. We will attempt to produce four issue each year. Some of those issue may become expanded bulletins which periodically update library, holdings, research aids and family histories. Each issue will at least include announcements of coming events, queries, offers of assistance, and related articles. Please submit any items that you wish to share with other members. These could include reports of travels, research experiences, etc.

⟵ The newsletter staff is STILL open to this!

⟵Please share! Fresh articles and stories are **always** needed, welcome, and appreciated!

This newsletter Is being published using WordPerfect© version 5.1, an IBM™ compatible computer, and a Panasonic™ KX1624 dot matrix printer. Submitted articles are read into the word processor by means of an optical recognition scanner. To save editorial time submitted articles should be typed, single-placed, and the use of outlining numbers special grouping, etc. should be avoided. Tables, graphs, and figures can be reproduced.

⟵ Boy times have changed!!

Since this is the first issue and items abmitted over the past year may have been lost or misfiled. Our apologies, if this is the case. Please resubmit for the next issue in March.

John Pokrzywinski

⟵And the more they change, the more they stay the same?!!!

First edition………

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

In January of 1993 the Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota will officially be a branch of the Minnesota Genealogical Society. Our history: a small effort was made to establish a Polish genealogical society in 1988. A more concerted effort was made about a year and a half ago. Now we have a constitution, have been accepted for branch membership by the MGS, have a newsletter and we can only continue to grow.

Our annual meeting was held in October. All the officers and members of the board of directors were reelected. Our constitution allows us to add board members during the year. Your participation will be most welcome.

The other major decision at the annual meeting regards dues. Those of you who have already paid last year's dues will have your membership extended for the new year, 1993. If you are not a member we encourage you to join with us.

Ed Brandt has taken on the responsibility of program chair. What would you like presented at future meetings?

All the members of the board would be happy to hear your suggestions and concerns.

I thank all of you who have helped the PGSM get started and look forward to seeing everyone at our January meeting.

Blanche Krbechek

And in case you've ever wondered…… *(Editor's note: I know I have!)*

OUR LOGO

Of course, we needed a logo. As a papercutter this was an intriguing challenge so out came my scissors. I wanted to maintain somewhat the traditional design elements of wycinankl (Polish paper cutting). I chose the style of the Kurpie region, a one color cutting, since it could be reproduced even in black and white. The primary elements became the two eagles – the white eagle of Poland and the bald eagle of the United States which could be created more or less symetrically. These two I dressed up within a Kurpie framework. Some folk will not be happy without a story, or a fine analysis of the design. In the true fashion of my Polish family I can create one and you can change it to suit yourself if you wish. Perhaps the branches in the diamond are the branching of a family tree. One could say the four corners of the diamond are the four directions: north, south, east, west. Then the "fringe" on the outside (a finishing touch that is very easy to do with sheep shears) can be us Poles reaching out in great number. I cannot imagine a need to explain the initials, PSGM, in the bottom corner. These thoughts came to me as I wrote. All I originally had in mind was the two eagles; that is the only fact and is not part of a story. We have a logo now. The papercutting from which it is taken hangs in my house.

Blanche Krbechek

Six Ships *(continued from page 9)*

took 300 survivors aboard from the vessel *Slovonia*, a Cunard ship that wrecked off the Azores.

In 1913, her ownership was transferred to Unione Austriaca and she took up service between Mediterranean ports and North America under the name *Polonia*. But she returned to Hamburg

American Lines, and her original Hamburg to Baltimore route in 1914. Out of service for a time, she was used as a German transport during WWI and was surrendered to the Allies on 30 December 1919. She was then ceded to the French and eventually came to the company Messageries Maritimes which scrapped her in 1924.

Like the *Barbarossa*, she was designed to move lots of lower fair passengers. She could accommodate 300 second-class and 2,400 third-class passengers.
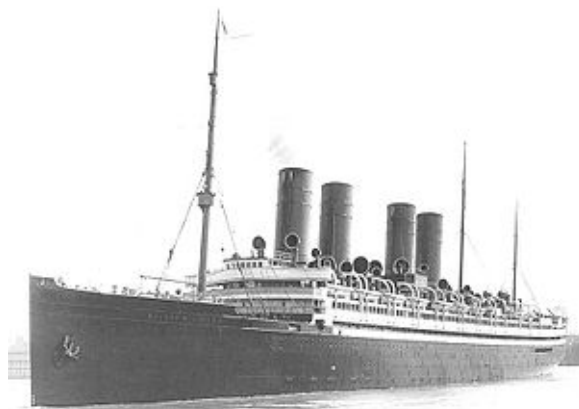

That is more than the capacity of the *Suevia* and the *Zeeland* combined! When Joseph Dobosz boarded on 25 May 1903 he must have felt like just another number in the midst of the thousands of others. He arrived in New York on 8 June 1903.

Statistics: Passenger ship. 501' long, 62' wide, 10178 gross tons (11464 after 1906), steel

construction. Steam engines driving twin screw propellers to 14 knots. One funnel, two masts. Crew of over 400.

Fyda ancestor - SS Kaiser Wilhelm II, 1904

The **SS** *Kaiser Wilhelm II* was built for the North German Lloyd Line by AG Vulcan in Stettin, Germany. Under the German flag, she was

launched on 12 August 1902 and took her maiden voyage from Bremen to New York on 14 April 1903. She was built for speed and the comfort of the cabined passengers in first- and second-class. She could hold almost 1,900 in total. In fact, she won the Blue Ribbon for the fastest eastbound Atlantic crossing in 1904 and held that record until the *Lusitania* took it from her. She was longer and sleeker then the *Barbarossa* and fitted as a truly opulent ship with more space for each passenger. She

was built at the dawn of the Ocean Liner age. She was pre-*Titanic*, but no less astounding to her passengers of the time.

When WWI broke out on 3 August 1914, the **SS** *Kaiser Wilhelm II* was mid-crossing coming to New York. She avoided British cruisers and arrived on 6 August. She stayed safe in its neutral harbor. But on 6 April 1917, she was seized as America entered the war. After repairing the sabotage damage done by the German crew, the ship was

The Steerage, a famous photograph taken by Alfred Stieglitz in 1907, shows the huddled masses in third-class coming above decks for some sun and air. Although John Fyda came three years earlier, you could easily imagine him as one of the faces in that crowd. This scene is in direct contrast to the posh image the North German Lloyd was selling to cabined passengers. It was also emblematic of the crowded (and yet hopeful) experience of so many immigrants on so many ships in the wave of migration before WWI.

Lest we get too romantic on this scene, you should know that it was captured on a trip ***TO*** Europe on which Stieglitz was taking his family. So the people are either those turned back upon entry for health or monetary reasons or trades people returning home once their work visa expired. It does not make the conditions at the bow of the ship any different, but it speaks to the two-way nature of the ocean liner route.

transformed into a troop carrier. During refitting, she was used as a floating barracks in the New York Navy Yard. As the USS *Kaiser Wilhelm II*, she started service for the Navy in August 1917. Her name was quickly changed to the USS *Agamemnon* as she transported some 38,000 troops to Europe. After the war, she brought 42,000 troops home. In 1927 she was renamed the USAT *Monticello* but saw no real use by the War Department. By 1940, she was deemed too old for use in WWII and was scrapped that year.
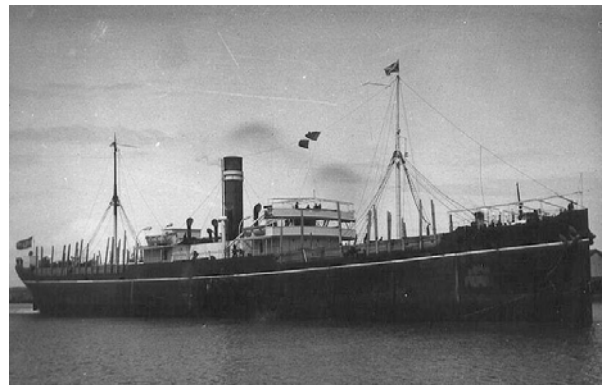
John Fyda, Sr. came to America aboard the SS *Kaiser Wilhelm II* in March 1904 when the ship was barely a year into service. Recorded as "Wojciech Fuda," John was one of the throng in steerage. Yet his passage was quick and he landed in New York on 24 March 1904 aboard this model of German efficiency.

Statistics: Ocean Liner. 706' long, 72' wide, 19361 gross tons, steel construction. Two quadruple-

expansion steam engines driving twin screw propellers to 23.5 knots! Four funnels, no masts. Crew of over 962.
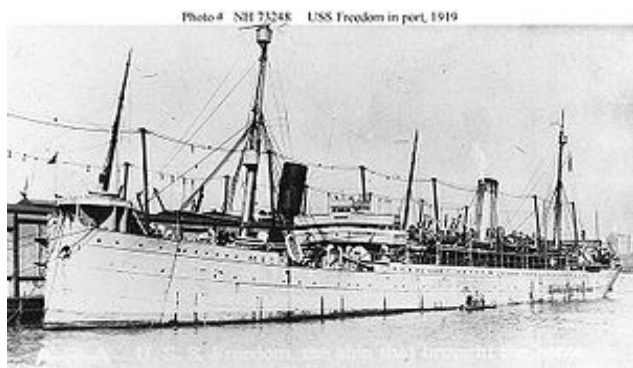
Jachowicz family - SS Wittekind, 1910

Like the SS *Barbarossa* & SS *Kaiser Wilhelm II, but* before them, the **SS *Wittekind*** was built for the North German Lloyd Line. She was built by Blohm & Voss in Hamburg, Germany in the same yard as the SS *Batavia* and the SS *Barbarossa.* Named for

a 9th century Duke of Saxony, she was launched 3 February 1894 and took her maiden voyage from Bremen to Hoboken, New Jersey on 14 April 1894. She and her sister ship, the SS *Willehad* were the first twin screw steamers built for the line. To increase her cargo capacity she was lengthened by 60 feet and resumed passenger service in March 1900. That summer, she took German troops to China as part of the Eight-Nation Alliance attempting to put down the Boxer Rebellion.

After her two years as a German troop transport and hospital ship, she resumed passenger service from Germany to ports including: Montreal, Galveston, Baltimore and some in South America. When England declared war on Germany, the **Wittekind** was enroute to British-controlled Montreal. So it anchored at neutral Boston. Eventually, seven German liners ended up in Boston Harbor. She was seized by America as it entered the war in 1917, and renamed USAT *Iroquois*. By 1918, her name was

Photo # NH 73248   USS Freedom in port, 1919

changed again to the USAT *Freedom*. Under this service, she returned almost 5,000 troops from France. By February 1924 she was scrapped at Baltimore.

After the *Suevia,* she was the smallest and oldest ship used by my ancestors. She was probably quite dated by the time Mary Anna (Jachowicz) Fyda came aboard with her daughter Julia. She had traveled back to Poland and was returning to her husband John in Buffalo, NY. John immigrated on a ship three times the size and twice as fast, but the ladies endured the two week trip and disembarked in June 1910. At the time, the ship was designed for 177 second-class passengers and over 1,039 in steerage.

Statistics: Passenger /Cargo ship. 409' then 461' long, 46' wide, 4997 gross tons (5640 after 1900), steel construction. Two triple-expansion, 2500 hp, steam engines driving twin screw propellers to 12 knots. One funnel, two masts. Crew of 70.

The immigrant ancestors of Jerome and Elizabeth (nee Bartkowiak) Biedny came to America in these six ships. Each voyage is recorded in the records of the National Archives in the U.S.; some even have surviving records through their departure at Hamburg. Over 27 years of immigration, their trips were all a bit different, but some things were common to all.

My ancestors probably traveled by coordinated trains from stations near their Polish villages right to the docks at Hamburg, Bremen or Antwerp. They travelled on the ship, not in cabins, but in steerage. Depending on the ship, these third-class accommodations usually included separate places for unmarried men and unmarried women and a third space for families with children. They would be below deck most of the time with some time given above board for sun and air. They would have had access to the ship's doctor, but in these crowded conditions epidemics did often break out.

Since almost all came under steam, their voyages were from seven to fourteen days long. When they got off, they were processed at

Castle Garden or Ellis Island in New York or Locust Point in Baltimore. They were met by relatives or otherwise maneuvered to the trains that would take them to Buffalo, NY as most had relatives or other reasons to go directly there.

If there were any steamer trunks, they no longer exist in the family. But we can imagine the heavy woolen cloths packed in something among the crowds, the noise, and the steam laden smoke at the docks. You can feel the hope of our ancestors as they were about to mark the turning point of their

lives and make my life and those of their other descendants possible. **PGS-MN**

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Learning Polish answers (from page 11)

English word --- Polish translation
- a. watch = zegarek
- b. money = pieniądze
- c. menu = jadłospis
- d. rooms = pokoje
- e. car = samochodem

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The Three Brides, Love in a Cottage, and Other Tales
Francis A. Curivage, 1853

(Editor's note: I thought "The Emigrant Ship" short tale excerpted from a volume of columns appropriate as it relates to the feature article topic this quarter. It may be uncomfortable to read but it certainly gives an idea of what transport by emigrant ship was like. This story references Irish emigrants but it's likely the circumstances were pretty universal.)

PREFACE.

The volume here submitted to the public is composed of selections from my contributions to the columns of the American press. The stories and sketches were written, most of them, in the intervals of relaxation from more serious labor and the daily business of life; and they would be suffered to disappear in the Lethe that awaits old magazines and newspapers, had not their extensive circulation, and the partial judgment of friends,—for I must not omit the stereotyped plea of scribblers,—flattered me that their collection in a permanent form would not prove wholly unacceptable. Some of these articles were published anonymously, or under the signature of "The Old 'Un," and have enjoyed the honor of adoption by persons having no claim to their paternity; and it seems time to call home and assemble these vagabond children under the paternal wing.

The materials for the tales were gathered from various sources: some are purely imaginative, some authentic, not a few jotted down from oral narrative, or derived from the vague remembrance of some old play or adventure; but the form at least is my own, and that is about all that a professional story-teller, gleaning his matter at random, can generally lay claim to.

Some of these sketches were originally published in the Boston "Olive Branch," and many in Mr. Gleason's popular papers, the "Flag of Our Union," and the "Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion." Others have appeared in the "New York Mirror," the "American Monthly Magazine," the New York "Spirit of the Times," the "Symbol," and other magazines and papers.

Should their perusal serve to beguile some hours of weariness and illness, as their composition has done, I shall feel that my labor has not been altogether vain; while the moderate success of this venture will stimulate me to attempt something more worthy the attention of the public.

Francis A. Durivage.

THE EMIGRANT SHIP.

On a summer's day, some years ago, business brought me to one of the wharves of this city, at the moment when a ship from Liverpool had just arrived, with some two hundred and fifty emigrants, men, women, and children, chiefly Irish. Much as I had heard and read of the condition of many of the poor passengers, I never fully realized their distresses until I personally witnessed them.

Under the most favorable circumstances, the removal of families from the land of their birth is attended by many painful incidents. About to embark upon a long and perilous voyage, to seek the untried hospitalities of a stranger soil, the old landmarks and associations which the heartstrings grasp with a cruel tenacity are viewed through the mist of tears and agony.

The old church—the weather-worn homestead—the ancient school house, the familiar play ground, and more sadly dear than all, the green graveyard, offer a mute appeal "more eloquent than words." But when to these afflictions of the heart are added the pangs of physical suffering and privation; when emigrants, in embarking, embark their all in the expenses of the voyage, and have no hope, even for existence, but in a happy combination of possible chances; when near and dear ones must be left behind, certainly to suffer, and probably to die,—the pangs of separation embrace all that can be conceived of agony and distress.

The emigrant ship whose arrival we witnessed had been seventy odd days from port to port. Her passengers were of the poorest class. Their means had been nearly exhausted in going from Dublin to Liverpool, and in endeavors to obtain work in the latter city, previous to bidding a reluctant but eternal farewell to the old country. They came on board worn out—wan—the very life of many dependent on a speedy passage over the Atlantic. In this they were disappointed. The ship had encountered a succession of terrific gales; it had leaked badly, and they had been confined, a great part of the voyage, to their narrow quarters between decks, herded together in a noisome and pestilential atmosphere, littered with damp straw, and full of filth.

What marvel that disease and death invaded their ranks? One after another, many died and were launched into the deep sea. The ship entered Fayal to refit, and there that clime of endless summer proved to the emigrants more fatal than the blast of the upas-poisoned valley of Java. The delicious oranges, and the mild Pico wine, used liberally by the passengers, sowed the seeds of death yet more freely among their ranks. On the passage from Fayal, the mortality was dreadful, but at length,

decimated and diseased, the band of emigrants arrived at Boston.

It was a summer's day—but no cheering ray of light fell upon the spires of the city. The sky was dark and gloomy; the bay spread out before the eye like a huge sheet of lead, and the clouds swept low and heavily over the hills and house tops.

After the vessel was moored, all the passengers who were capable of moving, or of being moved, came up or were brought up on deck. We scanned their wan and haggard features with curiosity and pity.

Here was the wreck of an athletic man. His eyes, deep-sunken in their orbits, were nearly as glassy as those of a corpse; his poor attire hung loosely on his square shoulders. His matted beard rendered his sickly, greenish countenance yet more wan and livid. He crawled about the deck alone—his wife and five children, they for whom he had lived and struggled, for whose sake he was making a last desperate exertion, had all been taken from him on the voyage. We addressed him some questions touching his family.

"They are all gone," said he, "the wife and the childer. The last one—the babby—died this mornin'—she lies below. They're best off where they are."

In another place sat a shivering, ragged man, the picture of despair. A few of his countrymen, who had gathered round him, offered him some food. He might have taken it eagerly some days before. Now he gazed on vacancy, without noticing their efforts to induce him to take some nourishment. Still they persevered, and one held a cooling glass of lemonade to his parched lips.

Seated on the after hatchway was a little boy who had that morning lost both his parents. He shed no tear. Familiarity with misery had deprived him of that sad consolation.

We passed on to a group of Irishmen gathered round an old gray-haired man lying at length upon the forward deck. One of them was kneeling beside him.

"Father, father!" said he, earnestly, "rouse up, for the love of Heaven. See here—I've brought ye

some porridge—tak a sup ov it—it will give ye heart and life."

"Sorrow a bit of life's left in the old man any how. Lave him alone, Jamie."

"Lift him ashore," said the mate—"he wants air."

The dying man was carefully lifted on the wharf, and laid down upon a plank. His features changed rapidly during the transit. His head now fell back— the pallid hue of death invaded his lips—his lower jaw relaxed—the staring eyeballs had no speculation in them—a slight shudder convulsed his frame. The son kneeled beside him; closed his eyes—it was all over. And there, in the open air, with no covering to shield his reverend locks from the falling rain, passed away the soul of the old man from its earthly tabernacle.

The hospital cart arrived. Busy agents lifted into it, with professional sang froid, crippled age and tottering childhood. But all the spectators of this harrowing scene testified, by their expressions, sympathy and sorrow, one low-browed ruffian alone excepted.

"Serves 'em right d—— n—— 'em!" said he, savagely. "Why don't they stay at home in their own country, and not come here to take the bread out of honest people's mouths?"

Honest, quotha? If ever "flat burglary" and "treason dire" were written on a man's face, it stood out in staring capitals upon that Cain-like brow.

  But there were lights as well as shadows to the picture. Out of that grim den of death, out of that floating lazar house, there came a few blooming maidens and stalwart youths, like fair flowers springing from the rankness of a charnel. Their sorrows were but for the misfortunes of others; and even these were a while forgotten in the joy of meeting near and dear relatives, and old friends upon the shore of the promised land. They went their way rejoicing, and with them passed the solitary ray of sunshine that streamed athwart the dark horrors of the emigrant ship, like the wandering pencil of light that sometimes visits the condemned cell of a prison. **PGS-MN**

Publications for sale by PGS-MN:

Jensen, *Sto Lat: A Modern Guide to Polish Genealogy* $25.00

Litak, *The Latin Church in the Polish Commonwealth in 1772* $17.00

Müllerowa, *Roman Catholic Parishes in the Polish Peoples Republic in 1984* $15.00

Radzilowski, *A Traveller's History of Poland* $14.95

Shea, *Going Home: A Guide to Polish American Family History Research* $35.00

Shea and Hoffman, *In Their Words: A Genealogist's Guide To Polish, German, Latin, and Russian Documents,* Vol. I: Polish, $35.00 - Vol. II: Russian, $35.00

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Bal Karnawałowy - February 9, 2013

PACIM's signature event, *Bal Karnawałowy* (carnival ball), honors the pre-Lenten celebration that dates back several centuries in Poland.

The formal event includes a Polish dinner, dances by the Dolina Polish Folk Dancers, dancing, and a silent auction of Polish and non-Polish items.

Schedule
5:30 PM - Social Hour & Silent Auction
7:30 PM - Dinner
9:00 PM - Opening of the Bal
1:00 AM - Bal Closes

Historic Saint Paul Hotel   Tickets: $60 members
350 Market Street $65 non-members
St. Paul, MN $500 table of eight

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Please contact me with your temporary or permanent **ADDRESS CHANGES**.

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Did you know that our database allows for winter and summer change of addresses?

If you furnish dates we will enter them into our database and it will automatically change your address so that you do not lose out on any of the newsletters and PGS-MN will not be charged for non delivery.

You can contact me by email doripgs@comcast.net or phone 763-535-2296

Thank You,
Dori Marszalek
Membership Director

Celebrating 20 Years!

Happy 20th Anniversary Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota!!!

SAVE THE DATE!
Everyone join the fun!

Attend the Annual Membership Meeting
Saturday, January 19
11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Gasthof Restaurant
2300 University Avenue NE
Minneapolis, MN

THE POLISH
GENEALOGICAL
SOCIETY OF MINNESOTA