



# The Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota

PGSMN Newsletter Volume 29 #4 Winter 2021

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*Szczęśliwego  
Nowego Roku*

## PGSMN Annual Meeting



**Saturday**

**January 22, 2022**

**1:00 –3:00 pm**

**MGS "Mississippi Room"**

Zoom Meeting

Business Meeting, Elections, Annual Achievement Award, meet with other members, work on the future of our organization and have a great time.



The Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota wishes to thank its members for their past generosity and support and we look forward to continuing to provide resources, tools and support in your Polish Genealogy research.

## PGSMN Officers/Board of Directors

President — Terry Kita (612-220-8182)  
terrykita@earthlink.com

Vice President — Paula Colwell (612-227-7113)  
pjcolwell@msn.com

Treasurer — Gary Wolf (715-220-7052)  
gcwolf@att.net

Secretary — Rosanne Betley (612-408-1152)  
rbetley@@hotmail.com

Director - Connie Waldherr (763-424-8428)  
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hlpedersen7@gmail.com

Director - Mike Stodolka  
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Director - Kay Freund (612-636-0078)  
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Past President - Peggy Larson (763-445-0090)  
peggylarson23@gmail.com



## Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota

*A branch of the Minnesota Genealogical Society*

**1385 Mendota Heights Road  
Mendota Heights, MN 55120-1367  
[www.pgsmn.org](http://www.pgsmn.org)**

### Committees

Library — Bob Kraska (612-978-6647)  
[kraskb1@comcast.net](mailto:kraskb1@comcast.net)

Membership— Connie Waldherr

Newsletter — Marie Przynski  
[Przynski@comcast.net](mailto:Przynski@comcast.net)

Programs — TBD

Research & Library — John Rys (651-731-9486)  
[jjlr55@john.rys.name](mailto:jjlr55@john.rys.name)

Bob Kraska  
[kraskb1@comcast.net](mailto:kraskb1@comcast.net)

Website - Heather Pedersen

Annual Mtg Richard Thiesen  
[rftheissen@comcast.net](mailto:rftheissen@comcast.net)  
John Rys

**The Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota hosts meetings on Polish Genealogy and Culture six times each year. Meetings take place from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on the first Saturday of the month, noted below, at the Minnesota Genealogy Center, 1385 Mendota Heights Road, Mendota Heights, MN.**

**Please check PGSMN website for on-site or zoom format.**

\* **March**  
\* **April**  
\* **May**

\* **September**  
\* **October**  
\* **November**



## Foundation for East European Family History Studies

2022 Conference  
July 25-29, 2022

The program will feature tracks in research in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire (including Czech, Slovak, etc.), German Empire, Poland, and the Russian Empire (including Ukraine, Belarus, and Baltic Countries) as well as classes on DNA Research, Jewish, Germans from Russia, and more. Conference format is still being designed, and may consist of a combination of in-person and virtual formats. More information will be provided soon on the [FEEFHS.org](http://FEEFHS.org) website.

## From the President

We will bid a not so fond farewell to a virtually conducted 2021, but anticipate that we will be able to physically interact with each other next year. Our Annual Meeting will be held January 22, 2022, at the Minnesota Genealogy Center, as well as via ZOOM. Review the meeting details in this edition of the newsletter, or on our website. We will review 2021 activities & preview those for 2022. Members can attend, either in person or virtually.

The Annual Meeting and all 2022 programs will be held via ZOOM. Members in good standing will receive an emailed invitation to attend each meeting. A reminder that dues for 2022, a bargain at \$20 per year, are to be paid by 12/31/21. We accept payment by PayPal or mailed payment. Your membership allows us to continue to provide our programs, website & newsletters, pay the rent and other expenses, and allows you to receive our newsletter, free access to the Genealogy Center Library, and its collections and software programs, and access to the Members Only section of the website. The Member's Only portion of the website contains archives of past meetings, copies of all newsletters since our inception, the *Poles to Minnesota* project & other information.

Programs are free to members, and \$5 for non-members—see our website for program details.

A note about PGSMN personnel changes in 2022. Marie Przyński, who has served in the past as both Website and Newsletter chair, and as the present Newsletter chair, will relinquish the Newsletter post to Steven Wasik at the end of 2021. She has served PGSMN for many years, & enhanced the publication with color pages as well as timely and informational articles.

Heather Pedersen, who has served as the Program Chair, and brought us into the virtual age with a variety of speakers and topics, will retire from her position at year's end.

Christine Petersen will retire as website chair. During her tenure the website was revamped, adding a Members Only feature as well as other improvements. Heather Pedersen will assume the chair of the Website Committee in 2022. We appreciate & thank those who have served PGSMN in any capacity.

Volunteers serve in all leadership and committee positions. We invite members with an interest in one of our committees to email your interest to [PGSMMinnesota@gmail.com](mailto:PGSMMinnesota@gmail.com). Committees are noted in each newsletter.

*As we work on our Polish genealogy, many times we only focus on people, dates, events and places. However, to make our Polish Family History come even more to life, it is important to document stories about our families. For the 2021 Annual Meeting, we introduced the "Polish Family Food History" collection from our members (this can be found under the "Members" tab on our website). For the 2022 Annual Meeting, we will provide an update on this project. Therefore, we encourage everyone to continue to share stories and recipes of the Polish foods and traditions of our ancestors. Send your stories, recipes and pictures to our email at [PGSMMinnesota@gmail.com](mailto:PGSMMinnesota@gmail.com)*

We invite our members to submit their research, stories & frustrations to us, for publication.

Stay well, Terry

## PGS-MN 2022 Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota will be held on Saturday, January 22, 2022. It will be held via ZOOM. An emailed invitation will be sent to members in good standing, and will include the link to the ZOOM meeting.

Meeting will start with social gathering at 1:00 pm, coffee and cookies will be provided. The business meeting will start at 1:30 pm, and last until 3:00 pm.

### Agenda

- Summary of 2021 activities
- 2021 Financial Summary
- 2022 Programming for General Membership Meetings.
- Polish Food recipes and Stories
- Elections—open —Treasurer, Secretary and two director positions
- Dues increase—2023 Dues increase-PGS-MN membership dues have remained at \$20 per year for over 15 years. As rent, printing and other costs have, & will continue to increase it will be necessary to increase our annual dues from \$20 to \$25 per year, beginning in 2023. This matter will be discussed, and voted on by the members attending the Zoom meeting.
- Annual Achievement Awards
- Other business

***Attendees should be prepared to meet MGS' requirements for masking, social distancing, and other COVID related precautions.***



**Is It Renewal Time for You?  
Thanks for being a member!  
Please check your newsletter mailing label to see if your  
renewal date is December 31, 2021**

We hope you'll renew for another exciting year of great programs and special events on Polish genealogy, history, culture and delicious recipes! For only \$20 you get a year's worth of value:

- \* Quarterly PGSMN newsletters (mail/online) and bi-monthly Komunikat E-newsletter filled with valuable information just for members.
- \* Programs and events planned for 2022. In-Person (when available), Live Streaming, and Recorded Playback.
- \* Access to all recorded past events and valuable presentation materials for your genealogy research.
- \* Exclusive content and data on [pgsmn.org](http://pgsmn.org) including our latest "From Poland to Minnesota" extensive research experience.
- \* Free member access to the Hoffman Research Library at the Minnesota Genealogy Center in Mendota Heights.
- \* Additional benefits will be available in 2022!

Renew Online or by Mail— Go to [pgsmn.org/membership](http://pgsmn.org/membership) and click the 'Pay Online' button; or mail your \$20 check to Gary Wolf, PGS-MN Treasurer, P.O. Box 291, Amery, WI 54001-0291. If your contact information has changed, or you need help renewing, email us at [pgsminnesota@gmail.com](mailto:pgsminnesota@gmail.com) and we'll get back to you.



## How to obtain a birth, marriage, or death certificate from a Polish registry office

On the 1st March 2015, a new electronic system in registry offices was launched. It means that every birth, marriage, or death certificate created after this date will be available in every registry office, not only in the one it was issued in. Also, the offices work on adding older documents to the system as well. But what about very old documents? Can we obtain them as well? And what if you don't live in Poland and don't have Polish citizenship? Can you receive, for example, your grandparents' marriage certificate? The answer is YES. And below we describe how to do it.

Registry offices in Poland keep vital records for 100 (births) or 80 (marriages and deaths) years. After that time they send all the documents to the local national archives. So if the document you're looking for is within those dates, then the registry office is the institution you should contact.

The first thing is to find the right registry office (**Urząd Stanu Cywilnego**). Usually, each municipality (gmina) has one, however, the biggest ones may have even a few of them. If you are looking for documents registered in a city, then all you have to do is to find the address of the registry office. All the data including the phone number and email address you can find on this website: <https://www.gov.pl/web/mswia/urzed-y-stanu-cywilnego>. Just write the name of the town in the searching bar..

**But what if my ancestors lived in a small village that was too small to have its own registry office?** Then find the gmina it belonged to. Here is the current list of gminas in Poland: <http://www.gminy.pl/>. Use the map and starting from the voivodeship, through the counties (powiats), you can find the municipality.

So now, when you have the right gmina, and the contact to the registry office, you can write them an email to verify if they have the record of your interest. Especially when the date of the event you're looking for is close to the mentioned threshold of 100 or 80 years. Your email should have all the information that can be useful while searching for documents, such as first name, surname, maiden name, date of birth, place of birth, parents' names.

Writing such an email in Polish will be more efficient. Not every clerk in the registry office can speak English. Below you have an example for obtaining a birth certificate (you can modify it for your purposes):

*"Urząd Stanu Cywilnego [here you write the name of the town/city, where the seat of the registry office is],*

*Zwracam się z uprzejmą prośbą o potwierdzenie, że są Państwo w posiadaniu aktu urodzenia następującej osoby:*

*[first name and surname], urodzony (urodzona in case of a female relative) w miejscowości [place of birth] on (date dd/mm/yyyy). Imiona rodziców: [parents' names]*

*Akt jest potrzebny do genealogii mojej rodziny.*

*Z poważaniem,  
[your first name and surname, address]*

Therefore, your email asking for a birth certificate could look like this:

*"Urząd Stanu Cywilnego **Bydgoszcz**,*

*Zwracam się z uprzejmą prośbą o potwierdzenie, że są Państwo w posiadaniu aktu urodzenia następującej osoby:*

***Adam Nowak**, urodzony w miejscowości **Bydgoszcz** dnia **25.11.1956**. Imiona rodziców: **Paweł i Weronika**.*

*Akt jest potrzebny do genealogii mojej rodziny.*

*Z poważaniem, **Jane Doe**"*

The one asking for the marriage certificate could look like this:

*"Urząd Stanu Cywilnego Bydgoszcz,*

*Zwracam się z uprzejmą prośbą o potwierdzenie, że są Państwo w posiadaniu aktu urodzenia następującej osoby.*

***Adam Nowak**, ślub w miejscowości **Bydgoszcz** dnia **25.11.1956**. Imiona rodziców: **Paweł i Weronika**.*

*Akt jest potrzebny do genealogii mojej rodziny.*

*Z poważaniem, **Jane Doe**"*

In case of a death record, just change the word "ślub" with "zgon".

Of course not always we can provide all that information. If you don't know the exact date, then just write the year, or use the word "około", which means "around". With a little bit of luck, the office will be able to find it. On the other hand giving a wide option, like "born between 1880 and 1890 somewhere near Białystok" can be too much. The offices **do not** conduct genealogy research. In this case, they will probably just check whether such a name is in their database, but if it's not, then it's rather unlikely they will check all the metrical books for 10 years in all those parishes. Try to be as specific as possible

After receiving the confirmation that the office has the document you are looking for, there are two possibilities:

- you can order the documents personally,
- through an authorized person.



As you can see they are all different. But for sure they contain few main points:

On the top right corner you may see the name of the town. After that, there is a place for the current date. Please remember about the date format used in Poland. 3.12.2021 is the 3rd of December 2021.

Then there is usually your name. Wherever you see any version of the word “wnioskodawca” (the applicant), that means it’s about you. So as you can see in the form from Kraków and Czosnów, the place for your data (first name, surname – “imię i nazwisko”, address – “adres zamieszkania” or “adres do korespondencji”, sometimes you may be asked for your phone number as well – “numer telefonu”. Usually it’s not required, but if you can speak Polish it can be helpful.

If you see that the form requires PESEL, then just leave it blank. PESEL is a number that every Polish citizen gets just after being born. If you don’t have it, then you leave it empty.

In the form from Lublin you can also see “typ wnioskodawcy”. You issue the document as “osoba prywatna”, which means you’re not an office or organization (a private person).

The next will be your request: “Proszę o wydanie odpisu...”. Now there are three options:

1) short copy – regular document with the most important information

2) full copy – contains more details

3) multilingual short copy – you may need this copy to use it in foreign offices. It doesn’t require translation or any other proof that it’s legitimate. However, you can use it in several countries only: Germany, Austria, Belgium, Spain, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Holland, Portugal, Switzerland, Turkey, Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herze-

Here is an example how the short copy looks like:

And below you have an example of the full copy:

This is a form titled "Odpis skrócony aktu urodzenia" (Short copy of the birth record) from Kraków. It includes fields for the applicant's name, address, and phone number. It also has sections for the birth date, place of birth, and the applicant's request for the document. The form is in Polish and includes the Polish coat of arms.

This is a form titled "Odpis zupełny aktu urodzenia" (Full copy of the birth record) from Czosnów. It includes fields for the applicant's name, address, and phone number. It also has sections for the birth date, place of birth, and the applicant's request for the document. The form is in Polish and includes the Polish coat of arms.

This is a form titled "Odpis skrócony aktu urodzenia" (Short copy of the birth record) from Lublin. It includes fields for the applicant's name, address, and phone number. It also has sections for the birth date, place of birth, and the applicant's request for the document. The form is in Polish and includes the Polish coat of arms.

As you can see, the short copy contains only the most important information.

The next step will be to choose the document we're obtaining: birth, marriage, or death certificate. But read the documents closely. The form from Czosnów is a form for issuing birth certificates only:

**WNIOSEK**  
**o wydanie odpisu aktu urodzenia**  
**anie odpisu skróconego / zupełnego / wielojęzycznego\* :**

Some offices will have specific forms for each kind of document, others will have just one form for every kind of document. Some of them will not have a template at all and it will be up to you to create one.

Usually, the next thing is your ancestor's data: first name and surname, birth/marriage/death date, place, and date.

Also, you may be asked to describe who this person is to you. Not everyone can ask for anyone's documents. We can receive documents containing our data, our spouse's, our children's and grandchildren's, our parents', siblings', grandparents', great grandparents', etc. But for example, some offices can disagree to issue our uncle's birth certificate, because he doesn't belong to our direct line. Each registry office can interpret the law differently and while some are helpful and go out their way to assist us, others can be very bureaucratic.

We usually have to write how are we related to the person of interest. In the form from Kraków, you can see the text: "Odpis dotyczy:" – the copy concerns. And the options are as above.

The forms also ask about the reason for obtaining the document. There can be several reasons: marriage abroad, divorce, for work, for insurance, for citizenship, etc. Also, it can be for private matters. If you won't use this document for any official reason, you can just write "do celów prywatnych" or "do celów genealogicznych" – for genealogy matters.

What else you can find in the form:

"Sposób odbioru dokumentu" – how you want to receive the document. Using post office "listownie" or "pocztą".

"Liczba odpisów" – the amount of copies.

Make sure there is your signature on the form.

After you fill out the form, now it's time to prove that you are the person who has the right to receive it. So for example when you ask for your great grandfather's death certificate, then you should also provide a copy of your passport, ID or birth certificate, your father's birth certificate (if that's your father's line), and your grandfather's birth certificate.

Note: it's worth checking the preferred documents with the office while exchanging emails. Each office may have a little bit different requirements.

The last thing will be the payment. You have to prove that you already paid for the documents, so that the copies can be sent to you. Some of the forms already contain the bank account number, where you have to send the money (look at the example from Lublin, page 2). But in other cases, you will have to find the bank account number on the registry office's web page or ask for it in your email correspondence. What doesn't change is the cost. **Each short copy costs 22 PLN and each full copy costs 33 PLN.**

Our advice would be to check the costs of payments before you send any money. Wire transfers can be very costly especially when you send small amounts of money.

If you already gathered those documents, then pack them together in an envelope and send them to the chosen registry office.

Now it's time to wait. How long? If the document is already in the electronic database, **up to 7 days**. If it's not, **up to 10 days**. The above doesn't include the time to send you the documents, so add this to your calculations.

You can also receive a decline with the reason why the office refuses to issue you the documents. If you don't agree with this decision you can appeal within 14 days.

### Obtain through an authorized person

If you know someone you trust, who lives in Poland and speaks Polish it may be more efficient to ask such a person for help. In this case, all you need to do is to send this person a document authorizing them to represent you in obtaining the documents of your interest. It has to be in Polish. It usually doesn't have to be printed out or written according to a template but it is also best to confirm it first. Some registry officers alsoThe document can look like this:

Bydgoszcz, dnia 5 czerwca 2023 r.

**PEŁNOMOCNICTWO**

Pani / Pan .....

Senia i mianer dokumentu tożsamości .....

Miejscę zamieszkania .....

**zawra i: daci „Mocodawca” niniejszoz, iz niniejszym udziela pełnomocnictwa**

Pani / Panu .....

Senia i mianer dokumentu tożsamości .....

Miejscę zamieszkania .....

iz w związku z tym upoważnia pełnomocnika dokonywania w jego imieniu wszelkich czynności prawnych i faktycznych oraz do składania w jego imieniu wszelkich oświadczeń woli i wiedzy, o treści według uznania pełnomocnika w związku z wysozkowaniem o wydanie odpisu aktu zgonu Adama Nowaka w Urzędzie Stanu Cywilnego w Bydgoszczy.

Pełnomocnictwo niniejsze obejmuje również upoważnienie do odbioru wszelkiej korespondencji i listów poleconych adresowanych do mocodawcy.

**MOCDAWCA**

**PEŁNOMOCNIK**

.....

\* niniejszym dacił

Here is translation

Bydgoszcz, 05.06.2021

**AUTHORIZATION**

Mrs / Mr \_\_\_\_\_ \*

ID number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Hereinafter referred to as "Principal" declares that provides the authorization**

Mrs / Mr \_\_\_\_\_ \*

ID number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

and hereby authorized the representative to make all legal and factual acts and to make all declarations of will and knowledge on his/her behalf concerning applying for a copy of the death certificate of Adam Nowak in the Civil Records Office in Bydgoszcz.

This document includes the authorization to receive all correspondence and registered letters addressed to the principal.

**PRINCIPAL** **REPRESENTATIVE (PROXY)**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\* Delete as appropriate

Note: in some Registry Offices scan of such documents may be enough, but usually the original is required.

The additional cost for having a proxy who acts on your behalf is 17 PLN.

The rest of the documents stay the same: you will have to prove how you are related and proof of payment has to be added as well. But in this case, your representative will fill out the form.

Also, your representative will receive the documents and it will be their responsibility to send you either scans or the originals.

This is the general procedure to receive copies of the documents in Polish registry offices. If I was to add any final advice here, it would probably be: remember that on the other side of the line or email there is a living person, who can have a bad day, not to be aware of something, didn't ever deal with such a case as yours. Ask questions, and if you still have doubts – ask again. Check if someone had the same issue. Double-check the data you're sending. And stay positive. If you have the right to receive the document you're asking for, then you'll receive it.

Aleksandra Matlaszewska, **PolishOrigins**, 15 September 2021

**PolishOrigins** mission is to make the journey of uncovering your roots in old Poland fruitful, smooth, and eventful experience. The organization creates tours to Poland, from big cities to small villages, perform genealogical research, from simple to complex; reunite clients with living relatives (some you may not know exist); provide a genealogical forum to assist with specific questions. Their website is <https://polishorigins.com> and also maintain a Facebook page.

### Passing the Torch



*Time for a rest—I am stepping down as PGSMN Editor, and with the Spring 2022 Newsletter, the Editor will be Steven Wasik. Steven brings his background as editor of other newsletters, and an enthusiastic spirit to the position. Steven and I have met, conversed several times (email is a great tool), and although I will no longer be the editor, I will endeavor to work with Steven to ensure a smooth transition, and help out where ever needed. I also asked that you the members submit your pieces, even just a paragraph or two, and continue to enhance our newsletter.*

*I wish to thank PGSMN for the opportunity to work in this position, as well as the webmaster position. I've greatly enjoyed and appreciated the friendships gained, and also for the opportunities that became available. I've learned many exciting and interesting things—Polish Genealogy, Polish history, heritage and traditions, and a comprehensive immersion into "All Things Polish."*

Marie Przynski  
[Przynski@comcast.net](mailto:Przynski@comcast.net)





## ***In Memory of Bridget Zwack***

*Editor's note—PGSMN Member Al Kowalczak brought my attention to a "family book" created by the Zwack and Kroll Families (Royalton, central Minnesota). They had used Bridget (nee Kroll) Zwack as their inspiration, and its an incredible acknowledgement of her impact on their lives. Included below are excerpts from that publication.*

### **Preface**

It is important to know a family's past history, the people who shaped our destiny by coming to America over a hundred years ago. If it is true, and I think it is, that we cannot escape being the sum of all our yesterdays, then it is important to explore those yesterdays for what they might tell us about ourselves, our past, our present, and our future. The dreams and expectations of a better life have largely been fulfilled for us, the descendants of Bridget and Daniel Zwack. But the struggle of life always continues. (Author Robert Treuer)

### **Mid-Nineteenth Century Europe**

The mid-nineteenth century in Europe saw the start of a mass migration of people from one continent to another. The reasons were many and varied. The old feudal patterns that had sustained life for generations began to give way. The land could no longer support a steadily increasing population. Successive wars ravaged families as national rivalries increased. Religious freedom came under attack.

Word came through newspapers and letters of the vast areas of virgin farmlands of mid-America waiting to be claimed. About the same time steamships replaced sailing ships as a means of swift, reliable transportation. Crossing the Atlantic became less of a risk. When the advantages of moving to a new land outweighed the disadvantages of remaining in place, a mass migration of people was on.

For families to survive, it required maintain a hold on some part of the land. Land was not the only source of food and sustenance but a primary one, and was a measure of a man's worth and self esteem. In the old country families' land consisted of tiny strips in different areas. And much of the land was community owned. Pastures, meadows, bogs and woodlands were used by all families.

Even then, families were not self-sufficient. They paid rent to the nobility who owned the land in the form of their surplus crops. In return the landlords offered protection against marauding tribes and provided a measure of justice in settling neighborhood disputes.

During the nineteenth century landlords began to consolidate land holdings by combining strips into contiguous plots. Common areas disappeared. Land required fencing, which increased the family's debt. This decreased the standard of living. A steadily rising population increased pressure on available farmland. A year of crop failure produced famine. Widespread riots and unrest spread throughout Europe, and severe potato blight brought mass starvation and misery to the peasant population.

There was much upheaval. Empires and dynasties came and went. A rising sense of nationalism in the mid to late 1800's brought a clash between Church and State.

Anti-Catholic laws drove many people out of Europe and to America.

Early immigrants often had little to guide them as they began their journey. They sold their land and gathered whatever money they could before beginning the long walk to a distant seaport. Passage there was booked on a sail ship, its destination and route uncertain. Overcrowding and disease was common. Drinking water had to be rationed. It was the mother's responsibility to hand out their limited provisions for the duration of the trip.

By the late 1860 the introduction of steamships had greatly improved transatlantic travel. The price of tickets fell to as little as twelve dollars, including food. The journey lasted ten days or less. Still overcrowding was common, and sickness continued to take its toll.

### **Why Minnesota?**

Early immigrants came through Ellis Island, and stood in long lines to have their general health and destination checked. They had to prove they had funds to reach their destination.

Why did immigrants choose Minnesota as their destination? By 1865 the states east of the Mississippi River had been settled. The civil war was over and new immigrants sought out the Midwest. The 1862 Homestead Act gave free land to anyone settling claim to it. It was the railroads that wanted people to populate the areas that it served. The railroad companies published pamphlets on the "Facts About Minnesota" and distributed them widely in Europe. Low rate immigrant trains carried the new arrival to the heartland...

Father Francis Xavier Pierz led a campaign to colonize the "rich prairie" he saw before him. "If the Territory of Minnesota even in its wild state produces such a variety of food for man and beast, how much more will it repay in bountiful harvest this agricultural work of industrious farmers. Throughout the most part of this beautiful and favored Territory the excellent soil, the abundant hay, the ample timber, the pure water, the splendid vegetation of all kinds and the rich harvest will satisfy the farmer that he has all a man might wish....."

*(Sources for above—The Distant Magnet—Harper & Row 1971; The Uprooted—Brown & Company 1973; and The Kroll Booklet—1987)*

### **Conditions in Poland**

It was written that when Bridget's grandmother Josepha made her decision to immigrate; her parents wept. They were elderly and poor, they knew they would never see their daughter and grandchildren again. Their goodbyes would be final and their hearts were breaking. Likewise Josepha knew as well she would never see her parents or loved ones again. You can't help but wonder what the conditions were like in their home land that would drive them to make such a bold move requiring many sacrifices.

Paul and Josepha were from the Province of Silesia, which was part of Prussia at that time. Eventually it would become our present day Germany. Otto Bismarck was the ruler of Prussia and a protestant. He was inspired to create a united Germany. For this reason he made great efforts to suppress the different cultures. In the late 1860's children were beaten even for just speaking in their native tongue at school.

The Catholic Church was seen as a major roadblock to uniting Germany, so a series of laws were drafted to disempower the church. Control of the educational system was taken over by the government, whereas the church had been in control before. Civil marriages became compulsory. The Catholic Priest was muzzled. Church property was confiscated. Priests and religious followers who resisted were persecuted. Village clergy were deposed, imprisoned, or expelled. Coupled with this was economic depravity. Paul was a farmer and owned 2 acres of land, but there was no land available to buy any longer. Young people were cheap labor and it was hard if not impossible to get ahead.

The trip over was grueling with crowded quarters, lack of privacy, isolation, home sickness, and sea sickness. Josepha was pregnant at the time of the journey and ill most of the trip. Her sister Julia, who came with, lost her 10 year old daughter who became so ill that she died and was wrapped in a blanket and buried at sea.

So these were the conditions that Paul and Josepha were leaving behind and the hope and inspiration instilled in them regarding America. Their brave and adventurous choice would alter the fate of many generations to come. As they departed from their homeland with their 5 children, Peter, Lawrence, Andrew, John and Mary, into the unknown with little to sustain them other than their hope, faith, and prayers.

### ***Bridget's Poppyseed Cake***

*Mother was a good baker, too. She made the best bread, coffee cake, cookies, cakes, pies, doughnuts, and cinnamon caramel rolls I ever tasted. The poppyseed was grown in the garden and was so good! (Theresa Blommer)*



*I remember that Grandma would grate some carrot to cook with the poppyseed and she said that it took the bitterness out of it. To this day I add grated carrot to the canned poppyseed to help it stretch and fill the coffee cake better! (Trisha Godel)*

2 packages of dry yeast	Crumbs (3x)
1/4 cup sugar	1/2 cup flour
1 cup warm water	1/4 cup sugar
Some flour from total	1/4 cup butter or mixture of lard
Mix together and let it bubble to	or shortening
activate yeast	Mix until crumbs form
2 tsp salt	Filling
1 cup lard	2 cups poppyseed
3 eggs beaten	1 1/2 cup cream
1 1/4 cup sugar	1 1/2 cup sugar
9 cups flour	boil until thickened
2 cups water and potato cooked	add vanilla and cool
And pressed through sieve	

Add some flour, salt, lard, eggs, sugar to bubbling yeast mixture and let rise. Then add the rest of the flour and knead. Dough will be soft and a bit sticky. Let rise 2 times. Use flour to roll out pieces of dough. Spread filling on 1/2 of the dough. Wet edges with water, then fold over, then tap the filling and press to eliminate air pockets. Press edges to seal.

Sprinkle with crumbs and cinnamon. Let rise and bake at 350 for 28-30 minutes. Makes about 5 coffee cakes.

# **Planning a trip to the Hoffman Memorial Library— Handy Guide**

## **Plan your visit**

Knowing what you wish to research when you arrive at the Hoffman Research Library (HRL) will make your time here more productive. Our online catalog can be searched remotely, so you can make a list of items you'd like to see before you come. Here are some other guidelines for how to make the most of your time at the Minnesota Genealogy Center (MGC).

## **Before you Arrive**

- The MGC facility is on a single level, so the library, meeting rooms, and offices are all accessible. Free and accessible parking is generally available right outside the front door.
- Restrooms are available within the MGC, with larger, accessible facilities available just outside the main meeting room (the Mississippi Room).
- Pandemic protocols will be in place based on recommendations and requirements from the State of Minnesota and Department of Health. Current practice will be announced on the MGS website home page, and the MGS Library home page. Hand sanitizer and wipes are available for patron use in the library and public areas. Download and/or print a map of the MGC and a list of abbreviations used in the call numbers to familiarize yourself with the layout of the MGS facilities.
- The HRL collection is non-circulating.
- Library admission is free to Minnesota Genealogical Society (MGS), branch (PGSMN), or partner members. Non-members are expected to pay a \$10 per visit usage fee.

## **When you arrive**

- Visitors are required to sign the check-in book at the welcome desk. Please indicate your membership affiliation and purpose in library.
- Visitors are required to sign the check-in book at the welcome desk. Please indicate your membership affiliation and purpose at the library.
- Store briefcases, purses, and bags in free lockers provided in the lobby area.
- You may bring laptops, tablets, and necessary research papers into the Library.

## **While at the Library**

- Please use pencils for your notes, to avoid accidental ink damage to the collection.
- The research area has numerous desktop computers for public use, free wireless Internet access, microfiche and microfilm readers, and a printer. Consider bringing a thumb drive for downloading items of interest to take home.

A variety of genealogy-specific software is installed on the library's computers.

- A scanning copy machine is provided for visitors. There is a minimal charge of 20 cents per page for copies. You may also use personal wand scanners and smart phones to capture images unless materials are designated as Fragile.
- Please place books and materials you've used on the cart by the reference desk rather than reshelving them.
- You are welcome to enjoy your food and beverages in the kitchen area or outside of the library area (in the kitchen or outside the library area.)

## **Before you leave**

- Please sign out at the welcome desk as you leave the MGC.
- Thank you for visiting!

If you would like research assistance from specialists for a particular country or ethnic group, [MGS branches and partner groups](#) schedule monthly sessions in the Hoffman Library. Plan your visit to connect with these experts.

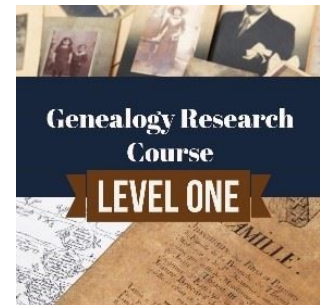
Please note—Library volunteers and staff are engaged in a massive project to migrate the HRL collection from a home-grown classification scheme to the Dewey Decimal System. Both organizational methods currently co-exist on our shelves and in our catalog, so do not hesitate to ask if you are unable to find an item. Our map and list of abbreviations may also help you navigate. The end result of the project will be a consistent, understandable way of Bringing materials together, with more searchable subject headings, contents notes for many titles, fresh labels, and barcodes for collection management. This project is assisted by a grant from the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage fund.



## Minnesota Genealogical Society Upcoming Events



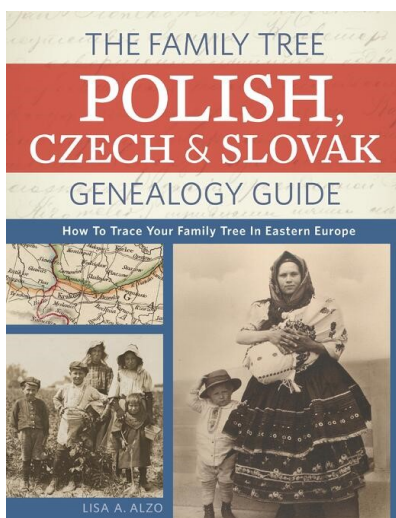
**Level One Genealogy Research Course**  
**January 9, 2022—February 20, 2022—Online**  
**Four 2 1/2 hour online class sessions**



Are you relatively new to researching your family? Or maybe your efforts have been on and off for years and you need help focusing and sorting through all the records and websites. Level One is designed for you. Participants complete assignments as they work on their own family with instructor feedback and research guidance.

Level One is a series of four progressive classes designed to teach important genealogy skills, with three optional "office hours" coaching sessions in between classes to assist students as they progress through the course.

Participants will learn best practices, basic tools and methods, including commonly used record types, helpful forms, record keeping, navigating beneficial websites, research tools and planning. By the end of the course, they will have produced identity profiles, timelines, locality guides, research plans and research results for their chosen projects. Additional details and registration at <https://mnngs.regfox.com/level-one-genealogy-research-course-2022>



### ***The Family Tree: How to Trace Your Family Tree in Eastern Europe***

The Family Tree, written by Lisa A. Alzo, is a terrific guide for Americans with Eastern European roots to learn more about their heritage. This book walks you step-by-step through the exciting and challenging journey of finding your Polish, Czech or Slovak roots.


By tracing back your ancestors with this guide, you'll be able to identify immigrant ancestors, find your family's town of origin, locate key genealogical resources, decipher foreign-language records and learn about the region's history.

## A NEW RESOURCE FOR SURNAME INFORMATION

by William R Hoffman, Polish Genealogical Society of Connecticut and the Northeast, Pathways & Passages

For thirty years now, I have been studying the origins and meanings of Polish surnames. When I first started, information on the subject from well-informed, reliable scholars was hard to come by. Of course, back then, any books and other resources from Poland were difficult to locate. Still, once I published a book in English on the subject of Polish surnames, it became clear lots of Polish Americans were interested in knowing more about their surnames. So I kept looking for sources of information, and I have been pleased to see them multiply over the years.

One of the first I learned of was the *Instytut Języka Polskiego PAN* (Polish Language Institute of the Academy of Sciences) in Kraków. At a Polish genealogical conference, I met genealogist and historian Rafal Prinke. When he learned of my interest in names, he gave me a copy of a book published by that Institute, *Nazwiska Polaków* (The Surnames of Poles) by Prof. Kazimierz Rymut (first edition published in 1991). What a gift! As the internet grew, and websites and email became more and more of a factor in research, I came to rely on that Institute, and even had the pleasure of corresponding with several of the scholars there. I often check its website, <<https://ijp.pan.pl/en/>>.



O słowniku

Biogramy autorów

Kontakt

I have long looked forward to the day when the Institute provided online access to the huge amount of information at its disposal. Recently, I was delighted to see this wish coming true. I discovered the associated site <<https://nazwiska.ijp.pan.pl>>, home of the "*Internetowy słownik nazwisk w Polsce* (ISNP)," or Internet Dictionary of Surnames in Poland (see Figure 1). All the information is in Polish, but much of it can be rendered acceptably in English with Deep-L or Google Translate.

As you see, at the upper right there are three tabs you can click: "O slowniku" (About the Dictionary); "Biogramy autorek" (Biographies of the Authors); and "Kontakt." The first option provides a great deal of information about the ISNP. For instance, the data on surname frequency and distribution is from 2014, and the ISNP has currently about 30,000 entries. While these represent only about 7.5% of all Polish surnames (those classified as very common, common, and moderately common), they are borne

by about 80% of Poles. This makes sense: I know from my work that there are literally hundreds of thousands of Polish surnames, but most of them are quite rare-not to mention that thousands that have died out over time. In a perfect world, the ISNP would include every single name ever borne by a Pole; and I imagine these scholars will work toward that goal. For now, the selection of names offered represents a practical approach toward using available resources to give maximum benefit.

The tab "Biogramy autorek" gives the names of the scholars (all women) who worked on the ISNP. They are the late Barbara Czopek-Kopciuch, Halszka Gorny, Malgorzata Magda-Czekaj, Elena Palinciuc-Dudek, Katarzyna Skowronek, and Elzbieta Supranowicz. Their names are very familiar to me, and I have great respect for their work. "Kontakt" is a tab found on the vast majority of Polish sites, and takes you to a page giving the street address and email address for those who wish to contact the Institute. It's always wise to note down these addresses on any Polish site.

The heart of the matter of course, is the section labeled *Nazwiska w Polsce*, Surnames in Poland. The heading is followed by the letters of the Polish alphabet so that you can click on one and start finding your names of interest.

But you can also go to the box labeled "Znajdz hasla," Find Entries. The drop-down menu offers you choices. You can find names *zaczynajace sie od*," beginning with; *konczace sie na*, ending with; *zawierajace*, containing; or *dokladnie*, exactly. So if you're sure of the exact spelling of the name you want, you can click on *dokladnie* and input that name in the box to the right. If you're not certain how the name begins or ends, you can use the other options to bring up all names matching the search text you input. So searching for "Janow" will bring up Janowczyk, Janowiak, Janowicz, Janowiec, Janowska, and Janowski. Or you can search for all names ending with "owski" and then wade through the 141 pages of matches that follow. (Note, the option *Pokaz 10 rekordow* lets you specify how many matches you want to display at once, 10, 25, 50, or 100). Intelligent use of these options can save you a lot of time and trouble.

Figure 1 shows an exact search for the surname "Mierzejewski," which returns only one match. Notice in the line just above the results, to the right of the word **Nazwiska**, you have two icons, representing a magnifying glass and a printer. Clicking on the magnifying glass brings up a page with details on the name you searched for. Clicking on the printer, as you would imagine, lets you print out those details.

Figure 2 shows what you get if you click on the magnifying glass for the entry "Mierzejewski." There are eleven choices with drop-down menus (or you can get a printout of all the info by clicking on the printer icon in the previous step).

*Liczba uzytnikow i ranga w Polsce* - Number of users and rank in Poland, that is, how many Poles bear that name and how it ranks in terms of frequency. The data is broken down as "Og6lna liczba," total number; "Kobiety," women; "Mezcyzni," men; and "Ranga," rank.

*Geografia nazwiska w Polsce* - The name's geography in Poland, which brings up a list breaking down the name's distribution by *wojew6dztwo*, province, *powiat*, county, and *gmina*, district, with a map showing the results in graphic form.

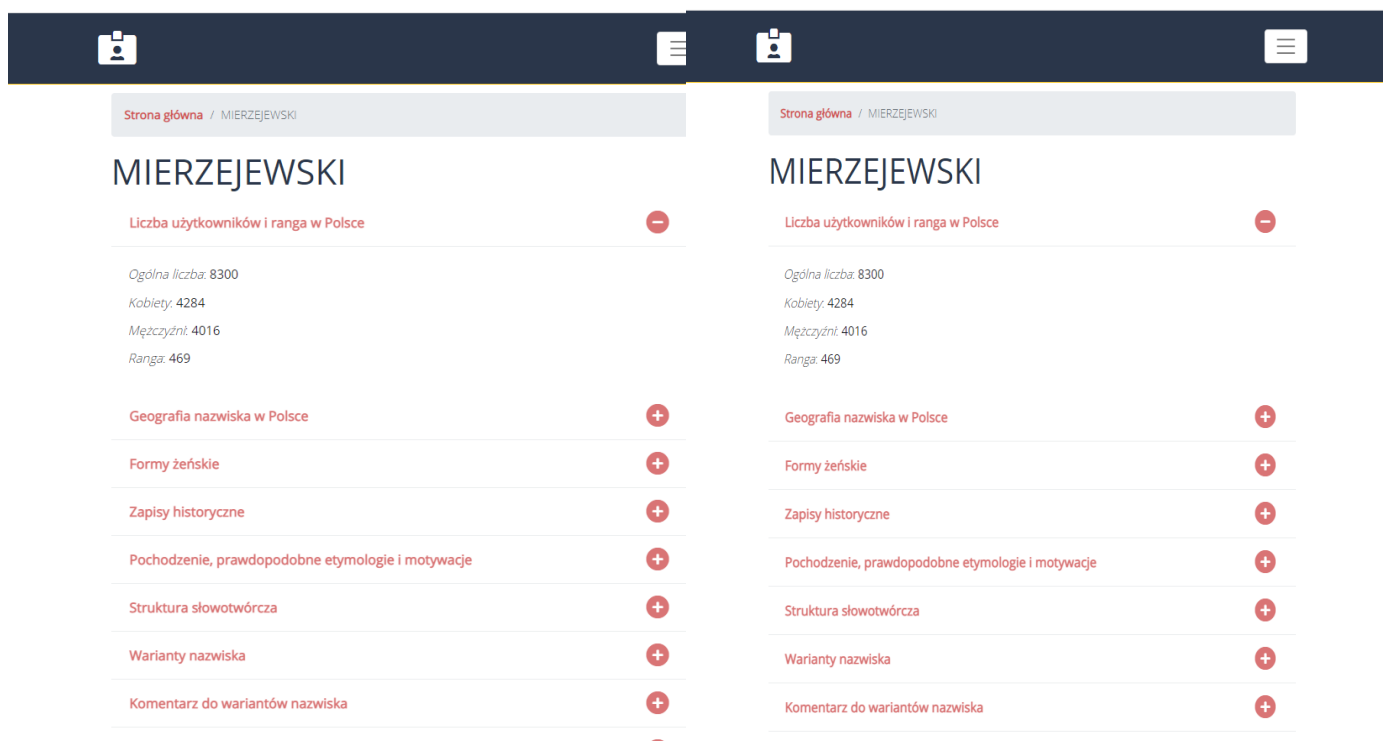


Figure 2 - The page devoted to the surname Mierzejewski

Figure 2—English format—Mierzejewski

*Formy zenskie* - Feminine forms. These include the older forms for noun-based surnames with endings -owa or ina/ -yna for married women and -ówna or -anka for unmarried women. I noticed non-standard and dialect forms are also listed in some cases. Preference is given, however, to the forms used in modern standard Polish.

*Zapisy historyczne* - Historical notes. If the surname has been found in old records studied by scholars, the text is quoted and the source provided.

*Pochodzenie, prawdopodobne etymologie i motywacje* - Origin, probable etymologies, and motivations. This is probably the item most users will want to check, as it gives fairly simple information on the likely origin of specific names.

*Struktura słowotwórcza* - Morphological structure. This will probably interest only linguists, as it breaks down exactly how the name was formed with its root and suffixes.

*Rozmieszczenie nazwiska w innych krajach*—Distribution of the name in other countries. This lists other European countries where the name appears, gives the number of bearers, and provides URLs you can click on to see where they got that data. Of the samples I checked, some included data for the United States, Great Britain, or Canada; they seemed to be the exception rather than the rule, as best I could tell.

*Informacje specjalne* - Special information. If there is no special information available for a name, this category may be skipped entirely. I noticed for Nowak, for instance, that it explains, "Outside the borders of Poland also in graphic adaptation forms Nowack, Novak, Novack."

Literatura-Literature. This is bibliographical information on sources consulted.

Other surnames may include additional categories. For instance, the details on the page for Nowak include Warianty nazwiska, Variants of the name," and the variants

listed are Nowok and Novak. There is also *Komentarz do wariant6w nazwiska*, Commentary on the variants. Noted there is that Nowok is a regional variant (Silesian), and Novak is a spelling variation. So the amount of information provided depends on what's available and what they've had time to incorporate into the database.

There are other websites that provide valuable information on Polish surnames, especially data on frequency and distribution, such as [https:// nazwiska-polskie.pl](https://nazwiska-polskie.pl) and [http://nlp.actaforte. pl:8080/Nomina/Nazwiska](http://nlp.actaforte.pl:8080/Nomina/Nazwiska). If you want more recent data on surnames, the following page gives a list of surnames for males and females from the database of the Polish government agency PESEL, with data as recent as February 2021, downloadable in formats XLSX or CSV: [https:// tinyurl. com/3c7xswk6](https://tinyurl.com/3c7xswk6).

I imagine there are many other great sites I haven't found yet. What a change from the situation in 1991, when I first started trying to find information on the origins and meanings of Polish surnames! I can't even imagine what may be available in another thirty years.



One of the main goals of the National Genealogical Society is to educate the public about family history research. In our Free Genealogy Resources section, we offer a number of different and important educational resources. Here you will find free genealogy charts, templates, and tutorials on the US Census and How to Borrow Books from the NGS Book Loan Collection.

We have organized helpful tips, articles, and recommended resources for every level of family researcher whether you are [Getting Started](#), [Going to the Next Level](#) or working at [Building Advanced Skills](#). And for those of you who are not NGS members, we offer a free sampling of beneficial articles from *NGS Magazine*, *NGS Quarterly*, and *NGS Monthly*.

## NGS's Free Genealogy Resources

<https://www.ngsgenealogy.org/free-resources/>



And after just 10 generations you then have

2048  
4096  
8192  
16384  
32768  
65536  
131072  
262144  
524288  
1048576

One million in only twenty generations!





The Polish Genealogical Society  
of Minnesota  
1385 Mendota Heights Road  
Suite #100  
Mendota Heights, MN 55120

PGSMN is located within the MGS Building

### **POLISH NIGHT AT THE LIBRARY**

Polish Night at the Library, scheduled for the 1st Saturday and 2nd Thursday monthly, will **NOT BE HELD** until Covid restrictions have been relaxed.

Members who have a Polish genealogical question, or wish to consult with a genealogist can contact Bob Kraska directly by email at [kraskb1@comcast.net](mailto:kraskb1@comcast.net)

**Please note that due to the COVID-19 concerns, the library may be closed to the public. Please check at the MNGS.org website, or call ahead to check 651-330-9312**

### **2021 MGS LIBRARY HOURS**

Wednesday 10 am—4 pm  
Thursdays, 4 pm—8 pm  
Saturday 10 am—4 pm

Please call to confirm the library will be open

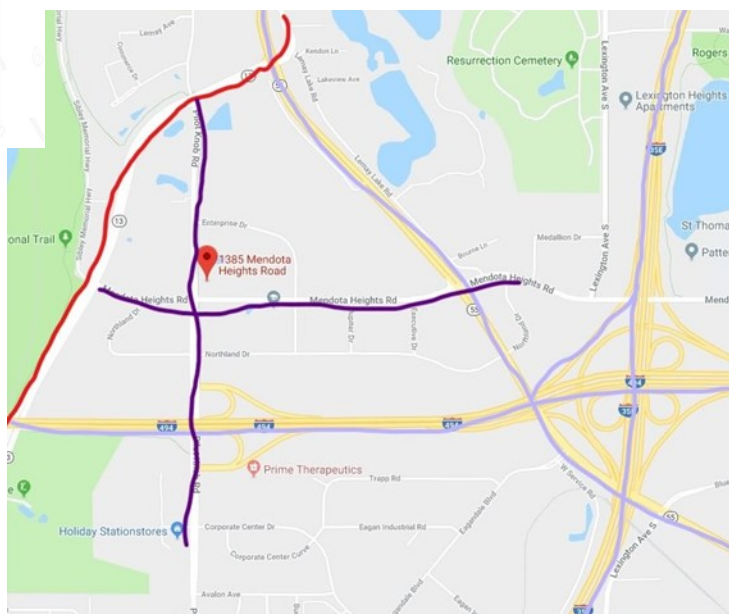
**The library is closed if volunteers are not available to assist researchers .**

**CLOSED in 2021-2022 on the following dates:**

**Saturday, December 25**  
**Sunday, January 1, 2022**  
**Saturday, October 8, 2022**  
**Thursday, November 24, 2022**  
**Saturday, December 24, 2022**

**PASS IT ALONG** - Do you know someone who has an interest in Polish Genealogy - give them this membership flyer. Thank you

[www.pgsmn.org](http://www.pgsmn.org)



### **DRIVING DIRECTIONS**

**Highway 55 (south)** - cross Mendota bridge eastbound - keep right onto MN 55 East - turn right on MN 13 (south) - turn left on Pilot Knob Road - take left on Mendota Heights Road to first driveway on left. From west or east on 494: Take 494 to Pilot Knob Road - go north - take right on Mendota Heights Road, take left into first driveway on left. From 35E - Take 35E to Pilot Knob Road - go west on Pilot Knob towards Mendota Heights Road. Address on northside of Mendota Heights Road, just prior to Pilot Knob. **Parking is directly in front of building.**



## Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota

*A Branch of the Minnesota Genealogical Society*

1385 Mendota Heights Road, Suite 100

Mendota Heights, MN 55120

www.pgsmn.org

### Membership Application

Membership cost is \$20 for one year, ending December 31. Membership includes a subscription to the PGS-MN newsletter and free access to the Minnesota Genealogical Society William J. Hoffman Library and Research Center in Mendota Heights.

***Thank you for helping to preserve and foster interest in Polish heritage!***

_____ New Member \$20 _____ Renewing \$20 _____ Donation	Make check payable to: <b>Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota</b>  Mail form and check to: PGS-MN Membership c/o Gary Wolf, Treasurer P.O. Box 291 Amery, WI 54001-0291
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\_\_\_\_\_  
Name Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (with area code) Email (Will be used to send program notifications and renewal reminders.)

PGS-MN endeavors to connect individuals researching their family roots. If information is included in the chart below, it will be published, along with your name and email, so other researchers can contact you. Adding information in the chart below indicates your acceptance of this release of information through both digital and paper formats by the Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota.

Polish Surname(s) Currently Being Researched	Location in Poland Where Surname Originated	U.S. Location Where Immigrant Settled

## Szukam cię — I'm looking for you



**Welcome to new members.** Thank you for being an important part of the Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota. We are excited that you have joined the Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota. We strive to provide you with inspiration and knowledge that will help you on your quest in discovering your family.

**Atchley, Timothy**, tatchley1960@live.com, Researching: **MILCZAREK, SIEDLECKI**

**Christopherson, Rebecca**, abchristopherson5@gmail.com, Researching: **SOBIECH SCHNEIDER** of Opole settled in Sobieski, MN; **OSOWSKI BREZA** of Kashubia settled in Winona, MN.

**Foss, Nicole**, fossnicolej@gmail.com. Researching: **LALOWSKI** of Kashubia Gdynia-Puck settled in Chicago, IL; **MROZEWSKI** of Kashubia Gdynia-Puck settled in Chicago, IL.

**Marks, Sandra**, trainbabe53@gmail.com. Researching: **MARKOWSKY** of Szendgun-ta Russian Poland settled in Superior, Douglas, WI; **SMOLENSKI; ZUMSKA; PIETZTYK** of Bouguszy Russian Poland settled in Superior, WI.

**Novkovic, Phyllis Siaweleski**, phylnov@gmail.com, Researching: **SIaweleski; ZUCHOWSKI; SZaweleski**.

**Okonek, Lois Marie**, famokcr@yahoo.com, Researching: **OKONEK**



*PLEASE NOTE: Existing member's Missing Branches information will longer be printed in the newsletter. This was done to reduce printing and mailing costs. In the future Missing Branches for all members will be available in the Members Only section of the [www.pgsmn.org](http://www.pgsmn.org) website. And, of course, Missing Branches information can be found in past newsletters. New members will continue to be published in one edition of the newsletter.*



Eastern European Genealogy Research

January 27 11:00 PST / 1:00 pm CST

Success in eastern European genealogical research starts with a good foundation. It is also incumbent upon currently identifying the ancestral village. This overview presentation will touch on genealogy basics and suggest useful resources. It will show sample records and provide tips for confirming the village name.

Our presenter for this online program is Chris Bukoski. Chris is the Program Chair and a longstanding member of the East European Genealogy Society. Her experience includes a successful research trip to Ukraine.

**Additional information and registration process at [familyhistory@surrey.ca](mailto:familyhistory@surrey.ca)**



**Polish Genealogy Society  
of Minnesota**

*A branch of the MN Genealogical Society*  
**1385 Mendota Heights Road #100**  
**Mendota Heights, Mn 55120-1367**

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*Wesołych Świąt*

## **Membership Renewal**

**Please check your mailing label for expiration date, is it time to renew? Please use the Membership Application form inserted in this newsletter or print form**

**Address/email changes or membership questions? Contact Connie Waldherr at [waldh001@umn.edu](mailto:waldh001@umn.edu)**

The PGSMN Newsletter is published quarterly in Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. Newsletter subscription is included with membership.

Submitting items for publication is welcomed and highly encouraged. We require feature-length articles to be submitted exclusively to PGSMN. Mail articles, letters, book reviews, news items to the PGSMN Editor

**Contact Us for more information about our services and meetings**

**Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota**  
**1385 Mendota Heights Road #100**  
**Mendota Heights, MN 55120-1367**  
**651-330-9312**

**Visit us on the web at**  
**[www.pgsmn.org](http://www.pgsmn.org)**