



WHITE EAGLE

JOURNAL OF THE POLISH NOBILITY ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION



Spring/Summer 2011 Issue

HOW POLISH SURNAMES DEVELOPED

By Robert Strybel

Centuries ago, as the population of old, rural Poland increased, more and more villagers began sharing such baptismal names as Józef, Jan, Stanisław, Tomasz, Władysław, Adam, Andrzej, Kazimierz, Mieczysław and Michał. For the female half of the population they included Anna, Maria, Jadwiga, Stanisława, Halina, Wanda, Krystyna, Agnieszka, Barbara and Katarzyna. Nicknames were often needed to tell them apart in a given locality.

These were largely based upon:

1. Occupation: Adam Kowal=Adam the blacksmith; Bednarz=the cooper; Krawiec=tailor; Pastuch=shepherd, cowherd; Cieśla=carpenter; Kołodziej=wheelwright; Skrzypek=fiddler; Woźnica=coachman, carter; Piekarz=baker; Kucharz=cook; Piekarz=baker; Stolarz=cabinet-maker; Kościelny=sexton, etc.



2. Father's occupation/first name (patronym): Adam Kowalski or Kowalczyk=Adam the blacksmith's son; Bednarski or Bednarczyk=the cooper's boy; Krawczyk=the tailor's son/helper; Adam Pastusiak=the shepherd's/cowherd's kid; Woźniak=the court crier's or coachman's son; Jasiak, Janik, Janowicz, Jasiewicz, etc.=John's boy; Bartosik=son of Bartosz; Stasiak=son of Staś. The most common patronymic endings include: -ak, -czak, -czyk, -wicz, -ski, -icz, -ic, -ycz, -yc, -ik, -yk and (in the east) also -uk and -czuk. Occupational patronymics referred to both sons and helpers (e.g. Piekarczyk=baker's son or apprentice).

3. First name: A small group of surnames are identical to first names (eg Adam, Bogdan, Janusz, Marek, Zygmunt) or their diminutives (Łukaszek, Janeczek, Jurek, Wojtek, Staszek). They include direct foreign borrowings (Iwan, Wiktor, Urban) or Polonized ones (Fryderych, Ignac, Augustyn) and often served as patronymic nicknames, especially when the father was the only one in a given place with that first name.

4. Characteristics: Appearance, prominent body part, quirk, trait, habit, etc.: Adam Paluch=big-fingered Adam; Paluszek=little-fingered; Gaduła=blabbermouth; Garbaty=humpbacked; Gruby=fat; Chudy=thin; Gwizdała=whistler; Biegała=runner; Głowacki=big-headed; Nosal=big-nosed; Kolano=knee; Oczko=little-eyed; Ząbek=tooth, Posłuszny=obedient; Mały=little; Prędkie=swift; Kulawy=limpy; Miziołek/Niziołek = midget; Staruch =oldtimer, Miły=nice; Nowak=newcomer; Krzywy=crooked, twisted; Ciemięga=oaf.

5. Common objects & concepts: Peasants in particular were often named after ordinary objects, animals, crops, foods, etc.: Motyka=hoe; Łopata=spade; Świder=drill; Baran=ram, male sheep; Koza=goat; Lis=fox; Jastrząb=hawk; Wróbel=sparrow; Sikora=titmouse; Maślanka=buttermilk; Żyto=rye; Słoma=straw; Siano=hay; Mleczko=milk; Zima=winter; Lato=summer; Pogoda=fair weather; Lipiec=July; Piątek=Friday.

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HUSARIA TOUR TO POLAND

A Tour of Culture, Faith and History.

September 13 - 25, 2011, 12 days

Land tour: \$2,360 per person

Single room supplement: \$590. Airfare not included¹

Tour escort: Fryk Jadaszewski

TOUR PROGRAM

Sep. 13/Tue - USA/WARSAW. This evening depart via transatlantic flight for the Polish capital with movies and meals on board.

Sep. 14/Wed - WARSAW. Upon arrival at the Chopin Airport, meet your guide and settle-in at the hotel situated in the heart of the city. Time to unpack and change money. In the evening depart for a welcome dinner in a local restaurant. En route catch a first glimpse of Warsaw by night. (D)

Sep. 15/Thu - WARSAW. After breakfast, sight-seeing tour of the city will introduce you to the major sites of the Poland's capital, largely rebuilt with great reverence after almost total destruction of WW II. We start at the Old Town with its colorful Market Square, St. John's Cathedral and magnificent Royal Castle, residence of last Polish kings with its magnificent rooms. After lunch visit the Polish Army Museum for an introduction to Polish history and an Uprising Museum dedicated to the horrific attempt of 1944 to liberate Warsaw from the Nazi occupation. (B, L)

Sep. 16/Fri - WARSAW/Sierpc/Golub/TORUN. After buffet breakfast depart for Northern Poland. En route stop at the outdoor Ethnographic Village Museum in the Mazovian countryside. Continue to Golub Castle and then to the historic city of Torun on the Vistula River. After settling in at our hotel, we can walk to the old town to catch a glimpse of its Gothic monuments dating back to the 13th century. (B, L)

Sep. 17/Sat - TORUN/Biskupin/Gnieszno/POZNAN. This morning see Torun's most important landmarks: the impressive Town Hall, the 'Leaning Tower', St. John Church, the Copernicus House where Polish astronomer N. Copernicus was born in 1473. Then off to Biskupin Archeological Museum, a reconstructed Slavic wooden fortress-village and museum from 2,700 years ago. In Gnieszno, cradle of the Polish Nation, visit the Gnieszno Cathedral founded by first ruler of Poland Mieszko I who brought Christianity to Poland in 966. Overnight in Poznan. (B, L)

Sep. 18/Sun-POZNAN/Lichen/CZESTOCHOWA. Start the day with a short city tour of Poznan, which includes its Renaissance Town Hall and the historic Gnieszno Cathedral with tombs of first Polish kings of Piast Dynasty. Depart for pilgrimage center of Lichen and visit the magnificent Basilica, 2nd largest church in the world. Overnight in Czestochowa, Poland's national shrine. In the evening you may walk to the shrine for veiling of the miraculous icon. (B, D)

Sep. 19/Mon - CZESTOCHOWA/Tychy/Wadowice/KRAKOW. After breakfast we discover the treasures of the Jasna Gora Monastery with Pauline Father. On the way to Krakow we stop in Tychy to tour the famous Tyskie beer brewery and Wadowice, birthplace of Pope John Paul II (the Great). Via a scenic route of the 'Eagle's Nests' Castle ruins we reach Krakow and check-in at the hotel conveniently situated in the Old Town. (B, L)

Sep. 20/Tue - KRAKOW. Poland's medieval capital and one of Europe's most beautiful and well preserved historic cities escaped destruction of WWII. On a morning city tour we visit the Wawel Castle - Poland's royal complex with fortress castle and cathedral. Most of Poland's kings and heroes are buried in the Wawel Coronation Cathedral. Walking tour of the old town includes St. Mary's Basilica, one of Europe's most beautiful and historic churches. Old Town square and courtyard of the Jagiellonian University founded in the 14th century. Balance of day is free to enjoy at leisure. An optional excursion to Wieliczka salt mine and its underground world will be offered. (B, D)

Sep. 21/Wed - KRAKOW - Lagiewniki. This morning visit The Sanctuary of Divine Mercy in Lagiewniki. The rest of the day is free to spend in the Old Town with its great entertainment, sidewalk cafes, galleries and shopping. An optional excursion will be offered to Auschwitz, former Nazi concentration camp, now a martyrdom museum. (B, D)

Sep. 22/Thu-KRAKOW/ZAKOPANE. This morning depart for the mountain resort of Zakopane, hidden in the majestic Tatra Mountains. Tour the town and climb the Gubalowka Mountain. You may hike in the Morskie Oko Lake in your free time. Evening's dinner is in mountaineer's cottage with folk music and local specialties. (B, D)

Sep. 23/Fri - ZAKOPANE/Dunajec/NIEPOLOMICE. After breakfast, depart for a scenic rail ride through the Dunajec Gorge on the Slovak border. After lunch in a local restaurant, continue for overnight in Niepolomice in the Royal Hunting Castle from the 14th century. (B, L)

Sep. 24/Sat - NIEPOLOMICE. Today, attend a historic 'Timeline' event on the castle's grounds. This full day event includes re-enactments, craft fair, fashion show and other attractions. Farewell dinner in castle restaurant. (B, D)

Sep. 25/Sun - NIEPOLOMICE/KRAKOW. Early morning depart for the airport and board your flight bound for home. (B)

POLISH SURNAMES *(continued)*

6. Place of origin (toponym): Birthplace, place of residence or (in the case of nobility) estate or crest name: Adam Zarzeczny = from across the river (topographic) or from the village of Zarzecze (toponymic nickname); Zaleski = from the other side of the forest or hailing from the village of Zalesie. Most Polish surnames ending in -owski or -ewski were derived from localities ending in -ów, -owo, -owa, -ew or -ewo (e.g. Dąbrowa, Chmielewo, Piotrów and Wojciechowo). Topo-patronymic nicknames were derived from the father's place-related nickname: father nicknamed Staś (native of Stasin); son patronymically called Stasiak.

7. Country, region, religion: Adam Niemiec=Adam the German; Rusin, Rusek=Ruthenian; Litwin=Lithuanian; Czech=Czech; Węgier=Hungarian; Moskal=Muscovite; Prus=Prussian; Żydek=Jew; Szot= Scot; Szwed=Swede; Duńczyk=Dane; Cygan=Gypsy; Tatar=Tartar; Luter, Luterski=Lutheran; Kalwin=Calvinist; Nawrot, Nawrocki, Noworycki=convert; Dobrowolski=voluntary convert.. Regional names include: Ślązak (Silesian), Mazur (Mazurian), Kaszuba (Kashubian), Góral (highlander), Podolak (from Podole), etc.

8. Obscure, mutilated: The origin of some Polish surnames is obscure. Over the centuries of foreign invasions and occupations, foreign names often got Polonized, and Polish ones – de-Polonized. Polish surnames got misspelled by semi-literate priests and foreign officials during the partitions (1772-1918), especially Russians mistransliterating them into Cyrillic. At times they were additionally mispronounced, shortened, respelled or otherwise altered (“Anglo-mangled”) in the New World.

POLISH NOBILITY ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION, INC.

Website: PNA.US;
email VillaAnneslie@verizon.net
mail: 529 Dunkirk Rd., Balto., Md 21212

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The White Eagle is the official semi-annual Journal of the Polish Nobility Association Foundation, Inc. All material submitted for publication is subject to editing of content, size, photos etc. Sent to over 30 countries for reference material.



HELPFUL CONTACTS FOR POLONIAN ROOT TRACERS

(Updated February 2011)

Ceil Jensen's *Sto Lat: A Modern Guide to Polish Genealogy* is an absolute "must" for PolAm family researchers. For more information or to order, contact the author: cjensen@mipolonia.net

The book is also available at: Polish Art Center, 9539 Jos. Campau, Hamtramck, MI 48212; toll-free: 1-888-619-9771; www.polishartcenter.com; raymond@polartcenter.com

Polish Genealogical Society of America

This and the genealogical groups below can be your gateway to PolAm ancestral exploration.

984 North Milwaukee Avenue

Chicago, IL 60622

(773) 384-3352 (c/o Polish Museum of America)

PGSAmerica@aol.com; www.pgsa.org

Polish Roots: Information includes immigration, ship manifests, maps, US Census, PNA Lodges, Polonian parishes, Haller's Army, Galician Records and more.

2643 W. 51st Street, Chicago, IL 60632-1559 www.polishroots.com; DSzumowski@aol.com

Polish Genealogical Society of California

PO Box 713, Midway City, CA 92655-0713

JaniceLipinski@verizon.net

www.pgscal.org

Polish Genealogical Society of Massachusetts

PO Box 381, Northampton, MA 01061-0381

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mapgsm/>

Polish & East European Genealogical Resources

Federation of East European Family History Societies

<http://www.feefhs.org/>

Polish Genealogical Society of Michigan

c/o Burton Historical Collection

Detroit Public Library

5201 Woodward Avenue

Detroit, MI 48202-4007

info@pgsm.org; www.pgsm.org

Family History Center

The Mormons of Salt Lake City have a huge volume of publicly accessible immigrant records on file.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

35 North West Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150

www.familysearch.org

Polish Genealogical Society of NY State

12645 Strykersville

East Aurora, NY 14025-9511

www.pgsnys.org

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HELPFUL CONTACTS *(continued)*

Polish Genealog. Society of Connecticut & the Northeast
8 Lyle Road
New Britain, CT 06053-2104
www.pgstne.org

Kashubian Association of North America
PO Box 27732
Minneapolis, MN 55427-0732
kaofna@yahoo.com; <http://www.ka-na.org>

Polish Genealogical. Society of Greater Cleveland
PO Box 609117
Cleveland, OH 44109-0117
cspikowski@oh.rr.com; www.freewebs.com/pgsgc

Polish Genealogical Society of Texas
329 Harbor Circle
Montgomery, TX 77356-4739
Webmaster@pgst.org
<http://www.pgst.org/>

Toledo Polish Genealogy Society
417 E. Pearl St, Toledo, OH 43608
www.geocities.com/tpgs02

Polish Church and Civil Record Holdings
<http://www.feefhs.org/links/Poland/kmsc/kmsc-ab.html>

PIAST Genealogical Research Centre
Warsaw's oldest genealogical firm accepts family-research assignments (records, family trees, coats of arms) and related research.
Ośrodek Badań Genealogicznych PIAST
Dr Andrzej Sikorski, Director
Skrytka Poczтовая 9, 00-957 Warsaw 36, Poland
phone: (+48 22) 646-5526
e-mail: obgpiast@wp.pl
website: www.piastr.waw.pl

Institute of Genealogy
Researching family records, histories, outstanding ancestors; locating living relatives; interviews, photo documentation, family trees, coats of arms and related services all over the territory of pre-partition Poland.
Andrzej Zygmunt Rola-Stężycki, Director
Aleja Niepodległości 3, 05-600 Grójec, Poland
Office tel/fax: (+48 48) 664-1717, (+48 48) 664-4415
instytut@instytut-genealogii.com.pl
www.instytut-genealogii.com

“GETTING POL-AMS HOOKED ON THEIR HERITAGE” POLONIA’S “MAN IN WARSAW”

Polonia’s long-standing Warsaw correspondent Robert Strybel has spent most of his adult life keeping the Polish-American community informed of current events in Poland and generating interest in all facets of its cultural heritage. At intervals, he has also taught Polish-related subjects in the US at the college, high school and adult-education levels in addition to authoring three books.

Polonia’s “Man in Warsaw” was born in Detroit’s once predominantly Polish enclave-suburb of Hamtramck. He spent a good deal of his childhood with his four Polish-born grandparents, learning the language, lore and traditions of his Old World ancestors. Strybel studied journalism and foreign languages (German, French and Spanish) at Central Michigan University and then went on to get a Bachelor’s Degree in German and French and a Master’s Degree in Polish Studies from the University of Wisconsin. His first teaching job was that of Polish language instructor and history lecturer at St. Mary’s College and Saints Cyril and Methodius Seminary of Polonia’s Orchard Lake Schools near Detroit.

Strybel later received a Kościuszko Foundation scholarship to pursue doctoral studies in Polish literature at Warsaw University, but—as he tells it—“instead of me getting a PhD, a pretty Warsaw coed got an MRS degree.” After he had sent a few articles of the “hometown boy tells about Poland today” variety to the Hamtramck weekly Citizen, other Pol-Am papers asked if they could reprint them. Back then, the notion of a young Polish American venturing behind the “iron curtain” was still quite a novelty.

In the 1970s, Strybel became the first accredited Polish-American Warsaw correspondent, and over the years his articles have appeared in more than three dozen publications, most of which are no longer published. Poland’s longest-serving American correspondent, he has reported on every major development, including food-price riots in the 1970s, the rise and fall of Solidarity (1980-81), successive papal visits, the collapse of communism (1989) and Poland’s admission to NATO (1999) and the European Union (2004). He also covered the death (2005) and beatification (2011) of Pope John Paul II as well as the country’s worst peacetime tragedy disaster – the 2010 plane crash in Smolensk, Russia that killed President and Mrs Lech Kaczyński and 94 other top-level political and military figures. In 1980, he began working at the Warsaw Bureau of Reuters News Agency. He has also done translations and tutored English.

Asked about his mission in life, Strybel often replies that its main purpose was “to get fellow Polish Americans hooked on their heritage”. He has tried to achieve that goal by promoting pride in our Polish heritage, its history, traditions, foods, family research, penpals and travel to Poland. Long before the advent of the Internet, his “Ask Our Man in Poland” column enabled readers to submit questions on a wide range of Polish and Polonian topics and receive answers in print or at least get pointed in the right direction.

In the late 1980s, Rob teamed up with his Polish-born wife Majka (Maria), to write “Polish Heritage Cookery”, said to be the biggest Polish cookbook ever published in English. He later produced the follow-up “Polish Holiday Cookery” featuring Polish delicacies for special occasions. Both were published by Hippocrene Books of New York. He also wrote “Christmas the Polish Way”, issued by Straż Publishers of Scranton. Strybel married Warsaw University coed Maria (Majka) Derkacz, a linguist and culinary expert who has authored and translated numerous cookbooks. Like his father, the Strybels’ only son Lesław (born in 1972) was raised bilingually and biculturally. He got his Master’s degree in American Studies at Warsaw University under a cooperative arrangement with Indiana University and has worked as an English teacher and musician. He has been the heart and soul of the rock groups Partia and later Komety (www.komety.com) which he set up in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

ONA GRAND DUCHESS OF LITHUANIA “WHO WAS THE WOMAN BEHIND THE GREATEST AND BEST KNOWN RULER OF LITHUANIA?”

BY ALVYDAS (AL) KARAA

Without doubt, the most prominent personality of the 14th-15th centuries Lithuania is Vytautas the Great. He stands as the most astute and powerful ruler, who suppressed enemies and negotiated alliances beyond any his immediate predecessors or followers could manage, and led his nation to become the largest country in Europe.

We can understand his motivation and qualifications to rule in his father's footsteps, but to gain some appreciation of the character of the man we must look to the critical personal influences in his life.

First, of course, is family. His father Kęstutis was already the respected ruler and Grand Duke of Lithuania when Vytautas was born. No doubt his early education in the exalted atmosphere of a royal court and fatherly influence encouraged the proper attitude toward rule which he was to inherit. He was educated partly by foreigners (one of whom may have been a Teutonic Order knight) which, among other things, gave him command of languages later useful in dealings with friend and foe alike. If his sense of leadership was inherited and skill of arms conveyed by nature and practice, then his spiritual strength came from his mother Biruté.

This legendary person is venerated as highly as her son and shares equal fame with Kęstutis. In view of her husband's personal strength, hers must have been of a very high spiritual standard to sustain her in her role alongside him whether she was a pagan seer, virtual priestess, or not. History does not often show Biruté in official capacity as co-ruler with Kęstutis. She did not involve herself actively in state politics. We see her as a spiritual leader of the people, their inspiration and the guardian of their inner peace. But historians are hard pressed to separate the legend from the real person. It hardly matters whether she was high born or a commoner, a seer, or keeper of the eternal flame. 'What is important is her gift to Lithuania - the national hero that was her son, Vytautas. Whatever her heritage, her strength of character was meaningful her son's rise to power and renown, however early in his childhood it began.

But Biruté was certainly not the only woman whose influence helped mold her son's character or impact his person later in life, a life filled with tragedy, as is the entire history of Lithuania. The year 1382 perhaps saw its deepest manifestation. Brother against brother stood in arms at the castle of Trakai to decide which, Kęstutis or his nephew Jogaila (before he became the Lithuanian King of Poland), deserved the Grand Duchy. This internal feud weakened and endangered the state. Teutonic Order's designs of conquest were at Lithuania's borders.

Jogaila knew he could not afford further opposition and discord after his victory. He took immediate and ruthless steps to eliminate it. He knew and feared Vytautas' political acumen, strong family support, and ability of command. It was imperative for Jogaila to stifle any possibility of opposition from him in the future. Prussian chronicles declared Kęstutis having been strangled and Biruté murdered by drowning. Vytautas himself was imprisoned in Kréva (Krewo in present-day Belarus) awaiting his fate which could only be a life sentence or death.

His gate to freedom was opened by a woman whose influence on his person was as important as his mother's. His wife Ona's contribution, quite unlike his mother's, was a far reaching cooperation with his foreign policies as well as domestic politics. She was to become an asset to her husband's rule in many ways.

Vytautas was held in Kréva Castle with the limited comforts often extended as a point of honor to imprisoned

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HELPFUL CONTACTS *(continued)*

PolGenResearch genealogical-research firm

Researching family, military, land, school, census, etc. records; homestead/cemetery photography in and around Poland; translation; genealogy trips in Poland for visiting PolAm root-seekers.

Michał J. Marciniak, Gen. Manager (fluent English)

ul. Broniewskiego 47 m.8, 01-716 Warsaw, Poland

cell: (+48) 507 030 334; office@polgenresearch.com

www.polgenresearch.com

Experienced genealogical researcher:

Archival research, translation of documents & letters, photography (family members, homesteads, graves); serves root-seekers as an interpreter, guide and driver during their visits to Poland.

Iwona Dakiniewicz (born 1957, ul. Kilińskiego 112 m.3

90-013 Łódź, Poland; cellphone: (+48) 607-072-797

genealogy@pro.onet.pl; <http://www.ipgs.us/iwona/iwona.html>

Professional genealogical research

Historian searches archives, provides facsimiles of documents, photos (families, homesteads, graves), etc.:

Emil Krasnodębski, ul. Powstańców 26E m.4

05-091 Ząbki, Poland; cellphone: (+48) 506-152-129

polishgenealogy@rubikon.pl; www.polishgenealogy.com.pl

Cyndi's List of Polish Genealogical Sites

Extensive listing of Polish genealogy, history & culture sites: archives, libraries, museums, records, obits, mailing lists, newsgroups, publications, maps, software & other resources facilitating ancestral exploration: www.cyndislist.com/poland.htm

Online Polish family-history service: Norman Pieniążek and associates conduct family research all over Poland (also Ukraine, Belarus & Lithuania), help obtain family records and documents;

Norman@PolishExpress.com; www.polishexpress.com

Polish/European locality-searching site

Contains listings of Polish localities and detailed maps of Poland, former Polish territory now in Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania and other Central and East European countries.)

www.jewishgen.org/ShtetlSeeker/loctown.htm

Professional translator, specializing in Polish genealogy (including old-style script and microfilms):

Adela Bąk, PO Box 249; Chambers, AZ 86502 <http://poltranslator.friendpages.com>

Central State Archives Authority

Provides addresses of regional archives across Poland.

(Located across from Old Documents Archives below) Naczelna Dyrekcja Archiwów Państwowych

ul. Długa 6, 00-950 Warsaw, Poland

phone: (+48 22) 564-4655

www.archiwa.gov.pl

ndap@archives.gpv.pl

HELPFUL CONTACTS *(continued)*

Translation of family correspondence & documents. from Polish, Russian, German & Latin: Andrew Gołębiowski, 109 Rosemead Lane, Cheektowaga, NY 14227
phone: (716) 892-5975; andywbuffalo@yahoo.com

Polish Red Cross Tracing Service

Traces WWII victims living & dead free of charge.

Biuro Poszukiwań Polski Czerwony Krzyż

ul. Mokotowska 14; 00-950 Warsaw, Poland

phone: (+4822) 326-1264; fax: (+4822) 628-4348 www.pck.org.pl/poszukiwania/;

tracing.service@pck.org.pl

Old Documents Archives

Genealogical research unit indicates whether information is available and estimates research cost:

Archiwum Akt Dawnych

ul. Długa 7, 00-950 Warsaw, Poland

phone: (+48 22) 831-5491>93 wewnętrzny (ext.) 429

sekretariat@agad.gov.pl; www.archiwa.gov.pl

Tracking down church/parish records

Poland's Roman Catholic Church website (www.opoka.org.pl) may help track down diocesan archives, museums, libraries, organizations and individual parishes around the country. Polish locality and general data base. This helpful site locates Polish localities, contains zip codes, area codes, train schedules, weight, measure & temperature conversions, namedays, etc.

<http://bazy.hoga.pl/kody.asp>

Wydział Udostępniania Informacji (Info Access Dept)

ul. Domaniewska 36/38, 02-672 Warsaw, Poland

phone: (+48 22) 601-1839; official government office has addresses of all Poles now living in Poland or who have died since 1990; addresses provided upon written request with the consent of the sought-after party.

Tracing long-lost relations Poland's best-known private detective agency locates and/or checks up on relatives and others in Poland, abroad:

ulica Biała 4, 00-895 Warsaw, Poland

phone: (+48 22) 654-0061; biuro@rutkowskidektyw.pl.

www.rutkowskidektyw.pl

Other Internet sites of interest to Polish root-seekers:

- www.rootsweb.com/~polwgv/
- <http://www.jewishgen.org/>
- www.infobel.com/teldir/
- <http://polishproject.hypermart.net>
- www.genealogyunlimited.com
- www.hamburg.de/LinkToYourRoots/english/welcome.htm

Rafał's Surname List

This site, originated by Rafał Prinke, contains a listing of Polish surnames and the e-mail address of those researching them. If your surname is among them, this can save you a lot of preliminary legwork, because the surname researcher may be willing to share what he/she has already turned up.

www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~polwgv/rafal/surname.html

HELPFUL CONTACTS *(continued)*

Tracing Soviet victims

This foundation researches and documents the fate of Poles victimized by the Soviet authorities in WWII:

Fundacja Ośrodka KARTA

ul. Narbutta 29, 02-536 Warsaw, Poland

phone: (+48 22) 848-0712, fax: 646-6511

indeks@karta.org.pl

Tracing Nazi victims

This foundation documents and assists victims of Nazi atrocities and their families:

Fundacja Polsko-Niemieckie Pojednanie

ul. Krucza 36, 00-921 Warsaw, Poland; phone:

(+48 22) 695-9941

www.fpnpl.pl; informacja@fpnp.pl

Polish Nobility Association Foundation

Promotes interest in Polish genealogy, heraldry and general ancestral research. Postal address:

Villa Anneslie, 529 Dunkirk Road

Anneslie, MD 21212; www.pnaf.us

Polish family coats of arms may be viewed at: www.republika.pl/akromer/armorial_pocz.html

<http://www.answers.com/topic/list-of-polish-nobility-coats-of-arms-images>; www.herby.com.pl/herby

<http://www.clenodium.eu/pl/herbarze/Polish-armorial.html>

ONA GRAND DUCHESS OF LITHUANIA *(continued)*

royalty. It is not known if Vytautas had parole from his cousin Jogaila on the promise not to attempt an escape, but some leniency in his captivity is evident in most accounts. Although his wife Ona was not a co-prisoner with him, she was permitted frequent stays in the castle. Needless to say, her movements were restricted and they were both held under heavy guard. Nevertheless, she contrived to arrange his escape.

There is some disagreement among historians as to how, exactly, he escaped. One of the oldest Lithuanian annals claims Ona convinced one of her maid servants to change clothes with her husband, whereupon the maid stayed in the castle while he walked out with his wife. If so, who ever this woman was, she deserves admiration for her courage and loyalty to her masters. But there are several other versions involving more than one woman servant.

The Marlburg Chronicle claims Vytautas changed clothes with his wife and walked out leaving her in his place. Another claim is that he was lowered out the castle window in a wicker basket. No one knows which, if any, of these claims is true. What is important is that Ona was instrumental in his escape. This claim never varies no matter the method of that escape or the source of this information.

There is no mention, however, of her own escape if she did, in fact, change places with her husband. Evidence points to Ona having suffered penalty for her part in his escape. Some records point to her having been subjected to a public whipping in the city square of Vilnius on the direct order from Jogaila as punishment for her actions.

NEWS AND NOTES FROM THE CHAIRMAN

DR. ROGER CHYLINSKI-POLUBINSKI

We would like to thank the following publications who can be contacted on the web for allowing us to reproduce articles or edited portions of articles from their publications.

The International Monarchist League, UK (www.monarchyinternational.net),
Lithuanian Heritage (editor@LithuanianHeritage.com), *Polish American Journal* (www.polamjournal.com)

THE RUSSIAN NOBILITY ASSOCIATION IN AMERICA: Dr. Cyril E. Geacintov, President sponsors an annual Russian Spring Ball At the Pierre Hotel, New York City each Spring. It is in the old tradition of Imperial Russia with recommended attire for ladies, Long Ball Gowns and gentlemen White or Black Tie. This years Ball was under the royal patronage of H.R.H. Prince Michael of Yugoslavia. Contact: Princess Elizabeth Galitzine, 20 Flitt Street, West Nyack, NY 10994. Also see Russian Nobility Association in America on the web for history and description of goals of the Association.



TRAGEDY AGAIN STRIKES THE IRANIAN ROYAL FAMILY: Empress Shabanu Farah Pahlavi, former Empress of Iran, has been dealt a terrible blow. Her youngest son, Prince Ali Reza passed away, aged only 44 at his home in Boston. The cause may have been related to his struggle with depression. In June 2001, Princess Leila, youngest of the four children of the late Shah and Farah Pahlavi – in the West still better known as Farah Diba – took her life at age 31.

HEAD OF GERMAN IMPERIAL DYNASTY TO MARRY – TO A PRINCESS OF SUITABLE RANK: Prince Georg Friedrich of Prussia, great-great-grandson of Kaiser Wilhelm II, and Head of the Royal House of Prussia is to marry later this year. His bride will be Princess Sophie of Ysenburg, daughter of Alexander, the Prince of Ysenburg-Birstein.

ROYAL BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS: Princess Ingrid Alexandra of Norway turned seven years old, King Juan Carlos marks his 73rd Birthday, Queen Beatrix Turns 73, becoming the oldest serving Dutch Monarch.

NEW PUBLICATION OF HERBARZ POLSKI FROM: POLART (Polandbymail.com or 1-800 278 9393) The PNAF ordered a copy of this new and expanded publication and would recommend it for the extensive display of clan and personal Coat of Arms displayed in full color as well and the family surname index identify for some families the year of ennoblement/registration of the arms.

PNAF FOUNDATION: in the upcoming months there will be various discussions related to the following items:

Titles Registration: In the past the Journal has printed individuals who have sent information for publication identifying themselves with titles. The PNAF has been criticized for promulgating unsubstantiated titles. The format will be developed to show the verifiable reference source, grant, date and surname verification as well as copies of any family documents which Monarchs or Governments with authority defacto/dejure is recognized with Royal authority for such grants.

Journal: Exploration of delivering the *Journal* electronically to organizations and individuals who specialize in Heraldry and Genealogy as well as making an ongoing PNAF Journal Library on the PNAF web site.

ONA GRAND DUCHESS OF LITHUANIA *(continued)*



So, who was this Ona? Where did she come from? And which one was she of the supposedly several wives Vytautas had?

In his *Codex epistolaris Vitoldi*, the Polish historian Anton Prochaska writes that Vytautas was married three times. According to him, Ona was his second wife.

Ona was connected with numerous affairs of state while Vytautas ruled Lithuania. There is no doubt she was a multilingual, industrious, highly motivated and astute personality who complemented her husband in many important aspects of his reign.

That she took interest in these activities is not surprising. She is known to have associated and corresponded widely with scholars and

educated people in general. Her interest in, and pursuit of education is evident in her frequent visits to Prussian institutions of higher learning. Cultural awareness in Teutonic Order cities was more advanced than it was elsewhere in the region, and Ona was well aware of Vytautas' desire to open those gates to Lithuania.

Ona's determination to stand by her husband's decision to seek shelter with the Teutonic Order after his escape from Kréva, and bypass Jogaila's designs on eliminating him from Lithuania's political theater.

The Teutonic Order was well informed about Lithuania's relationship with Poland's King Jogaila, and extended a welcome to Vytautas. The Order's leadership was appreciative and respectful of Grand Duchess Ona's role in Lithuanian politics. She was often invited to visit Teutonic Order cities and entertained there in regal splendor. The Order even went as far as to suggest protection for her in the event of her husband's death.

The kind of respect and admiration which Ona garnered from foreign dignitaries was not commonplace. They must be viewed as specifically directed at her for exceptional reasons. Her death in 1418 signaled concern in Teutonic Order ranks about dealings with Vytautas in the future. To pacify the Lithuanian leadership, the Grand Master ordered all churches to hold masses and devotions for her soul. She died in Trakai and is buried in Vilnius Cathedral where her husband was later laid to rest at her side.

In view of the general status of women in 14th century public eye, and especially in pagan Lithuania, Grand Duchess Ona was held in very high regard as ally and inspiration to Vytautas. Their only daughter Sofija, who was given in marriage to the Grand Duke Vasily I of Muscovy for purely political reasons, also played an important role in Lithuania's foreign policy. She is reputed to have been a strong, proud, ambitious personality, but never achieved her mother's fame.

Editor's Note: This is an abridged version of the article that appeared in the September/ October 2010 issue of LITHUANIAN HERITAGE and is reproduced courtesy of the publisher.