



# Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota

Volume #32, Issue #3  
Fall 2024



## ABOUT US

### **PGS-MN Mission**

To share genealogical, biographical, and historical information, and collaborate with other organizations that promote interest in Polish genealogical research, history and culture from Poland to Minnesota and surrounding states.

*The Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota (PGS-MN) is a non-profit organization offering information regarding Polish Genealogy and Heritage, with wide ranging programs and events that provide opportunity to grow deeper understanding and appreciation of Polish genealogical research, Polish and Polish American traditions, culture, and heritage.*

#### **SUPPORT PGS-MN**

*PGS-MN grows through membership from our members, donors and other organizations who desire to connect with their ancestors, and welcome their heritage, whether through art, traditions or information. As a non-profit charitable organization PGS-MN uses your membership costs to fund the Polish library resources at the MGS Hoffman Library, holding programming on topics of interest to the community.*

*PGS-MN Membership Program is designed for dedicated supporters to play a significant role in sustaining the organization while gaining preferred access. All members receive free access to the library, a quarterly newsletter, email notifications, and access to the "members only" section of the website.*

*Our membership levels have remained relatively stable, and we continue to manage expenses. The membership fee remains at \$25 annually.*

*Further information at [www.pgsmn.org](http://www.pgsmn.org) or at the PGS-MN Facebook page.*

### **PGS-MN Board**

President / Terry Kita

Vice-President / Jim Warzonek

Treasurer / Gary Wolf

Secretary / Kay Freund

Director / Jerry Bambenek

Director / Karen Brill

Director / Mike Stodolka

Director / Tom Losinski

Past President / Peggy Larson

### **Committee Chairs**

Annual Meeting/Awards—Richard Theissen

Library / Bob Kraska

Membership / Karen Brill

Newsletter / Marie Przyński

Nominating / Peggy Larson

Programs / Terry Kita

Website / Paula Colwell  
& Joe Hughes

### **Project Leaders**

Database Project /

Facebook / Marie Przyński

From Poland to Minnesota /  
Paula Colwell

Contact Us

**PGSminnesota@gmail.com**

Or

**PGS-MN**

**1385 Mendota Heights Rd, #100  
Mendota Heights, MN 55120**



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### Kashubian Cultural Institute & Polish Museum

KCIPM invite you to a virtual tour of the Kashubian Cultural Institute & Polish Museum—now accessible on their website — [polishmuseumwinona.org/virtual-tour/](http://polishmuseumwinona.org/virtual-tour/).



## President's Letter

09/01/24

This month we will begin our Fall programs. We will present four programs for the remainder of 2024, information about which you can access on our website, for subject, date and time.

Included in our set of programs was a partnership with Twin Ports Genealogical Society, Duluth, MN. And St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Gnesen, MN. on 09/28/24 and the program was sold out.

Our membership continues to inch up, thanks to our information booths at summer festivals, spearheaded by Mike Stodolka. WE will have several more opportunities remaining in 2024, at Winona Applefest, and the MGS Northstar conference.

Our member survey was very successful, for the number of responses as well as the number who have offered to volunteer in some capacity, and offered suggestions for communication improvements. We will contact all who offered to volunteer, and consider all suggestions made.

A complete summary of the survey results will be forthcoming.

We are looking for ideas for 2025, especially from members who will share their family history research, stories, frustrations, with others. If you wish to discuss an idea for a talk, or newsletter article, contact us at " pgsminnesota@gmail.com and with the heading Article. Many of our articles and talks begin with an idea, which can be fleshed out with the assistance of others.

Now begins the best time of our year, in my opinion.

Terry Kita



October 25-26, 2024

The 17th Minnesota Genealogical Society's North Star Conference early bird registration is now open.

The event will be held at the Eagan Community Center, 1501 Central Parkway, Eagan, MN. Featured speakers are Judy G. Russell, a genealogist with a law degree, and Blaine Bettinger, a professional genealogist specializing in DNA evidence. for more information about the conference, see **[www.mnsgs.org](http://www.mnsgs.org)**

## PGS-MN Summer Festivals—Mike Stodolka

The PGS-MN attended five summer fests during the 2024 summer. All were well attended events and provided a great deal of Polish flavor. The PGS-MN booth provided names and links to resources on Polish genealogical research.

The Morrison County Fair was an early summer event where their committee waived the vendor charge in order for us to set up our booth free. There was a threat of rain present and a moderately sized crowd wandered through the fairgrounds the entire day and seemed to grow as evening events were about to begin. I stayed until 5 pm. The people who did approach our tent were quite interested in what we offer. We were invited back for next year's Fair.



The Sobieski Fest followed the last week of June. Mike Retka was as accommodating as the weather and set us up with a tent located within the middle of the activity. We were quite busy the entire afternoon. Charlotte Czech and myself staffed the booth. Charlotte was raised near Sobieski and was instrumental in interpreting the local's questions. This Sobieski area is inundated with the very popular Czech last name. History shows that the first few Czech families that immigrated to Minnesota from Silesia, were extremely large families of mainly males which created numerous Czech branches that spread out across this area. Two families had over 14 children!

The Bowlus Fun Day was held July 7th this year and is a staple of the area. The usual robust crowd did not disappoint us and kept the booth active all day. This town of less than 300 drew over 700 in attendance for the parade, food, drinks, polka music, bingo, games and the Fire Departments "Tug-of-War". The weather did not disappoint either. Tom Losinski worked the tent the entire day (11-4:00pm) with me. Tom's Kashubian family history came in handy as he met a few Kashubian Poles in the crowd. He and I were constantly bristling with the crowd as we handed out 20-25 brochures. In addition, I met Joe Klisch, whose family bought the farm my Stodolka family had previously owned just south of Bowlus.

We were also in attendance for the Sacred Heart Festival in Minneapolis. Terry Kita and Marie Przynski set up a table. The rain was intermittent but the event went on. It was their annual fundraiser, in this case to raise funds after the destruction of their church. It was well-attended, primarily by parishioners and friends, who listened to a concertina band, and enjoyed a variety of Polish delicacies and Zywiec. Most attendees appeared to have a Polish connection. A lapsed member renewed his membership.

We did not participate in the Slavic fest that was held in early August.

Another Polish festival was introduced to me while I was at the Sobieski event. Al Poser asked if I would be interested in setting up our booth in mid-August in Randall, Minnesota, just north of Little Falls. Terry Kita and myself manned the booth from noon to 4:00pm. Again, this town of 607 people probably had a good portion of them in attendance. Food, drink, music and raffles were the main draws. Our booth was well attended the entire time. We got one new member to sign up and I even met a third cousin who I had never met.





## PGS-MN Newsletter Archive - Paula Colwell

Did you know that we have 31 years of PGS-MN quarterly newsletters in the Members Only section of our website? The newsletters have a wealth of genealogy information. One fun way you can enjoy the newsletters is to randomly choose one from any year and just start reading!

Our newsletters are all about Poland and the Poles who settled in MN, as well as about Polish culture and history. You can likely find information that you were not aware of before. As you well know, genealogy information is timeless!

Another direct way to look at some of the articles is to go to From Poland to MN (also in the Members Only section of our website). We have gone through all of the newsletters and linked articles by areas of Poland where MN Poles came from, as well as where they settled in Minnesota. Try it out.

Once you are in the From Poland to MN section, click on Minnesota and you will see that the information is further divided into regions of the state.

Go to the region where your Polish ancestors settled in Minnesota, then the county.

Scroll down to the list of PGS-MN newsletter articles in the different communities.

Note what page it says the article is on, then click on the link and scroll to the page.

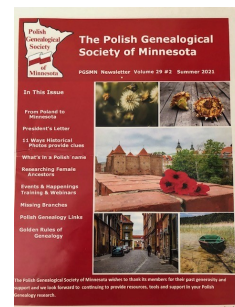
Let's use St. Louis County in Northeast Minnesota as an example. The communities where Poles settled in this county include: Duluth, Virginia, Gnesen/Rice Lake, Buyck and Greaney.

There are 25 newsletter articles related to overall St. Louis County as well as specific communities.

The articles are varied and include:

- descriptions of the establishment of early churches and Polish priests
- some of the early Poles who settled in the community
- other ethnic groups who settled along side of the Poles in the community
- highlights of some of the businesses in the early days
- transcriptions of gravestones from cemeteries
- list of soldiers who volunteered in Haller's Army from Duluth and Superior, WI
- chain migration from a specific area of Poland, and settling in a specific area of NE Minnesota
- Greg Kishel's Drobne Echa articles, which include English translations of articles from Hieronim Derdowski's Polish newspapers from the late 1800s early 1900s (often including surnames of Poles who settled in the communities)

We encourage you to check out this wonderful resource on our website. It reflects the thoughtful time many members have spent writing over the years to share with us all!



## Minnesota History Center—Polish Newspapers

The Minnesota History Center is happy to share that digitized historic content of three Polish-American newspapers from Minnesota are freely available online:

- Wiarus (Winona, Minn.), 1886-1893
- Katolik (Winona, Minn.), 1893-1895
- Wiarus (Winona, Minn.), 1895-1919



They were originally digitized as a part of a National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP) grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) and available on the Library of Congress' Chronicling America site, along with Polish-American newspapers from several other states: [https://www.loc.gov/collections/chronicling-america/dynamic-list-of-titles/?searchType=advanced&st=table&sb=title s asc&subject ethnicity=polish](https://www.loc.gov/collections/chronicling-america/dynamic-list-of-titles/?searchType=advanced&st=table&sb=title%20asc&subject=ethnicity=polish)

The titles are also available on the Minnesota Digital Newspaper Hub created by MNHS here: <https://www.mnhs.org/newspapers/hub/wiarus>

Having the content on Chronicling America makes the titles freely available to search within a national collection of newspapers. Including it in our Minnesota Digital Newspaper Hub makes them available within the context of all the other Minnesota newspapers that MNHS has digitized for many other projects.

Please let us know if you have any questions: [newspapers@mnhs.org](mailto:newspapers@mnhs.org)

## Polish Roots Info

**PolishRoots** - <https://www.polishroots.org/Home/Index?PageId=37>

PolishRoots covers all areas that were historically part of the Polish Commonwealth, from the 16th through the 18th centuries, throughout the years of partitions by Prussia, Russia, and Austria, through its rebirth in 1918, subsequent domination during World War II and post-War occupation, to its present freedom and struggle for independence through the latter 20th Century. The site also promotes Polonia, areas of Polish presence throughout the world regardless of ethnicity, religion, or political views.

This site allows you to register your Polish surnames and connect with others sharing those names. Also features links to old gazetteers and directories covering Polish regions; cross-index of Polish and German place names, passenger ship lists and if desired the "Gen Dobry!" e-newsletter.

# Calendar

## October

- 2—MGS Webinar “Cousin Baiting & Cousin Stalking”** See MNGS.org for info.
- 5—PGS-MN Monthly Meeting/Program—“Kashubians”** by Joe Hughes. (On-line)
- 6—Smacze Jablka Apple Fest,** KCIPM, Winona—check out website for additional details. [www.Polishmuseumwinona.org](http://www.Polishmuseumwinona.org).
- 7—Midwest Genealogical Center—Newspaper Research for Genealogy** (Hybrid), 6 p.m. Registration required—info at <https://www.mymcpl.org/events/98957/newspaper-research-genealogy-hybrid>
- 14—Teacher’s Day in Poland**
- 19—Polish Institute of Culture & Research Grand Opening of new Galeria.** On display are sacred images, holy spaces, Art & Faith in Poland. Piano exhibition with Kamil Pacholec. \$50 (admission and reception), Orchard Lake, MI. See [info@picrol.org](mailto:info@picrol.org).
- 21-26 KCIPM Haunted Halloween Bash.** Visit and support KCIPM Student Ambassador Program. See [www.polishmuseumwinona.org](http://www.polishmuseumwinona.org) for additional details.
- 22—Poland, Defender of Europe Program;** Kolbe Hall, adjacent to Holy Cross. This is a multifaceted celebration and includes supper, lecture by Dr. Kenneth Kemp (Professor emeritus, University of St. Thomas) and musician Brian Billion, playing music by Chopin. \$15 donation suggested.
- 25 & 26 —MGS Northstar Conference—Unlocking the Past, Shaping the Future.** See [www.MNGS.org](http://www.MNGS.org) for details.
- 27—PACIM Annual Soup Festival**
- 27—KCIPM Murder Mystery Party—**The museum is hosting a party and includes Kashubian Folklore and Fantasy. Drinks and snacks provided. See [www.KCIPM.org](http://www.KCIPM.org) for further info.

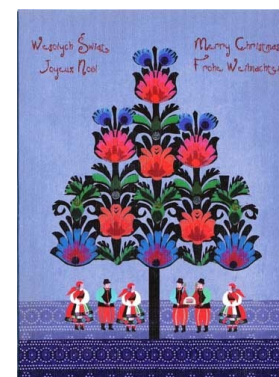
## November

- 2—Dolina Polish Folk Dancers 75th celebration,** St. Marion’s Catholic Church, Minneapolis
- 2—PGS-MN/Pommern Meeting— Tracing Family from the Pomerania Area** – a joint program with the Pommern Regional Group of MN. Speakers: Kay Freund and Chris DeWuske
- 11—US Veterans Day**
- 11—Poland Independence Day**



## December

- 1—KCIPM Oplatki Sunday, Winter Festival—**Santa Claus, Local artisan vendors, and seasonal Polish Food.
- 6—St. Mikolaj Day—**don’t put my presents in my shoes
- 24—Wigilia / Christmas Eve**
- 25—Christmas Day**
- 31—Sylwester / New Years Eve**



## January—Happy New Year



## Polish Cuisine—Jim Warzonek

*Story and pictures shared by Jim & Rosemary Warzonek.*

Just a little note on the Drunken Sausage meal – when we traveled to Poland for the first time ever in November 2018 to meet family members near Lublin. While celebrating the 100 years of Poland's Independence in Krakow, we found this lovely little restaurant on the northwest corner of Stare Maistro, where the hospitality was as great as the food! We have been back several times to enjoy the authentic Polish cuisine, but also to get the recipe...

Preheat oven to 375 degrees

- 2 lbs. Kielbasa Biala (Polish White Sausage)
- 1 bottle Beer (of your choice, Polish preferred)
- 3 Tbsp. Butter
- 4 Tbsp. Honey
- ¼ tsp. Cayenne Pepper
- 2 Sweet Onions (such as Vidalia or Walla Walla)
- 1 jar Whole Grain Mustard (such as Maille Mustard Old Style)

1. Cut onions into thin strips. Sautee onions in a large cast iron skillet by melting 3 Tbsp of butter over medium-low heat, add the onions. Cook, uncovered, stirring occasionally for 13 to 15 minutes or until the onions are tender and golden.
2. Transfer sauteed onions into an oven baking dish. Place Kielbasa on top of the onions. Drizzle 4 Tbsp of honey over the top. Sprinkle cayenne pepper over the top. Add about ½ bottle of beer (you can drink the rest while you wait for the next step!).
3. Place into preheated oven for 15-18 minutes. Remove from oven. Gently slice the top of the sausages about an inch apart. This will lightly allow the meat to be exposed. With a spoon, spread a generous amount of the whole mustard seen on top of the sausages. Place back into oven for an additional 10-12 minutes (total baking time about 30 minutes).

This pairs well with Pilsudski Polish Style Horseradish Mustard, as well as fine Polska Pivo. I can personally vouch for the following fine cold quenchers – Perla Chmielowa, ŻUBR Polish Lager and Zywiec Porter.

Side dishes may include sauerkraut, pierogi, boiled potatoes with butter, beets, bread or others of your choice. If you would like to add a little “more heat” to the meal, I would suggest Red Pepper Flakes. Enjoy.



## Missing Branches

Szukam cię — I'm looking for you



PGS-MN is excited that you have joined or renewed your membership in the Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota (PGS-MN). We strive to provide you with inspiration and knowledge that will help you on your quest in discovering your ancestors. Take advantage of the various resources that we have to offer. New and renewing membership information will be available in the password-protected "Members Only" section of the [www.pgsmn.org](http://www.pgsmn.org) website.

**Ezdon, Marilyn;** mawezdon@gmail.com—researching **Wicka**/??/MN, WI, CA, FL;  
**Eichman**/??/MN and WI

**Koskie, Mary Beth;** Bethknitsallday@aol.com—researching **Koscielniak/Rabka**, Maloposkie/Minneapolis, **Zajac/Rabka**, Malopolskie/Minneapolis, **Schartz**, Malopolskie/Minneapolis, MN

**Hoyt, Roberta;** bobbihoit@aol.com—researching **Sopczak-Sobczak**/Unknown, Duluth, MN, **Bronikowski**/Duluth, MN

**Wood, Patte;** rockwriter99@rockbridge.net—researching **Cienkowski/Kcynia**, Bydgoszcz, Poland/MN and IN, **Szałaciński or Salat/Czerlin**, **Wagrowiec**, Poznan, Poland/MN, **Rakowski/Czeszewo**, **Wagrowiec**, Poznan, Poland/MN, IN, **Heleniak/Mierzkowo**, Poznan, Poland/MN, IN, MI, **Novak/Laskownica**, **Smogulec**, Poznan, Poland/MI

**Niehaus, Elaine;** elaine.niehaus@cbrealty.com—researching **Puchala**/Bowlus, MN

**Graczyk, Bill;** wrgraczyk@gmail.com—researching **Graczyk**/Znin, Poland/McLeod, MN, **Nowak**/Znin, Poland/McLeod, MN, **Kielas**/Znin, Poland/McLeod, MN, **Swendra**/Znin, Poland/McLeod, MN, **Piotrowiak**/Srem, Poland/McLeod, MN, **Pryl**/Rogowo, Poland/Benton, MN

**Lulai, Rita;** rlulai@daktel.com—researching **Lulaj** from Sesila/Settled in WI & ND, **Reuter**/Settled in ND, **Peghotta** from Silesia?/Settled in WI & Canada, **Sortore**/Settled in NY, WI, MN & ND

**Kallan, Rich;** rkallan@wi.rr.com—researching **Kaldunski**/Settled in WI, **Pellowski**/Settled in WI

**Rompa, David;** djr71win@yahoo.com—researching **Rompa**, **Drwall**

**Stennes, Barbara;** bastennes@gmail.com - researching **Zubrzycki**/Settled in MN, **Boyko**/Settled in MN, **Jaskulowski**/Settled in MN

**Muellner, Lois;** lois.muellner@gmail.com—researching **LIPINSKI** of West Prussia, settled in LaSelle, IL and Wilno, MN, **BEDNAREK** of Poznan, settled in Chicago, IL and Wilno, MN, **LOZYNSKI** of Poznan, settled in Chicago IL and Wilno, MN, **SKORCZEWSKI** of West Prussia, settled in Chicago, IL and Wilno, MN

**Jacobson, Cynthia;** cynjacobson539@gmail.com—researching **Stanislawski**/Kreis Rosenberg, West Prussia/Big Rapids, MI, **Rettkowski**/Kreis Rosenberg, West Prussia/Big Rapids, MI, **Kutschinski**/Kreis Rosenberg, West Prussia/Big Rapids, MI.

## PGS-MN Programs

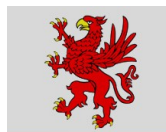


### Kashubian Poles in Minnesota

**Speaker: Dr. Joseph Hughes**  
**Saturday, October 5, 2024 at 10 AM CST**

Dr. Hughes will present a concise illustrated history of Kashubian Poles in Minnesota. The focus will be on the 19th century. Topics include the Kashubian migration to North America, Kashubian "colonies" throughout Minnesota, and the unfortunate, rapid demise of the Kashubian language all across Minnesota.

**This program is free to PGS-MN members, and members do not need to pre-register.** The program will be held by **Zoom only**. A Zoom link will be sent to all PGS-MN members a few days before the program.



**POMMERN REGIONAL GROUP**  
of Minnesota, an affiliate of Germanic Genealogy Society

### Tracing Family from the Pomerania Area

November 2 @ 10:00 am - 2:30 pm CDT

Speakers:

Kay Freund, PGS-MN Secretary

Chris DeWuske, Teacher, Graphic Designer and founder of My Pomerania

This is a joint meeting between the Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota and the Pommern Regional Group of Minnesota, (longer meeting), In person at the Minnesota Genealogy Center, 1385 Mendota Heights Road, Mississippi Room, Mendota Heights, Minnesota 55120 as well as virtually by Zoom . A box lunch available for purchase.

Speaker Freund will detail her journey to locate her ancestral village, and key takeaways of her five-decade search.

Speaker DeWuske will fill in gaps about his unusual surname and explain documents not normally available to US researchers. His website includes over 1300 digitized archival documents that are freely accessible. His vision is to inspire a shared knowledge and continue to build a collective library.

More information will be more information will be available soon on how to register for the in-person attendees, as well as more specific times for the speaker presentations.

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



## Did you miss a program meeting?

Several meetings have been recorded and are available to PGS-MN members (in the **"members only" section** of the PGS-MN website)- **www.pgsmn.org**.

Various meetings such as

- \* Mieszko to Millennium: Tracing Religion
  - \* Personal genealogical journeys from members (Larson, Runnako)
  - \* Preserving your photos and Documents
  - \* Prussian partition - Resources for genealogists
  - \* Where did your Polish born ancestors settle in Minnesota
  - \* Who are the Lemkos of Poland
- and many, many more.

Become a member, and enjoy the various videos, and also discover that the "members only" section also has other enticing sections, from food recipes, to research information, etc. **Check out the website—www.pgsmn.org.**

## Membership Survey

PGS-MN undertook a membership survey, as we felt that it was very important to collect information and improve our value as an organization to the membership. The survey was designed to engage our membership, and determine what direction the members desired for the future of PGS-MN.

The survey was designed to capture what members were satisfied with, what were issues of concern, and what they desired to gain from PGS-MN. The PGS-MN board recognizes the important role in the stability and progress of the organization the members provide, and the survey offered a window into perceptions, satisfaction, desires, and possible concerns.

To facilitate the survey, Board member Kay Freund undertook this huge task, and reports the following:

There was outstanding results with 38% of the membership responding. (*Editor's note—It should be noted that the average response to non-profit surveys is about 29% - XOLA University, Marketing, Malnik, 12/23*). The survey was conducted online (Google Forms), and the survey participation was highlighted in the Summer newsletter, on Facebook, email reminders sent to the membership, and also contained the opportunity to enter a drawing for a free 2025 membership (four free annual memberships were awarded.)

Additionally, PGS-MN put out a call for volunteers, and 20 members stepped up for a variety of committees to help PGS-MN continue to grow and enhance its mission and vision.

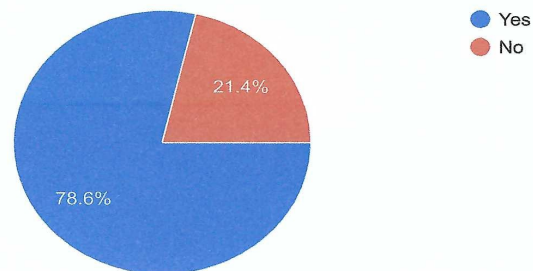
One area that received a lot of interest was the newsletter, with the commitment to have articles and items of interest (and the PGS-MN editor offered that this is indeed great news). It was also noted that the "articles" could be short (a few paragraphs), or more in-depth. A picture or two, with brief explanation are also welcomed. Even your favorite recipe(s) to tantalize our taste buds were requested.

Several members offered to help with presentations, or participate in the various booths, not only to talk about membership, board positions and responsibilities, but also Polish experiences and present artifacts. A housebound member even offered to help either online or by phone to promote PGS-MN concerns. One member recently went to Poland and offered to share her pictures.

The results provide PGS-MN with valuable and helpful information. It was interesting to note that members are actively engaged in researching their family ancestry. Additionally the various areas, webpage, newsletter, Facebook, etc. were broken down, and members identified the priorities of each category. This is most helpful in supporting PGS-MN strengths and identify those challenges that will be pursued and enhanced for members use.

#### Polish Genealogical Research - Do you actively research your family history?

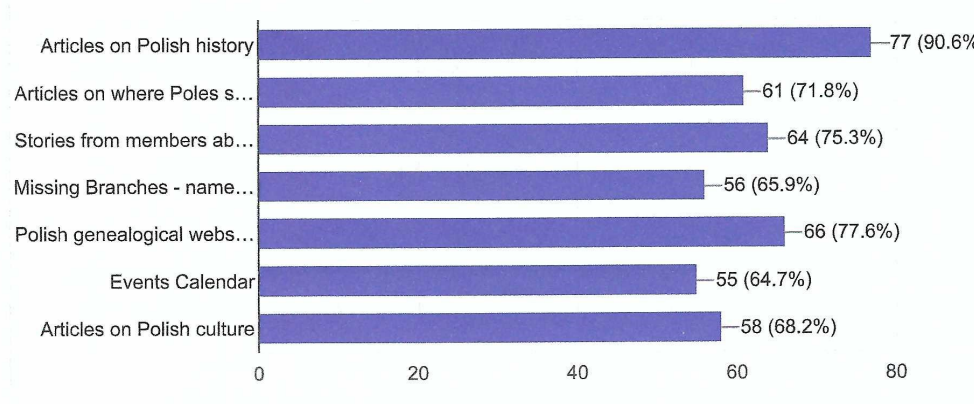
84 responses



#### PGS-MN Newsletters - what parts of the Newsletter do you find useful?

(check all that apply)

85 responses



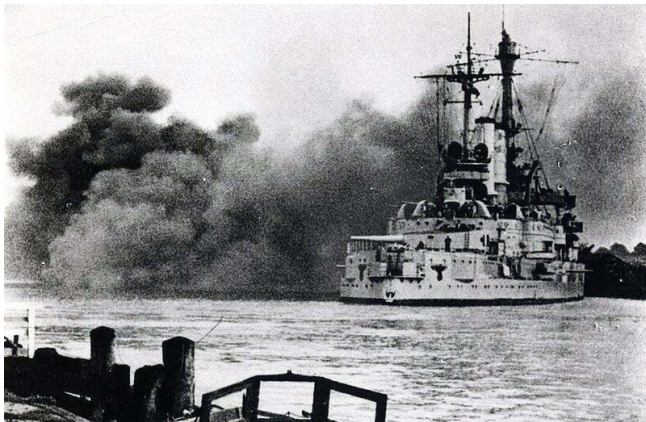
The membership survey will be discussed further at the PGS-MN Board Meeting in October and with the various committees. If you have a question or something further to ask, please contact the PGS-MN Board or committee heads and it will be placed on the agenda.

Thank you for participating, providing valuable feedback, and directing the organization into the future.

## Honor to their Memory - American Institute of Polish Culture



1939 Warsaw bombing - A child on the rubble  
images from [www.defenceredefined.com](http://www.defenceredefined.com)



On September 1, 1939, German forces under the control of Adolf Hitler invaded Poland on land, water and from the air. World War II had begun - the most destructive conflict in human history. 6 million Polish citizens, soldiers and civilians were brutally killed including 3 million Polish Jews.

We remember their ultimate sacrifice.

*Cześć ich Pamięci!  
Honor to their Memory!*



The American Institute of Polish Culture  
1440 79th Street Causeway | Suite 117  
Miami, FL 33141

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

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## Koniaków Lace - Marie Przynski



Koniaków craftswomen with Maria Gwarek (first of the right)

Snuggled in the hilltops of the Beskidy mountains of southern Poland, Koniaków is the epicenter of a unique cultural tradition of Koniaków Lacemaking. It has been traced back over the generations, and over 150 years ago was noted for its head bonnets and small additions to altar clothes. The technique has its roots in the region's folk costume. It gradually grew to include table clothes, doilies, and small pieces attached to personal garments.

Currently, experienced artisans meet weekly and indulge in the tradition. Lacemaking has been passed from mother to daughter over the generations, and was a closely guarded tradition within the community. In the late 19th century, the community then broaden its horizons and it was introduced in the local schools. Eventually through a variety of efforts, Koniaków is recognized as one of the largest lace making centers globally.



The tradition and resulting artwork boast of the artisan's translation of the surrounding natures into elaborate compositions (Polish Fashion Stories, Koniaków Lace). The lace is made with cotton thread, usually in white or cream. Made without patterns, no two pieces are the same, proudly displaying vision and style of the lace maker and her creativity. Patterns are usually crocheted separately and then later combined. The lace has been acquired by various kings, and even graces the Pope's collection. It's this uniqueness that was noted when it was added to Poland's list of UNESCO Cultural Heritage.

Lacemaking was a cottage industry, and experienced periods where the lace was greatly sought, and then there were low periods where the tradition faded into the background. The lacemaking trade was deeply impacted by World War II and the resulting communist rule. In the late 1940s, the communist party decided to extend state protection to folk art. Most of the folk art was sold through the state run Cepelia shops, providing an outlet for marketing.

One of the first champions for these **artisans** was master lacemaker Maria Gwarek, and is considered the “mother” of Koniaków lacemaking. In 1947 she founded a cooperative and worked tirelessly to advance the status of the tradition. These efforts were not only to make it a paid profession, allowing women to earn a living, but would later qualify them for a craft pension. She created the Koniaków Lace Cooperative, allowing the artisans to come together, bringing their pieces into the greater public, and fostering the growth of the art, sponsoring exhibitions and competitions, developing new patterns, and the finding of markets for sales. She passed away in 1962 while working on a commissioned piece for Queen Elisabeth II. It was not finished, but her effort is currently displayed at the Koniaków Lace Museum.

Gwarek’s daughter-in-law Zuzanna overtook the collective, adding to its display collection. In 1980 they created a memorial room for Maria, displaying the oldest examples as well as contemporary lace pieces being produced. Zuzanna carried this work on until her death in 2015.

As the Polish political system went through great upheaval, the fall of communism made it harder to sell the larger more traditional pieces, and impacted the way of life in the village. Although originally divisive with the community, some artisans in 2003, turned their needles to making non-traditional products, i.e. lingerie, including G-strings and the lacemaking experienced a growing popularity. This controversial shift was only the beginning of a larger renaissance for the lace, and has been driven by Lucyna Ligocka-Kohut. She grew up in a neighboring village, and watched her grandmother make the lace.



Although not an artist herself, she has dedicated her career to the lace craft, and its promotion globally. In 2019, she created the Koniaków Lace Center, which includes a museum, educational space, and an inhouse shop to market the creations. She has indicated that her approach has been to increase awareness of the lace and its beauty, uses modern applications to challenge old thinking regarding lace, and encourage collaboration among the artists.

In working with Japanese fashion designer Rei Kawakubo; he incorporated the lace into a wedding dress presented during Paris Fashion week. With its publicity, this led to taking Koniaków lace in new directions. The renewed curiosity has led younger designers (Dior, Vuitton, Saab, Arkadius, etc.) to use various lacework in their fashion designs also.

Another initiative was the creation of the largest piece of Koniaków lace—a doily that spans over 16 1/2 feet in diameter, and is noted in the Guinness Book of Records. It took five lace makers, approximately five months, and is made of more than 8,000 individual pieces, and used over 50 km of thread to produce. It has travelled the world, and been included in several exhibitions, bringing the craft and the village to other audiences as well.





In 2019, she was instrumental in creating a home to the lace foundation, and includes a museum and educational center.

*"It was a response to a lack of place where one could learn the genesis and growth of our lacemaking, familiarize with the pioneers of the craft and buy locally handcrafted products ... It is also a place where our local lace artists meet up to exchange their craft knowledge and pass it on to younger generations" (Lucyna Ligocka-Kohut, November 2021, Craftsmanship).*

Currently the Center and artisans are working on developing the use of a wool lace. The Koniaków wool from the local sheep is very scratchy. It is not used very often, considered a wasted material, and the artisans are collaborating on its use in their craft and further supporting the local community.

The Lace center now encourages outsiders to come to Koniaków to encourage others to experience and work in the craft, hoping to carry the tradition into the future.



## Resources

*Wikipedia "Koniaków lace"*

*Craftsman, Koniaków Lace, 23 November 2021*

*Culture.pl / Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2004, Koniaków Lace, Nelly Kaminska*

*Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 14/7/2004, UNESCO lists of traditional Polish lace*

*Guinness Book of Records, 04/01/2017, "Lace"*

*Piecework Magazine, Polish Crocheted Lace "Art, Tradition, Passion" Jun 26, 2024  
Carol J. Sulcoski*



## Biały Orzeł

The White Polish Eagle, or "Biały Orzeł" in Polish, is the national emblem of Poland. It features a white eagle with a golden beak and talons, wearing a golden crown. The eagle has been a symbol of Poland since at least the 13th century, representing strength, courage, and independence. The emblem is deeply rooted in Polish history and tradition, symbolizing the nation's resilience and pride. The crowned eagle was officially adopted as the state symbol of Poland in 1919, following the country's regained independence. (Photo/Info by FB Polish Footing.)





## POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF MN

1385 Mendota Heights Rd, Ste. 100

Mendota Heights, MN 55120-1367

*<http://pgsmn.org>*

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

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## **Newsletter**

Newsletter issues from 1993 to today that withstand the test of time! Great stories, articles, and genealogy tips for you to use today! We mail our newsletters quarterly for spring, summer, fall and winter issues. Prior issues can be located in the Member's Section on the PGS-MN website.

## **Polish Family Food History**

PGS-MN members have shared their Polish family recipes with others.

## **Polish White Eagle Association Files**

See if your ancestors had life insurance through the PWEA and hopefully discover new details!

## **Program Meeting Archives**

View prior quality Program Meetings to help you with your genealogy journey!

## **Archdiocese Indexed marriage and Burial Records**

Search the Catholic Church Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis index for your ancestors (if applicable) from the 19th century to 1940.

Let the fun begin! Don't miss out on a single moment locating your ancestors and learning more about their struggles and joys.



## **BE A PGS-MN VOLUNTEER**

- \* Support PGS-MN
- \* Outreach and Connect with others
  - Expand your Polishness
  - Make a difference!



Photo—Historolki Historolki

Warszawa M20 (name of course after the name of capital of Poland). Various models of Warszawa were produced in FSO Warszawa, Poland from 1951 to 1973 in Warsaw, based on [GAZ-M20 Pobeda](#).

The Warszawa was the first newly designed car built in [Poland](#) after [World War II](#). Warszawas were popular as taxis because of their sturdiness and ruggedness. However, they were underpowered for their weight and had high fuel consumption.



*Genealogy is not just a hobby, it's a way of preserving our cultural heritage and passing it on to future generations.*

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**AMY JOHNSON CROW**  
Minnesota Genealogical Society

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