

Using the Wiarus Polish Newspaper as a Source of Information by Paula Colwell

The [Minnesota Historical Society](#) (MNHS) website provides access to a number of historical Minnesota newspapers that you can review from home - many of them are from small Minnesota towns.

My grandfather was the son of Polish immigrants in Winona and I am currently working on a book about his service in WW1. As part of my research, I checked into the [Winona Newspaper Database](#) for historical newspaper articles (which is another great resource if you are searching for information related to Winona), as well as the MNHS website.

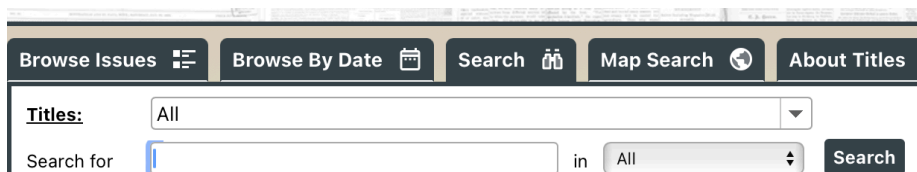
I was able to find some articles on my grandfather on the MNHS website in the newspaper called *Wiarus*, which is a Polish newspaper edited by Hieronim Derdowski and his wife between 1886-1919. The Drobne Echa articles we feature on the PGS-MN website from past newsletters are translations of Wiarus newspaper articles. The articles are not just about Winona - Derdowski wrote about many Polish communities (and people) across Minnesota in the Wiarus. You can find out if he wrote about some of your ancestors!

A great advantage of the Wiarus links on the MNHS website is that you can find an article written in Polish, snip it, and it will immediately translate it in Google Translate. The translation is not always exact, but it gives you a good sense of what the article is about, and you can play around with some of the words if it turns out to be an article of interest to you.

I will walk you through how I found one WW1-related article related to my grandfather:

- Go to the [Minnesota Historical Society](#) website.
- Click on Explore, then Digital Newspapers, then the Minnesota Digital Newspaper Hub.
- Click on “Search the Newspapers” in the column on the left.
- Once that is open, click the black “Search” tab at the top.

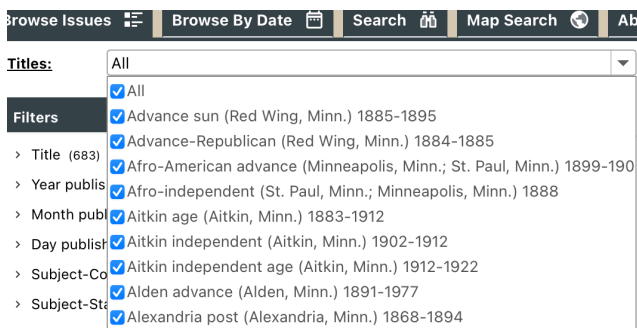
You will then see the following:



The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Minnesota Digital Newspaper Hub. It includes tabs for 'Browse Issues', 'Browse By Date', 'Search', 'Map Search', and 'About Titles'. Below the navigation bar, there is a 'Titles:' dropdown menu set to 'All'. To the right of the dropdown is a 'Search for' text input field, followed by an 'in' dropdown menu also set to 'All', and a 'Search' button.

In the “Search for” box, type in what you are looking for. I was looking for my grandfather’s name so I typed in his last name. You can enter a full first and last name, but my grandfather’s first name has been spelled differently in documents, so I wanted to be able to catch all the spellings so I just entered the last name. After the word “in,” there is another box and I left the default entry “All.” This opens up a listing of all of the newspapers. Don’t click “Search” yet.

To the right of the “Titles” box (the default is “All.” Click on the down arrow to the right of “All.” You will see a drop-down box with all the newspapers selected.



The screenshot shows the dropdown menu that appears when the 'Titles:' dropdown is clicked. It lists various newspapers with checkboxes next to them. The 'All' option is selected. The list includes: 'Advance sun (Red Wing, Minn.) 1885-1895', 'Advance-Republican (Red Wing, Minn.) 1884-1885', 'Afro-American advance (Minneapolis, Minn.; St. Paul, Minn.) 1899-190', 'Afro-independent (St. Paul, Minn.; Minneapolis, Minn.) 1888', 'Aitkin age (Aitkin, Minn.) 1883-1912', 'Aitkin independent (Aitkin, Minn.) 1902-1912', 'Aitkin independent age (Aitkin, Minn.) 1912-1922', 'Alden advance (Alden, Minn.) 1891-1977', and 'Alexandria post (Alexandria, Minn.) 1868-1894'.

Click on the box in front of the word “All,” which will deselect all boxes.

Please select ...

- ☐ All
- ☐ Advance sun (Red Wing, Minn.) 1885-1895
- ☐ Advance-Republican (Red Wing, Minn.) 1884-1885
- ☐ Afro-American advance (Minneapolis, Minn.; St. Paul, Minn.) 1899-1900
- ☐ Afro-independent (St. Paul, Minn.; Minneapolis, Minn.) 1888
- ☐ Aitkin age (Aitkin, Minn.) 1883-1912
- ☐ Aitkin independent (Aitkin, Minn.) 1902-1912
- ☐ Aitkin independent age (Aitkin, Minn.) 1912-1922
- ☐ Alden advance (Alden, Minn.) 1891-1977
- ☐ Alexandria post (Alexandria, Minn.) 1868-1894
- ☐ Allarm (Minneapolis, Minn.) 1915-1918
- ☐ Alliance standard (Willmar, Minn.) 1891-1893

Then scroll down to the Wiarus Newspaper. You will see that there are two choices (with different years). I clicked on 1895-1919 because I was specifically looking for WW1 articles, but you can select as many other newspapers that you want from the entire list.

- ☐ Wiarus (Winona, Minn.) 1886-1893
- ☒ Wiarus (Winona, Minn.) 1895-1919
- ☐ Wilkin County record (Breckenridge, Minn.) 1881-1884

Click just outside the box once you have checked which issue you want. You will then see from the Titles Box that you are in the Wiarus newspaper for the years 1895-1919, and my grandfather's last name in the “Search for” box. Leave the default “All” for the word “in” and click on the black “Search” button next to that.

Browse Issues | Browse By Date | Search | Map Search | About Titles | Help

Titles: Wiarus (Winona, Minn.) 1895-1919

Search for kleinschmidt in All **Search** Add Search Term

What came up is a list of 38 Wiarus newspapers that had the name, Kleinschmidt, listed. There are filters on the left and I chose to narrow down the year to 1918 (the year he entered the service), so I clicked on “Year Published” option and chose “1918”. This narrowed down my options to 10 different issues. I then went to “Month published” and chose “April” (4th month). This left two issues to look at. I then clicked on the one with the date “April 23, 1918.”


Titles: Wiarus (Winona, Minn.) 1895-1919

Search for kleinschmidt in All **Search** Add Search Term


Filters

- Title (1)
- Year published (1)
 - ☒ 1918 2
- Month published (1)
 - ☒ 04 2
- Day published (2)
- Subject-Country (1)
- Subject-State (1)
- Subject-County (1)
- Subject-City (1)

Sort By: Relevance Display Columns: 4 Items Per Page: 50



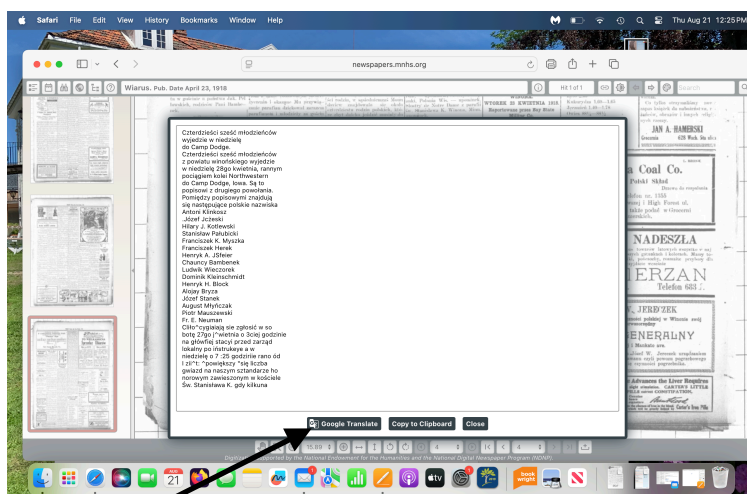
Wiarus.
Publication Date: April 23, 1918



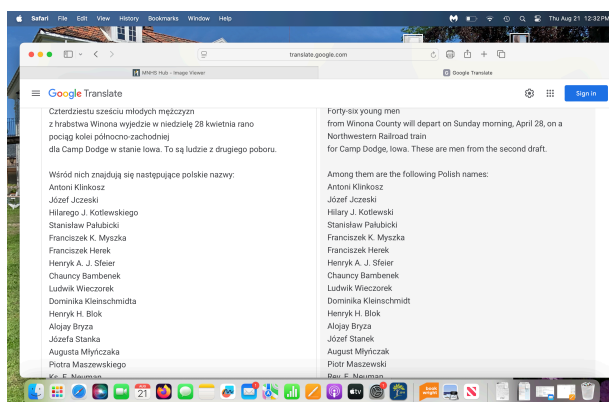
Wiarus.
Publication Date: April 5, 1918



The article automatically popped up the (in Polish). Click the “Copy to Clipboard” button at the bottom, then highlight the article you are interested in. The article will then open up. Click on the Google Translate button.



It automatically translated the article. You will see that the translation has some errors in it, but you can figure out the general content of the article from the translation and further play around with it. For articles from other newspapers in the Minnesota Digital Newspaper Hub that are in English, you can just copy to clipboard to save the article in your own records.



From this article, I learned that my Grandfather was scheduled to leave for Camp Dodge on April 28, 1918 with 45 other men, and 15 of them were Polish. With the 46 names that were listed, I could then compare other records to find out if any were in the same regiment as him (only one was). I plan to check out some of my other ancestors in this newspaper!