Advanced Polish Research

This lecture will cover finding your ancestors’ parish and civil registration records in Poland while dispelling the myths that records were destroyed during the world wars and that language barriers make Polish research difficult. It will also give examples and suggestions on how to use advanced records, databases and archives.

Case Study

Preparing Eugenia Gorecki’s World War II story for Genealogy Roadshow

In the spring of 2013 genealogists were abuzz — a new program *Genealogy Roadshow* had just been announced. And locally, we were excited that one episode was scheduled to be filmed in Detroit. Our region could certainly benefit from a positive program. Who would be included? Which stories did they want? Which ethnicities would be features?

As Director of the Polonica American Research Institute (PARI), it is part of my job to deliver on our goals which includes bringing this history to mainstream America. Too often, families shy away from starting their Polish lineage, fearing vital records were destroyed during the World Wars and the language(s) make it too difficult. Being part of *Genealogy Roadshow* would certainly allow us to reach a broad audience and set the record straight.

The "elevator speech" ran something like this: *We are glad you are coming to Detroit! We have a story for you! It involves immigration, World War II, and the auto industry.* She was intrigued by our pitch.

We used our extensive Polish network to document Genia’s story, including the help of *GenPol’s* Tomasz Nitsch; Józef Taran; Professor Andrzej Nowakowski (*author of Sokół w Wadowicach w latach 1918-1949 – część II*); Marcin Witkowski, Historian at the Muzeum w Wadowicach; and visiting Archivist Paweł Pietrzyk, from Łódź, Poland.

In summary, we were able to identify the education institution in which her father was schooled, the significance of his small portraits, the resistances of the young members of Sokół, and the most likely event that resulted in his fatal beating at the hands of the German police.

Our network in Poland spoke with pastors, museum curators, historians and provided documents and
translations to authenticate the research. Our efforts paid off.

Genia writes:

Ceil, thank you so much for "closing the door" on my father's past. In my youth I felt sorry for myself, not understanding why I’m not able to enjoy life with both parents. WWII marked every family in Europe, including mine. I have learned that my dad was involved in the underground group of young Polish men and lost his life in 1942. I’m so proud of my patriotic father!

— Eugenia K. Gorecki

Outline of Research

Foundation Documents – Have you completed you homework?

**United States Records**

United States Census  

World War I Draft Registration  
[https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1968530](https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1968530)

Naturalization Documents  

Ship Manifests  

Passport Application  
[https://familysearch.org/search/collection/2185145](https://familysearch.org/search/collection/2185145)

Private Family Collections— Photos
Private Family Collections—Certificate

Digital Libraries in Poland - http://fbc.pionier.net.pl/owoc/list-libs

Facebook – Genealogy in Poland https://www.facebook.com/groups/Genealogy.in.Poland/?ref=br_tf


Muzeum w Wadowicach http://www.wck.wadowice.pl/Godziny-otwarcia.143.0.html


MapyWig http://english.mapywig.org/news.php

Geneteka baza Polskiego Towarzystwa Genealogicznego http://geneteka.genealodzy.pl/

Szukaj w Archiwach (Search the Archives) http://searcharchives.pl/