

POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER CLEVELAND  
Minutes of the Meeting  
December 1, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. Member Ben Kman hosted the meeting on Zoom. Approximately fifteen participants attended virtually.

The November 2020 meeting minutes were read aloud and approved.

Treasurer Ben Kman gave the treasurer's report. Our balance as of Nov. 3, 2020 was \$3,419.66. Income was \$336.00 for dues and interest of 43 cents, for a total of \$336.43. Expenses were \$16 in rent, leaving a net income of \$320.43 for the month. Our current balance is \$3,740.09.

Vice President Michael Speare reported membership holds steady at 66 members with 28 renewed for 2021. Michael recognized Ed Ostrey for continuing to revise our surname list.

Old Business:

Ben Kman reported that our new bank account was opened at Huntington Bank, and our old account at Third Federal will be closed. Michael Speare recognized Ben for the amount of effort it took to get the new account situated.

Ben Kman received a letter from Benedictine High School thanking us for our donation in John Szuch's memory.

New Business

Elections: Richard Szczepinski shared that each board position received only one nomination per position. He opened the floor to new nominations, but none were presented. Richard called for a vote to approve all nominations. Ellen Paduch motioned to approve, and it was seconded. Members present voted by voice, and all candidates were approved unanimously. Your 2021 officers are: Anthonette Baciak, President; Michael Speare, Vice President; Ben Kman, Treasurer; and Corina Mesenger, Secretary.

President Anthonette Baciak reported that Ben Kman created a draft of our new bylaws. The Bylaw Committee will meet via Zoom in 2021 to discuss revisions. Once the draft is finalized, it will be sent to members.

Anthonette informed us of an opportunity to become an affiliate society with the Polish American Foundation of Connecticut. A \$20 fee would include membership to their organization and their upcoming lecture series starting in January 2021. Anthonette will post the flyer with more information on our Facebook page.

Anthonette shared that Saint Mary's Parma (physical home to our club) is offering a take-home Wigilia dinner. She will post the flyer on our Facebook page.

The business portion of the meeting closed at 7:22 pm.

Ben Kman opened this month's "Variety Show" program, an open forum for genealogy questions and tips.

Elaine Weiss asked for input on Y-DNA tests. Members were lukewarm on its usefulness. Richard Szczepinski reported his most useful Eastern Europe matches came from *MyHeritage*. Members discussed challenges with contacting DNA matches.

Cori Mesenger asked about surname aliases in Polish records. Patricia Bakalis and Richard Szczepinski shared their experiences. Ben added that surnames were still fluid in 19th century Poland.

Ben Kman demonstrated three methods for typing Polish characters: *typeit.org*, the Polish language pack in Microsoft Word, and *Google Translate*.

Collateral family research tips were discussed. Ben demonstrated the usefulness of *Stevemorse.org* in conducting collateral research. He suggested using the Gold Form to search Ellis Island passenger records in various ways, such as by village or surname. Witnesses and Godparents can add clues to your research, so he noted the importance of recording them. Michael Speare also suggested looking at maps of nearby small villages for additional relatives.

Ben shared a tip for using *Geneteka* to search your Parish for a surname when you can't read the priest's handwriting. Try substituting an asterisk for the unknown letters in a surname search to generate spelling variations within your village. Compare the results to the handwriting for aid in deciphering those hard-to-read surnames.

Cori Mesenger asked if *Poznan Project* could be searched by place and time without using surnames. Ben was not aware of a way but suggested emailing the administrator.

Ben recommended the book "In Their Words" by Jonathan Shea. It details how to translate records with terrific samples, explanations, and key words.

Ben suggested *Genbaza* as another source for digitized records. He demonstrated how to find the end of individual sections (birth, marriages, deaths) for an index of names. *Genpol.com* was also introduced as another source of records.

Anthonette Baciak asked for help finding surnames in Russian. Ben recommended trying *typeit.org*. He also suggested searching *Geneteka* for your surname in the desired area then opening a linked scan to see what the name looks like in Russian script.

On a lighter note, Ben recommended two cooking sites for Polish recipes: *The Polish Housewife* and *In Ania's Kitchen*. Thank you, Ben, for all of the tips.

Anthonette Baciak reported that the newsletter will be late this month, but it is on its way!

Anthonette recommended an article in the November *Gen Dobry* newsletter on Haller's Army. Elaine Weiss noted that the same newsletter introduced an interesting website called *ancestorspoland.com*. Users can post research and translation help requests on this online message board.

Next month's guest speaker will be on Prussian (German partition) research.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm. *Wesołych Świąt!*