

BEGAN CAREER IN SAN FRANCISCO

Modjeska Pledged Allegiance
to California as Her
Home State.

AMUSEMENTS

San Francisco Chronicle (1869-Current File); Aug 26, 1877;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers The San Francisco Chronicle (1865-1922)
pg. 8

AMUSEMENTS.

CALIFORNIA THEATER.—*Hamlet* was given last evening for John McCullough's benefit. All the seats in the house were occupied, and persons were standing in both dress circle and gallery. The principal attraction was the "Ophelia" of Madame Modjeska. As regards the lady, her reception was in the nature of a triumph. How much was due to gentle womanhood, and how much to her skill as an actress, must be decided in less enthusiastic and more critical moments. Full justice was done by her to the sweetness and beauty of one of Shakespeare's loveliest, though by no means one of his strongest creations. The first scene with "Polonius" and "Laertes" was given with great tenderness, and that with "Hamlet" with touching pathos. The mad scene was in Polish, and had much that was new both in sentiment and action. It affected the audience profoundly, and elicited two tumultuous recalls and numerous floral tributes. "Ophelia" is not a part that demands the exhibition of commanding stage qualities. As a general criticism on the performance, it may therefore be said that Madame Modjeska very nearly realizes the ideal of the character, and that she lends to its various phases all her superior knowledge of stage requirements, and all her many graces of mind and manner. But there are other actresses on the American stage who are, as "Ophelia," in most respects her equal, and in some her superior. Her singing of the incidental songs was better than that we often hear. A very graceful act, and one which was generally recognized by the audience, was the giving of a basket of flowers to John McCullough at the end of the second act. Among the gifts which she herself received was a floral crown.

Max Strakosch arrives by the overland train to-night.

**The following [Founding Members](#) of the
[Polish Society of California](#),
(which is one of the three owners of the Polish Club)
were Friends of Helena Modjeska**

Rudolf Korwin Piotrowski, Captain Kazimierz (Casimir) Bielawski,
Dr. Władisław (Ladislaus) Pawlicki, Aleksander Bednawski,
Captain F. Theophilus Lessen

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MEMORIES AND IMPRESSIONS

come to greet us. At the head of the group was Captain Korwin Piotrowski, the prototype of Sienkiewicz's "Zagloba," and with him were Captain Bielawski, Dr. Pawlicki, General Kryzanowski, Horain, Bednawski, and Captain Lessen. I mention all these gentlemen because they were more or less connected with my début on the American stage. Our joy at meeting these countrymen was great, and the greetings exchanged quite demonstrative. There surely exists a sort of freemasonry between people of the same class or education, especially as in the present case,

who knew him. It was an original and curious relation that bound him to his friends, Captain Piotrowski and Dr. Pawlicki. The former had aristocratic leanings and prejudices, and the latter, the doctor, was a staunch Catholic. The whole time they were of different opinions and were very hot in their discussions, but when it came to action, they all went hand in hand. They all three were the soul

Helena Modjeska Donates Books
to Rudolf Korwin Piotrowski for The Society of Poles in America
[Current opinion: Volume 46 - Page 668](#)

But the East with its new laurels lured "our lady" from her Californian friends. Her brilliant success never eclipsed her gratitude to her compatriots and to California, the scene of her early triumphs; and it was there that she died. Before her departure, she presented Captain Piotrowski with her carefully chosen library consisting of more than four hundred volumes, with the stipulation that after his death it was to pass into the possession of "The Society of Poles in America." The doughty Captain, however, conveyed the library to the society at once, "that nobody should lie in wait for his death."

Number of Poles in California in 1894

Source: *The Charities of San Francisco, A Directory...* Prepared by C.K. Jenness. Leland Stanford Jr. University, 1894

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SOCIETY OF POLES OF CALIFORNIA. 18 Hickory avenue; Secretary, Alex. Bednaviski. **Object:** Assistance of needy Poles. The only source of income, besides the initiation fee, \$1.00, is the monthly dues of 50 cents per member. Present number of members, 20. Total number of Poles in San Francisco, 120; in other parts of the State, 40. Organized 1873.

August 28, 1877, Paper: *Indianapolis Sentinel*

SAN FRANCISCO is elated over the idea of having a real Polish countess on the stage of the **California theater.** Madame Modjeska only studied the English language nine months before appearing as "Adrienne Lecournio." She is favorably likened to Ristori and Rachel. New York critics are getting out their literary vitriol to throw upon her when she appears east.

Date: October 17, 1877, Location: Nevada, *Territorial Enterprise*

Modjeska.

Madam Helen Modjeska (the Countess Bozenta) will open at National Guard Hall on Monday evening. Modjeska is ranked as the finest actress on the stage. The remarkable sensation she produced at the **California Theater** is still fresh in the minds of most of the people. On Monday and Tuesday evenings she gives her masterpiece, "Adrienne Lecouvreur," Wednesday and Thursday "Romeo and Juliet," and on Friday "Camille," with "Adrienne Lecouvreur" as a farewell performance Saturday evening.

7 May 1894, *SF Call*

Dr. and Mrs. Pawlicke will give a matinee tea next Wednesday at their residence, 1119 Van Ness avenue, to the talented actress, Mme. Modjeska.

14 May 1894, *SF Call*

A most successful reception was given last Wednesday to Mme. Modjeska and her husband, Count Bozenta, by Dr. and Mrs. Pawlicki at their residence, 1119 Van Ness avenue. The drawing-rooms and dining salon were artistically decorated with the choicest flowers of the season and looked like a fairy bower. Mme. Modjeska was attired in a magnificent robe of shell pink moire antique en train. She seemed delighted in meeting her old and new friends. The hours of the reception were most interestingly spent in pleasant conversation and in listening to recitations and vocal and instrumental music. The elite of the city were in attendance, and all were delighted with the charming hospitality of their host and hostess.

20 August 1896, *SF Chronicle*

Madame Helene Modjeska, the actress, charming as ever, slender, graceful, fair and slow-speaking, is visiting San Francisco. This time she comes as a private personage, accompanied only by her husband, Count Charles Bozenta Chtapowski, and a Polish maid. The trio are the guests of Captain Cassimir Bielawski, 2302 $\frac{1}{2}$ California street, and will remain but a few days.

6 Jan 1897, *SF Call*

MADAME MODJESKA HERE

The Actress Arrived From
Her "Ranch" Yesterday
Morning.

In Her Company Are Mrs. Edgerton
and Miss Frances Jolliffe of
This City.

Mme. Modjeska arrived from her home near Los Angeles yesterday morning and is at present at the residence of Dr. Pawlicki, 1119 Van Ness avenue. The favorite actress is accompanied by her husband, Count Charles Bozenta.

San Francisco Call, Volume 81, Number 69, 7 February 1897
[Town that Modjeska Loved Best](#)

WHEN the history of contemporary drama comes to be written **San Francisco** will be proudly set down as the town that Helene **Modjeska** loved best. It was **San Francisco** that first recognized her talent, and when, after nearly twenty years of triumphs, the great actress, enfeebled by a long and wearing illness, wants to try her pinions again, it is to **San Francisco** that she comes as to an old friend. And what an ovation awaited her! They say

With her debut in San Francisco the fate of the family changed. After the first night she signed a contract with Harry Sargent to tour the United States at \$50,000 a year and all expenses paid. That was an enormous sum in 1877.

27 June 1897, *SF Chronicle*

Recalls Modjeska stay in SF with Kazimierz Bielawski in 1877

prise

Mme. **Modjeska** came up from Southern California to San Francisco, and taking up her abode with a Polish nobleman, Mr. Bielawski, who has been for many years a resident of this city, she began the study of the English language, and finally made her debut in "Adrienne Lecouvreur," with what success we already know.

Evening News, 1 June 1909 Modjeska's English Teacher and friend, Johanna Tucholsky, Dies (In Garden City near San Jose)