

THE SILENT HEROES

POLISH CONTRIBUTIONS TO CALIFORNIA

Part I: Northern California

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P.A.C.F. Founder and President

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THE POLISH ARTS
AND CULTURE FOUNDATION

PREFACE

Considering the immense contributions by the Polish people who made Northern California their home, and the total silence about them in school textbooks and in the media, I feel it is my responsibility to publish their input into California history, culture and the sciences, and to honor their achievements in this modest publication.

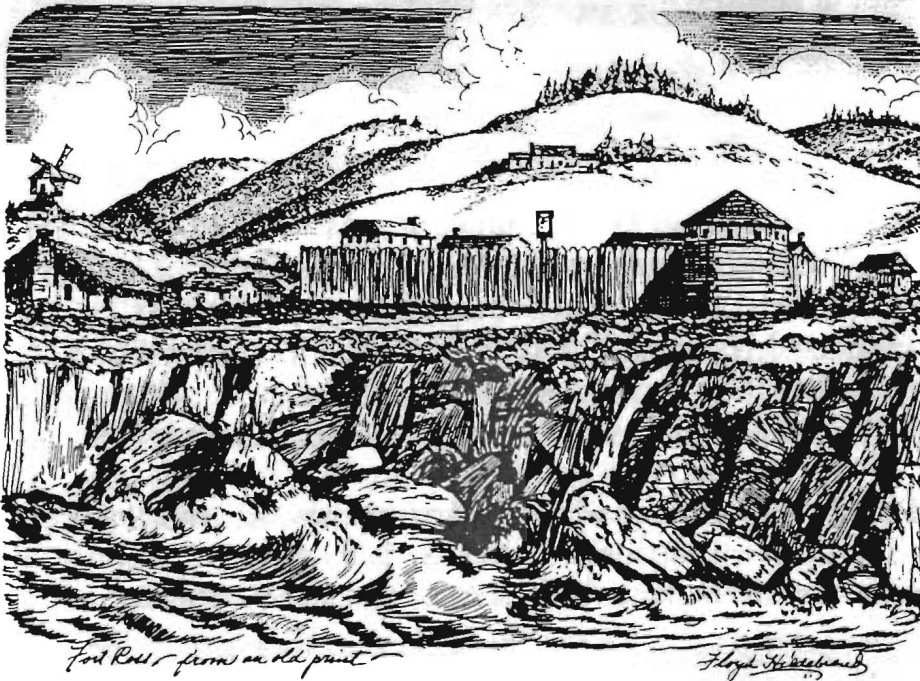
This subject has been thoroughly researched over many years, and much documentation collected. Documentary exhibits were presented at the San Francisco Public Library in Civic Center, at the John Muir National Historic Site in Martinez, at the Oakland Museum during a 1978 "Celebration of Polish Heritage", and at the 42nd National Convention of the American Council for Polish Culture, Fairmont Hotel, San Francisco, hosted by the Polish Arts and Culture Foundation in 1990.

There are thousands of Poles who ought to be honored for their great contributions to California. However, this publication, not supported by any grant or major donation, can focus only on some of the most important contributors. Therefore, I hope in the future proper funds will be available to include many others, and to expand the "profiles" included in this publication.

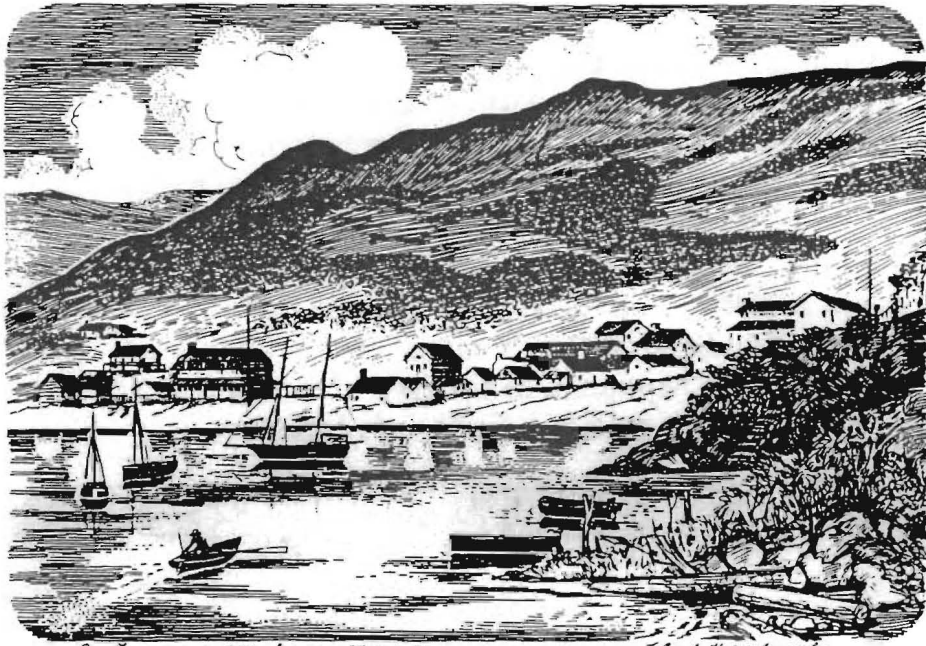
May this edition be the torch that is passed on to future generations.

Wanda Tomczykowska
Founder and President

The first Polish people to arrive in Northern California were those who came via Alaska in the Russian Expedition between 1740-41. In 1771 the famous Polish adventurer, Maurycy August Bieniowski, fleeing from Siberia on a captured vessel, arrived. He was accompanied by Casimir Bielski. Others came between 1806-1836, also from Siberia, with Russians from that region to build Fort Ross north of San Francisco. Poland was at that time under Russian rule, therefore many Poles had to serve in the Russian navy, some as sea captains on trading ships. Cpt. Dionizy Zarembo frequently visited Fort Ross after 1827 as captain of the "Okhotsk." He also put into Bodega Bay in 1831 as captain of the "Urup." He was an agent of the Russia-America Company which sold Fort Ross to John Sutter.



The first Pole to come to California by the overland route (from Sapling Grove in Kansas), was Henryk Brolawski. He settled in Monterey in 1841, but one year later he left for Peru. In 1843 Stanisław Pongowski (Pałowski) stayed for a while before settling in Chile. In 1846 Franciszek Surok arrived, and established a store on the Mokelumne River in 1849. In that same year, the "Pałaski clan" arrived: Wojciech (Albert) Pałaski frequently visited Fort Ross (then called New Helvetia). He was a railroad promoter and planned a transcontinental line across the Sierras. A northern branch of the South Pacific Railroad bears the name "Pollasky Road." Another Wojciech Pałaski, a relative, came to California to fight in the Mexican War. Marek (Marcus) Pałaski founded the town of Pollasky (now Friant in Fresno County) and established the first railroad between Pollasky and Fresno.

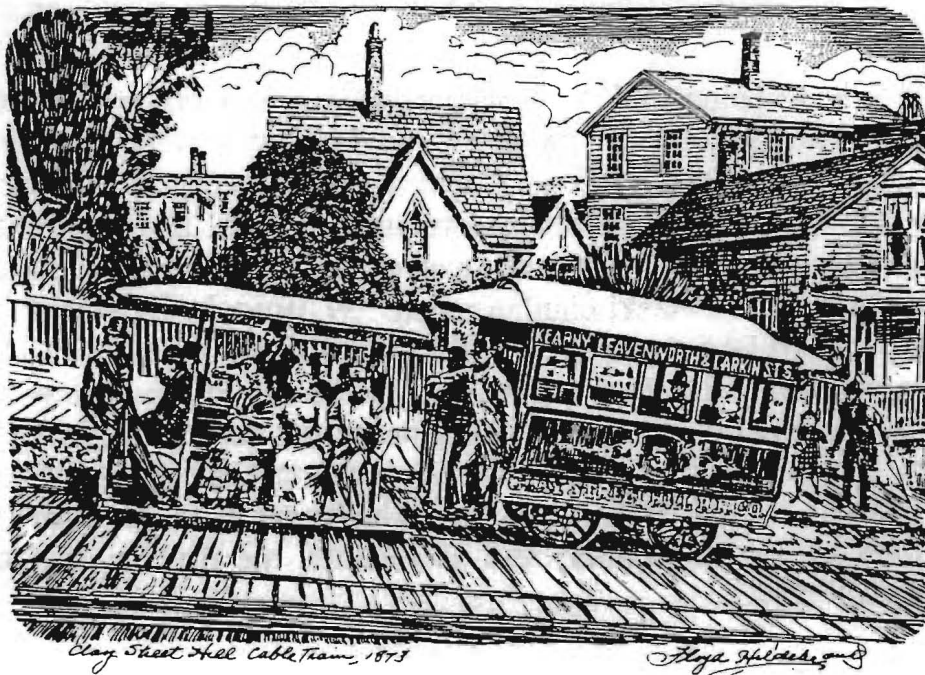


San Francisco in 1845 - from an old print

Floyd Heilbrond

The discovery of gold in 1848 brought masses of people to California. The registers of the 49-ers also included some Poles: Paweł Pietrowicz (Petrovits), one of the more active members of the Vigilance Committee of San Francisco; Mr. Jazinski (Jasiński ?), the first clockmaker in Los Angeles; Michał Kraszewski, who had a store at San Juan Capistrano, where the bandit Manilas robbed him in 1856, and many others.

The Poles, highly educated with moral principles, and mostly political exiles bound by their patriotism, ideals and memories, were a close-knit community who maintained their cultural ties and traditions.



Clay Street Hill Cable Tram, 1873

Floyd Heilbrond

Dr. Jan Teofil Strencel (John Strentzel), a Lutheran born in 1813 in Lublin, was one of the many Polish men who had to escape from occupied Poland because of his participation in the 1830-1831 Insurrection against Czarist Russia. "By the good offices of influential friends" - he writes in his autobiography - "I was permitted to reside in Hungary for several years, gaining information in the wine trade and vineyard culture. I resumed my medical studies in the University of Pesth, and was awarded a medical diploma..." In 1840 he, and his brother, arrived in America as the surgeon to a group of emigrants. In the spring of 1849, Dr. Strentzel, and a company of 135 persons undertook "the perilous journey" from Texas to California. It lasted 13 months, and the gruesome details were described in his handwritten diary. Among the 135 persons was Dr. Strentzel's wife, Louisiana Erwin, and their children: 3-year-old Louise Elizabeth, and 1-year-old John Cracus.

The family first settled on the Stanislaus River because of its Polish name (for Saint Stanislaus), which was given to an Indian leader as Estanislao.

In 1853 Dr. Strentzel purchased 20 acres of land in the "Valley of Hunger" in Martinez, California. He promptly re-named it "Alhambra Valley", influenced by Irving's descriptions of the Moorish paradise in Granada, Spain. Here, he pursued his horticultural interests, and practiced medicine in the ranch house until 1882, when he built a stately Victorian mansion. In 1883 he was awarded a Gold Medal for his display at the Industrial Exhibition in Contra Costa County.

Hard work brought him great success, for he became known as the Father of California Horticulture. According to a letter written by John Muir, the famous California naturalist who married his daughter, Louisa (Ludwika) Wanda, in 1889 Dr. Strentzel's crops consisted of "hundreds of tons of grapes, pears, cherries, etc." By then his holdings consisted of 2,600 acres, 840 of them located in Alhambra Valley.

Besides founding the town of Crockett and the first Grange in Contra Costa County, he also helped found the University of California campus at Davis, where his successes with horticultural experiments were studied. But he also lectured at the University of California in Berkeley - on agriculture and orange culture.

Despite all the above, Dr. Strentzel found time for his compatriots - political emigrants. They arrived as sailors and officers on Russian ships, from which they escaped almost directly to Dr. Strentzel's home in Martinez. A rich correspondence, in Polish survives from the 1850s, (especially with Dr.

Władysław Pawlicki) which attests to his great patriotism and love of Poland. He was very much involved in the Polish Society of California (Towarzystwo Polaków w Kalifornii) which was formed in 1863 in San Francisco. But he also became one of the first members in the prestigious Society of California Pioneers.

When Dr. Strentzel passed away on October 31, 1890, the Muirs and their children moved into the mansion, which is now open to the public. His entire estate, now reduced to 10 acres, was declared a National Historic Site in 1964. Two years later the National Park Service received title to the John Muir National Historic Site.



Several years later a large, slightly damaged frame was found in the attic of the Victorian mansion, now called the "John Muir House." I was asked to identify the language in which the framed document was written. It was a tribute from the Polish patriots to Dr. Jan Strentzel, on the 10th Anniversary of his participation in the 1830-31 Insurrection. After this discovery, the National Park Service agreed to include his name and a paragraph about his work in their new information brochures.

Dr. Felix Wierzbicki, born in Czerniawka, Poland, on January 1, 1815, was only 15 years old when he took part in the November 1830-31 Insurrection against Russia. Arrested by the Austrians with 234 other Polish officers and soldiers, he was deported to the United States in 1834. He taught French in New England and studied medicine in Rhode Island. In 1841 he published his treatise The Ideal Man. But he used a pseudonym. In 1846 he published a series of articles on Poland in The American Whig Review.

Dr. Wierzbicki arrived in California in 1847 to fight in the Mexican War. He joined the American Army as a volunteer, and became Assistant Surgeon.. The discovery of gold in 1848 brought him to San Francisco not to "dig for gold," but - his hobby being metalurgy - to observe the process. For four months he toured the region doing research, which resulted in "a book which shook the continent": California As It Is and As It May Be - or A Guide to the Gold Region, published in 1849. The book was not only the first one published in San Francisco, and the first in California, but also the first one published in the English language. Because of its historical value, the first two editions are valued at "more than their weight in gold." In it, he maintained that California's future lay not in "the gold dust", but in agriculture and colonization of the state.

Dr. Wierzbicki continued his medical practice in San Francisco and became a pioneer member of the prestigious Medical Society of the State of California. As such, he wrote another "first" - it was an article on the history of medicine in California, published in the California State Journal of Medicine" in 1856.

Dr. Wierzbicki is immortalized in a mural at Toland Hall, University of California Medical Center in San Francisco, which documents the history of medicine in California.

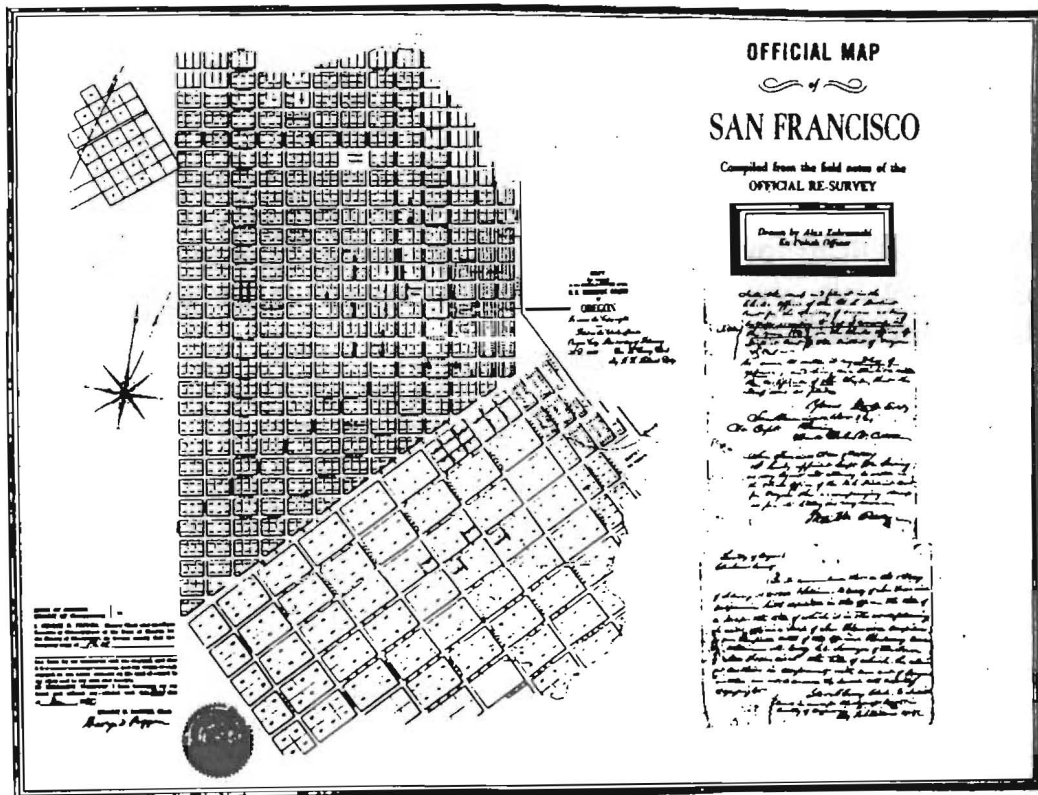
When the U.S. Government established a branch of the U.S. Mint in San Francisco, Dr. Wierzbicki was offered a very important position, which he held until his death on December 26, 1860. He was buried at the Laurel Hill Cemetery, but his remains were later transferred to the Presidio National Cemetery in San Francisco.

Capt. Aleksander Zakrzewski, a Second Lieutenant of Engineers in the Polish Army, was born in Sandomierz on January 1, 1799. As a graphic artist he made several maps of the city of Warsaw, then, in 1849, came to San Francisco as a political exile. Almost immediately he became a major local personality, because he drew the first map of San Francisco. He signed it "A. Zakrzewski, Ex-Polish Officer."

On November 28, 1849 he was granted a city lot (#1172), and in 1850 his new business was listed in San Francisco's first directory as Zakreski & Hartman, lithographers. In that same year he made a lithograph entitled "View of the Procession in Celebration of the Admission of California, October 29, 1850", after a drawing by J. Pendergast. One year later he lithographed the first certificate of membership for the "Committee of Vigilance in San Francisco."

Aleksander Zakrzewski was also a photographer, but lithography was his profession. Because of the sudden increase in the city's population, new maps were needed. Now an important employee of the Topographical Office (at Washington and Montgomery Streets), with the excellent annual salary of \$2,000, he drew new maps of San Francisco in 1853 and 1854. The re-survey for this job was ordered by the then Mayor Geary.

Even though he had a very successful career, and was highly respected in the San Francisco community, Zakrzewski's heart longed for Poland. When the 1863 Uprising against Russia broke out in Warsaw, he promptly returned to Poland to join it. He died three years later, on April 22, 1866, in Kraków.



Aleksander Jan Hołynski also lived in San Francisco, but his address is unknown. He came to California in 1850, already a US citizen whose name was anglicized to "Holinski."

Born in 1813 in Witebsk, White Ruthenia, he became a friend of the great Polish poet Juliusz Słowacki (who predicted a "Slavic Pope" in one of his poems), with whom he travelled extensively to Egypt, the Holy Land, to France, Spain, and other European countries.

Within three years of his arrival in California he wrote La Californie et les Routes Interoceaniques, which, for some reason, was published in Brussels, Belgium, in 1853. In this book he lobbied heavily for digging the Panama Canal. Besides Wierzbicki's books, his are the next most valuable sources of information on California during the Gold Rush era.

In 1854 he executed a map of California, which is housed in the Sacramento Museum, and a copy can be seen at the Polish Arts and Culture Foundation in San Francisco.

After leaving the S.F. Bay Area, Hołynski travelled to South America, published more books, and - like Aleksander Zakrzewski - returned to Poland to fight for its freedom. He died in Lwów in 1884.

COLONEL JAMES C. ZABRISKI (ZABOROWSKI), a prominent California attorney, distinguished himself through his law-and-order approach to problems in Sacramento in 1840. During the 4th of July, 1850 celebration in that city he was invited to speak to the Order of the Sons of Temperance. He was respected for his "independence of thought and action." His daughter, Lizzie, became the wife of Governor J. Neely Johnson, who delegated the Colonel to deal with the Vigilance Committee in San Francisco in 1856. One of his brothers, C.B. ZABRISKIE, a noted physician, accompanied him, together with other prominent citizens of Sacramento.



By 1914, Chris Zabriskie was Vice-President and General Manager for the giant Pacific Coast Borax Company, the Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad, the Bullfrog-Goldfield R.R. and the newly-completed Death Valley Railroad to the mining camp of Ryan, 300 feet above the floor of Death Valley and only 15 miles from Furnace Creek Ranch.

The Zabriskies were sons of the famous OLBRACHT ZABOROWSKI, known also as the "Friend of the Indians" because he was their interpreter and advisor, thus preventing many problems in the New York area. The family was large and prominent. WILLIAM ZABRISKI was an attorney in San Francisco, and already in 1850 a principal speaker at the Fourth of July celebration in Washington, California. A.L. ZABRISKIE was the proprietor of the Zabriski Hotel five miles northwest of Marysville, California. There is also a small town called Zabriskie in Inyo County, near the border of Nevada; and several other small Zabriski towns scattered throughout California.



Cpt. Kazimierz Bielawski, born in Poland on February 27, 1815, was Cpt. of Engineers in the Austrian Army, which occupied the southwestern part of Poland for over a century. In 1846 an Austrian statesman, Klemens von Metternich, wanted to prevent the Polish nobles' and landowners' insurrection against Austria. In order to achieve that he instigated the Polish peasants to rebel against them. Outraged and disgusted, Bielawski left his country for the USA.

He came to California in 1853, and for the next 45 years worked as an engineer for the Southern Pacific Railroad, and at the US Land Office in San Francisco. Doing nearly all of the surveying of old Spanish grants in California, he was recognized as the best and the most honest authority on real estate property titles in the state.

Similar high praise came from those who knew him intimately and who described him as "devoted to his friends, kind-hearted, and generous to a fault." He was for them an example of Polish patriotism-in-action while he worked with them on the "Polish Committee", which collected \$8,000 for the Polish Relief Committee in Warsaw to help those threatened with banishment to Siberia for their participation in the 1863 Insurrection (it was almost half of what was collected in all other states!). Cpt. Bielawski and his friends also worked on changing the "Polish Committee" into the "Polish Society of California", of which he became the first President in 1863.

One year later, on the First Anniversary of that Insurrection, Cpt. Bielawski presided over special ceremonies:

* at 1 a.m., the exact hour of the outbreak, a parade took place through the streets of San Francisco;

* a Holy Mass for those who were killed in the Insurrection was said at St. Mary's Cathedral, then situated on Van Ness Avenue, between Geary and O'Farrell Streets;

* in the evening a dinner for 200 prominent citizens was given at the Russ House (Hotel), the headquarters of the former "Polish Committee."

Cpt. Bielawski was the toastmaster, while Senator Booth, Col. James Zabriskie, Cpt. Piotrowski, and others, were the speakers. They were joined by representatives of other ethnic groups: Hungary was represented by Dr. Czapkay; Germany - by Dr. Lehr; Italy - by Mr. Villamori, etc. All expressed their countries' sympathies for the Polish cause. The evening closed with a recital of patriotic poems, written especially for this occasion by Senator Booth and several ladies. The next morning, January 23rd, special services were held in the local synagogue, under the leadership of Dr. Henry.

Following the collapse of the January Insurrection of 1863, many patriotic Poles fled Poland. Some of them arrived in San Francisco and became very active in the Polish Society of California.

In 1865 Bielawski, together with J.D. Hoffman and A. Poelt, published the "Topographical and Railroad Map of the Central Part of California and Nevada." In 1877 he officially greeted the famous Polish actress, Helena Modrzejewska, on her arrival in San Francisco. She later stayed in his home so she could learn English from his British wife.

Kazimierz Bielawski died in San Francisco at his home, 2302 1/2 California Street, on March 3 (or 8), 1905. He was 90 years old. He is buried at Cypress Lawn Memorial Park in Colma (Section C, Division 3, Lot 69, Grave 11 across the way from the De Young mausoleum). His wife, Maria, died on November 19, 1894, at the age of 65. They are interred side-by-side. The small monument over their graves was erected by the Polish Society of California (Towarzystwo Polaków w Kalifornii).

Casimir Bielawski's contributions to California were recognized by the naming of a mountain near Los Gatos, Santa Clara County, after him. Mount Bielawski is 3,269 feet high, topped by a fire lookout.

Before his death, Cpt. Bielawski designated a 4,372 foot mountain near Mount Hamilton (2 miles southwest) as "Copernicus Peak", to honor the great Polish astronomer who "stopped the sun and moved the earth" - Mikołaj Kopernik.

THE POLISH SOCIETY OF CALIFORNIA

was created in 1863 by the idealistic and patriotic members of the Polish Committee, with headquarters in the Russ House, a hotel in San Francisco. The first president of the Society was also one of its co-founders, Cpt. Casimir Bielawski, under whose leadership the Society grew in activities and prestige. The Polish Society of California was the first of its kind on the West Coast, and one of the oldest in the United States.

The charter members were:

- * Dr. Marcei Pietrzycki, an ardent worker for the cause of Polish Independence, who married an American artist;
- * Dr. Władysław Pawlicki, owner of a prosperous practice, and personal friend of Archbishop Riordan of San Francisco
- * Mieczysław Balczyński, a renowned architect who built the finest S.F. structures;
- * Izydor Levinson, an engineer who became a bookkeeper in S.F.;
- * Izydor Marcinkowski, Franciszek Kosmowski, J. Bieniowski, and Wiktor Dobrogoski.
- * Aleksander Elgass was the secretary.

Prince Andre Poniatowski, "a very enthusiastic worker in the Polish Colony. Always ready to aid his fellow countrymen with money and employment, he paid for as many as ten members of the society when they were financially pressed". One of the Society's great supporters in the 1870s was Count Bodzenta-Chłapowski, husband of the great Shakespearian actress, Helena Modrzejewska. The Society's "Polish Reading Room" was enriched by a collection of books which Kornel Ujejski, one of Poland's important poets, donated in 1864.

In 1880, the Polish Society of California was renamed as the Polish Society of San Francisco. In 1894 it became "Branch 7 of the Polish National Alliance", a benevolent society with branches all over the United States.

In 1889, Saint Stanislaus Benevolent Society was organized, and became "Branch 57 of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America", also a fraternal organization. During World War I, Father Jan Kanty Rozmus organized a women's congregation, Towarzystwo Królowej Korony Polskiej (Queen of of the Polish Crown Society), trying to collect funds for building a Polish Catholic church in the area.

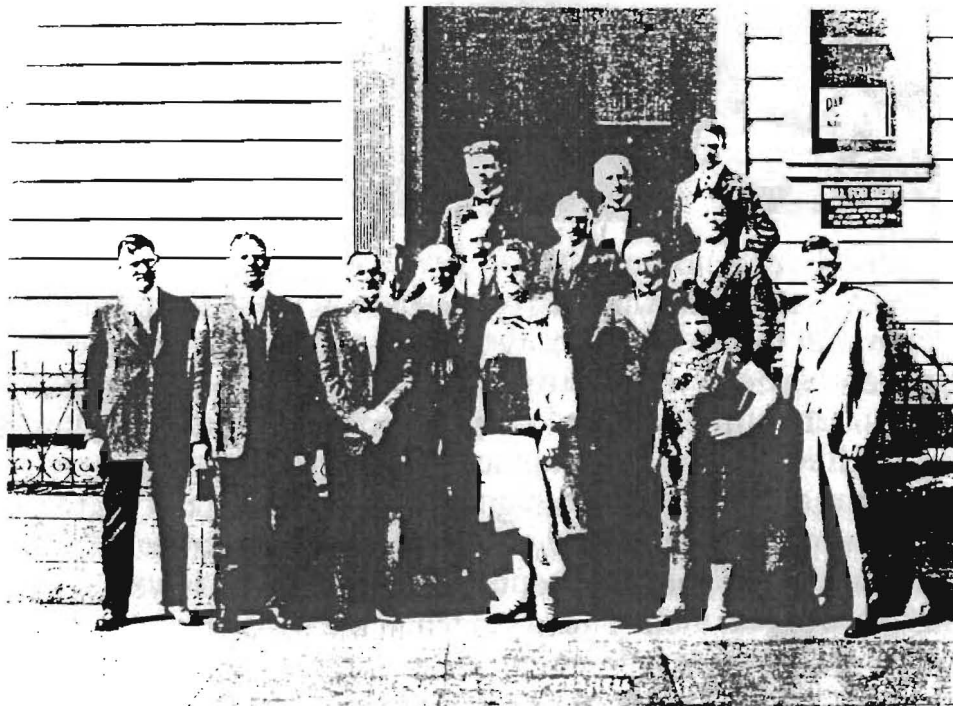
In 1934, the American-Polish Citizens Club was organized. It ceased to exist with the death of its long-time president, Mr. Stanley Walczak, in 1958. There was also the S.F. Polish War Relief, and its Women's Auxiliary. For many years, Mrs. Wiktoria Witkowska directed a Polish Dance Group. From 1951 to 1955, there was an Ignace Paderewski Club in San Francisco. From 1956 to 1964, the Joseph Conrad-Korzeniowski Children's Dance Group prepared their national and folk dances at the Polish House. I was their teacher and choreographer. The group was presented at Polish and international programs and festivals, and organized summer day-camps for the 40 children at the Polish House.

From 1964 to 1966, meetings of the Poland's Millennium Observance Committee held its meetings at the Polish House. In 1967, the Polish American Educational Committee of San Francisco was organized by Krystyna Chciuk and Tadeusz Butler. It offered a range of Polish subjects to children who attended the lessons every second Saturday. In 1971, they organized Związek Harcerstwa Polskiego (Polish Girlscouts, and Polish Boyscouts) - their meetings still take place at the Polish Club, another name for the Polish House.

Other organizations also hold their quarterly meetings there: the Northern California Division of the Polish American Congress (established in 1968); Polish Veterans Association of World War II and the Polish Home Army Veterans Circle (established in 1971 and 1972). When in 1976, the Polish American Congress, the Archbishop of San Francisco, and the Society of Christ Congregation established the Polish Roman Catholic Pastoral Mission in San Francisco, the first Holy Masses were celebrated at the Polish Club. And when Mr. and Mrs. Zins created the Bratnia Pomoc or Polish Assistance of California in 1978 to help the new Polish refugees, most of their programs were presented at the Polish Club.

Today, the Polish Club is open whenever a program or commemoration of a Polish national holiday is observed, or when the Łowiczanie (directed by Mrs. Krystyna Chciuk), and the Vistula dance groups (directed by Genia Nowak) hold their practice there. Its spacious quarters are also rented to outside groups and for wedding receptions. Because none of the above organizations have offices, the Polish Club serves as a mailing address for them. In the small reading room, unfortunately, very little remains of the previously impressive book collection.

Towarzystwo Literacko Dramatyczne (Literary and Dramatic Association) was established in 1925. Its members devoted themselves not only to cultural activities, but also collected \$15,000 with which they purchased an old Baptist Church at 3040 22nd Street (South of Mission Street). It was converted into Dom Polski (Polish House). Its caretakers were three sponsors: Branch 7 of the Polish National Alliance, Branch 57 of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America (Saint Stanislaus Benevolent Society), and the Literary and Dramatic Association. Together they formed the United Polish - American Society of San Francisco, which was incorporated in Sacramento on April 19, 1926 (and exists till today.) The Dom Polski became literally "the home" for Polish immigrants who came to America looking for a chance to build better lives for themselves and their families. They put into it all their combined work and savings, their sentiments and all their hopes. Cooperation between the Polish House and the pre-World War I Polish Consulate in San Francisco, located at 2660 Green Street, was very close and friendly. On December 17, 1938, the Consul General, Dr. Władysław Sokołowski, decorated four members of the Polish House with the Silver Cross of Merit: Katarzyna Pilch, Józefa Niklasiewicz, Felix Gottlicher and Stanisław Błóński.



The Solidarity refugees in the early 1980s used the Polish Club to present political, cultural and artistic programs. Now most of them are members of the existing Polish American organizations, or have moved away in search of professional employment.



Helena Modrzejewska, the famous Polish actress, admired in Kraków, Warsaw and other Polish cities for her roles in the plays of Juliusz Słowacki and other Polish playwrights, arrived in San Francisco on the ship "Constitution" (via Panama), on September 22, 1876, with the intention of establishing in California a Polish Colony of intellectuals and artists. She came with her 15-year-old son Rudolf, her maid-cook Hanusia, and her second husband, Count Bodzenta-Chłapowski. They were greeted by the most important leaders of the Polish community: Cpt. Casimir Bielawski, Cpt. Korwin-Piotrowski, Gen. Włodzimierz Krzyżanowski, Dr. Władysław Pawlicki and Julian Horain. The day was so foggy that she had to be wrapped in blankets.

After a three-week sojourn in San Francisco, the party travelled with great enthusiasm to Anaheim, where they hoped to make their dreams come true. In Anaheim, on October 18th, they were greeted by the great Polish writer Henryk Sienkiewicz (who arrived ahead of them to purchase the proper house and land - still covered only by cacti). Juliusz Sypniewski with his wife and children, and the graphic artist Lucjan Paprocki were also already there. None of them knew anything about the hard work of farming, so their utopian dream soon vanished. In January 1877 Modrzejewska returned to San Francisco, while her husband, Count Chłapowski, stayed in Anaheim to continue the work on their "Arden" ranch in the Modjeska Canyon. ("Arden" was named for the Arden Woods in Shakespeare's "As You Like It".) There were horses, cattle and beehives to take care of, as well as the gardens and the land, in which they invested most of their money, and on which part-time employees worked. It was indeed an extremely expensive toy to play with, but it was Count Chłapowski's greatest passion.

In 1905, the beehives of "Arden" produced three tons of honey. Other crops were as prolific, but financial problems persisted. Therefore, Modrzejewska and Count Chłapowski decided to sell the ranch. It was purchased by the Walker family from Long Beach (who resided there until 1986, when the beautiful house had almost deteriorated).

After the sale of "Arden", Modrzejewska and her husband moved to Los Angeles for a short time, and then to San Diego, while the reconstruction of a villa on Bay Island, at Newport Beach, began. In 1906 they embarked on the 26th (and the last) tour of Modrzejewska's performances in America. In June 1907 they leased a gorgeous Spanish house in Tustin, situated not far from "Arden". The cold she caught during the tour weakened her health to such an extent that they had to cancel their plans for traveling to Poland, where their families awaited them. Their villa on Bay Island was not completed until December 1908, when Modrzejewska and Count Chłapowski finally moved in. (However, the Polish painters - who recited for themselves poems by Mickiewicz - worked on the interior until the first months of 1909, so Modrzejewska could not enjoy her new home very much). Already very ill, she was asked to give a Benefit Performance for the victims of the 1908 Earthquake in Messina, Sicily. Her husband protested, but she overruled him, and gave on January 12, 1909, a memorable performance. It was her last, for she died suddenly on April 8, 1909. Her husband was at her bedside along with her doctor and her priest. She whispered to them: "I hope that heaven is as beautiful as California."

Today, not even a modest sign is affixed to that house on Bay Island, in which the world's greatest Shakespearian actress spent her last days. However, in Orange County there is still Modjeska Canyon, the town of Modjeska (between Watts and Clearwater), a Modjeska railway station, and the 1803 meter high Modjeska Peak in the "Old Saddleback" of the Santa Ana Mountains.

Modrzejewska's "Arden" ranch of 12 acres, and the house with some of her furniture still in place, were purchased from the Walker family in 1986 for \$1,000,000, even though the property was worth at least twice as much. Orange County agreed to this outlay of funds at the repeated requests of Mr. and Mrs. Gene H. Zygmunt (he is President of the American Cultural Network), and other Polish American, mainly Californian, organizations. The reconstruction of the house will cost several hundred thousand dollars. Afterwards, the house and the park will be open for tours and visitors.



Ralph Modjeski, son of Helena Modrzejewska, was born on January 27, 1861, when Modrzejewska was only 17 years old. As a 15-year-old boy he arrived with her and his stepfather Count Karol Bodzenta-Chłapowski, in San Francisco. It was 1876. He loved San Francisco as much as his mother, with whom he made several excursions to Oakland by ferry. At that time it was the only means of crossing the bay. On that same ferry he crossed the bay with Ignacy Jan Paderewski, when he came on concert-tours to the San Francisco Bay Area. Did they discuss the "loss of precious time" crossing the bay in such a manner? Had Ralph Modjeski already then conceive the idea of a bridge to connect the two sides of the bay?

It is quite possible, though at that time his great passion was for music, which he studied with the prominent Polish pianist Kazimierz Hoffman. Perhaps he also observed that in America a more practical profession would be desirable. At any rate, after studying English together with his mother and in San Francisco schools for two years, he left for Paris to enroll at the "School for Construction of Bridges and Roads."

Upon his return to America, Dr. Modjeski designed and built many impressive bridges in various states. He did the same in other countries, thus gaining the reputation of "one of the world's best designers and builders of bridges." No wonder, therefore, that in 1933 he was asked to come to San Francisco and take over the Chairmanship of the Board of Consulting Engineers in preparation for the building of a bridge between San Francisco and Oakland. Dr. Modjeski must have accepted happily - if only in remembrance of his ferry-trips across the bay many years before.

The San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge was built at an expense of \$77 million, and was completed within three years. It was the world's longest bridge, and perhaps one of the most photographed. The opening ceremonies were festive and impressive.



Henryk Sienkiewicz, one of the most popular writers in Polish literature, spent only several months in California, but left behind important writing about the state and the Polish people who made it their new home.

He came to California in March of 1876, to explore possible sites for a "Polish Colony", which some enthusiastic intellectuals and "positivistic artists" planned to establish in California patterned after Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Brook Farm." Those who wanted to come were: Adam Chmielowski (Brother Albert); Stanisław Witkiewicz (father of Witkacy); Helena Modrzejewska (Poland's fabulous Shakespearian actress); Count Karol Bodziena-Chłapowski (her husband); Henryk Sienkiewicz and his friends, Mr. and Mrs. Juliusz Sypniewski with their children; and the prominent Polish graphic artist, Lucjan Paprocki.

Sienkiewicz found a beautiful canyon near Anaheim, full of old woods, and fields never before tilled - only cacti grew there in all their glory. He described it enthusiastically: how the canyon was free of mosquitos and dangerous animals; how wonderfully the peaches, almonds, oranges and palms grew; that "eternal spring" and clean air will make life in the canyon a paradise, etc. "The Party", except for Chmielowski and Witkiewicz, arrived (including Modrzejewska's 15-year-old son, Rudolf) in San Francisco on October 5, 1876 on the ship "Constitution." After three weeks, it proceeded to Anaheim, where Mr. Sypniewski purchased a 4-room house (plus the kitchen), in which only Modrzejewska, her son and husband, the Sypniewskis and their children could live. Sienkiewicz and Paprocki slept in the adjacent barn. Soon they discovered that none of them knew anything about farming, no matter how hard they tried to adapt to it. And the utopian dream ended very soon.

Henryk Sienkiewicz began to travel around California, and his writings were published in Poland in the Gazeta Polska in Warsaw. In Yosemite he lived through a very moving experience: a lonely Polish settler, who lived deep in the Yosemite woods, came down to the hotel in which Sienkiewicz stayed wanting to speak to him. Sienkiewicz was struck by the man's strange Polish language, then discovered that it was the language of the Polish Bible. It turned out that the settler, in order not to forget his beloved Polish, read every day parts of the Bible which he brought with him. Sienkiewicz wrote the story in his Reminiscences of Mariposa.

Sienkiewicz spent some time in San Francisco, staying at the elegant Palace Hotel on Market Street. He attended Modrzejewska's triumphant premiere of "Adrienne Lecouvreur" - at the California Theater - which he immortalized in his American Debut. About his further travels we can read his Western Septet; After Bread; and Letters from my Travels in America, written for several Warsaw newspapers and later translated into English as Portrait of America. In San Francisco, Sienkiewicz met many Poles, but only one of them was used as a prototype - for "Zagłoba", in his historical novel With Fire and Sword. It was Cpt. Korwin-Piotrowski, a tall and handsome man, a very witty and "life-loving" nobleman, who prided himself in using a 16th-century Polish.

In 1905, Henryk Sienkiewicz was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, for his novel Quo Vadis?

Cpt. Rudolf Korwin-Piotrowski was born near Lublin in 1814. For his bravery during the 1830-1831 Insurrection against Russia, he received the highest Polish military award, the *Virtuti Militari*.

He came to America in the early 1840s, but did not arrive in California until 1849, to participate in the Gold Rush. All gains from his gold mining he saved with the intention of buying land near San Francisco, which he dearly loved.

In San Francisco, Cpt. Korwin-Piotrowski joined Cpt. Casimir Bielawski in his efforts to create a patriotic organization, which they named the Polish Committee, and which later was transformed into the Polish Society of California. As one of its founders, and as Commissioner of Immigration for the State of California, he became one of the earliest members of the Society of California Pioneers.

When Helena Modrzejewska, arrived in San Francisco in 1876, Korwin-Piotrowski greeted her - in his dramatic basso-voice - with the traditional "Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus" (Praised be Jesus Christ). And when her "Polish Colony" in Anaheim proved to be just a utopian dream, and she returned to San Francisco to perform at the California Theater, he loaned her money for costumes. At the same time, although not at all wealthy, Korwin-Piotrowski sent \$500 to the editor of *Gazeta Nowojorska* (New York Newspaper), Mr. Julian Horain, for his return to California. (Horain and his family arrived in the USA in 1871 with about \$5,000 and all their belongings, including precious Polish silver, china, etc. By 1876 everything had to be sold in order to survive. San Francisco was not the place for a Polish writer, as California - at that time - counted only 804 Poles.)

When in the Crimean War the allied forces captured the Russian fortress of Sevastopol, Cpt. Korwin-Piotrowski celebrated this event by founding the town of Sebastopol on the Russian River in Northern California, where it still exists.

Later in life he lost his sight. In order to be as close to Poland as possible, he left San Francisco for Paris, where he died in 1883 at the Polish Institute/Hospice of St. Casimir.

General

Włodzimierz Krzyżanowski

was born near Poznań. He came to America in 1861, and on October 20th, as Colonel Krzyżanowski, he formed the 58th Regiment, New York Volunteers. The US Congress intended to promote him to Brigadier General for his valor, but because they could not spell his name, the promotion was limited to the rank of General.

On July 1, 1863, during the bloodiest Battle of Gettysburg, he was thrown from his horse, which then fell on his legs. Despite his great strength, and in spite of immediate treatment in the field, he was permanently disabled.



In 1865 General Krzyżanowski was nominated Commissary of Alaska, but he declined. So he held various government jobs, until he was sent to San Francisco to a position at the U.S. Treasury Department, where he worked from 1879 to 1885.

On March 13, 1885, Krzyżanowski applied for an invalid's pension in Washington, D.C., but because it was very slow in coming, he opened a bar in San Francisco. His clients said that "even behind the bar he still looked like a nobleman." On November 1, 1885, Krzyżanowski, now a widower, married Pelagia Maria Borkoska. Apparently it became necessary for Krzyżanowski to go to Washington regarding his pension. He died there on January 31, 1887, at the age of 62.

His widow continued living in San Francisco. She was then only 40 years old, but lived in great poverty because she was still fighting to obtain her husband's pension. A document dated December 4, 1902 shows the sum of \$8 as her last pension check. The US Pension Agency noted on February 28, 1903: "Dropped the pensioner because of death - date unknown."



Prince André Poniatowski, was born on January 24, 1864 in Paris as the great-grandson of the brother of Poland's last King, Stanisław August Poniatowski. He was also the nephew of Count Walewski, Minister of Foreign Affairs in the French Second Empire, and son of Napoleon I and Countess Walewska. His youth was spent at the court of Napoleon III. Later, as an officer in the Cavalry, he acquired a fascination for horses and racing. In his twenties he was trained in banking, and travelled extensively to Russia, South America, and other countries. His interests were also in hunting, sailing and mining.

With such a background he came to San Francisco in the 1890s, seeking investment opportunities for himself and other European bankers. When he returned to San Francisco in 1893 for the second time, he purchased 20 mining properties in Calaveras and Amador Counties, and created The California Exploration Company. Four years later, with Thomas S. Bullock, he established the Sierra Railway Company, which brought to the Mother Lode region the materials needed for building electric power stations. Then he formed a company to re-work the old Mother Lode gold mines by using more modern methods. Finally, he financed, with the California Exploration Co., Ltd. (into which English bankers brought a credit of \$300,000 to the Crocker Bank) the construction of the Blue Lakes Power House on the Mokelumne River.

Despite the opinions of engineering consultants that it would be impossible to transmit electric power over a distance of 130 miles, Prince Poniatowski was determined to bring hydroelectric power to San Francisco. After four summers of heroic work in the Sierra Mountains (the only season work could be done on the 6,000 - 8,000 foot mountain-level), with teams of horses and mules, and up to 1500 strong workers in 14 camps, he achieved his goal. From the "Electra" plant in the Blue Lakes, via 143 miles of high voltage transmission lines, he brought 15,000 kilowatts of hydroelectric power to the Bay Area: to Oakland on May 6, 1902, and to San Francisco on November 3, 1902. Stockton and San Jose were the next two cities to receive electric power. From the San Jose Mission a second powerline was brought to San Francisco in 1905.

At the beginning of his second trip to San Francisco, Prince André Poniatowski was invited by Mr. William Crocker, then President of the Crocker-Woolworth Bank, to his mansion. There he met the lovely sister of Mrs. Crocker, Elizabeth Sperry. The romance culminated in a October 6, 1894 marriage in Paris. Upon their return to San Francisco they lived in the Crocker Mansion, where two of their sons were born. The mansion stood on the site where today the Grace Cathedral's Choir and Chapel stand. (California and Taylor Streets). The stables and servant quarters stood on the present school site. Today's parking lot gateway, and the walls and fences, are the only remnants of the William H. Crocker and Charles Crocker Mansions which stood next to each other. Both buildings burned after the 1906 earthquake.



Princess Elizabeth (Sperry) Poniatowska
with her three sons: Stanislaw August,
Casimir, and Andre.



Prince Andre Poniatowski and Mr. William H. Crocker, together with General Electric, formed in 1897 the Standard Electric Company of California. Later the United Gas and Electric Company was incorporated. In 1904, California Gas and Electric Co. purchased the above, and is currently the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, where in its building's lobby Prince Poniatowski's photograph prominently figures among the pioneers. The Prince also has an entire chapter (17th) in Charles Coleman's book: PG and E of California - The Centennial Story of Pacific Gas and Electric Company 1852-1952.

In 1896, Prince Poniatowski and his family moved to their newly built mansion on a 160-acre estate in Hillsborough. Today, the Birnhamwood Gold and Country Club occupies the old packing house, while the Nuevo School stands on another part of the estate. Prince Poniatowski's love for horses and horse-racing, inspired him to build - in 1899 - the Tanforan Race Track in Burlingame. That part of the city was incorporated into San Bruno, and a shopping center stands on the site of the track.

The Poniatowskis' other estate was in Santa Barbara, but it was sold in 1903, when the family returned to France.

Prince Andre Poniatowski with his three sons during World War I: **Stanisław August**, who from 1918 to 1920 commanded a Polish Infantry Regiment in Poland; **Casimir**, born in San Francisco, was a paratrooper during WWII for the French-American forces; and **Andre**, also born in San Francisco (Dec. 13, 1899), who joined the Polish Army of General Haller in 1919 as a member of the French Military Mission. His son, Marie-André Poniatowski, was killed during the battle of St. Philipsland in Holland, as a Lieutenant in the 1st Armored Division of General Maczek.



Jan Henryk Rosen, was born in Warsaw in 1891 as the son of a court painter to the Russian tsars. He was educated in France and Switzerland until World War I, during which he served in the French and the Polish armies. In Geneva, Switzerland, he was a military aid to Ignacy Jan Paderewski, and when in 1918 Poland regained her independence after 123 years of partitions and occupations, Baron Jan Henryk de Rosen served for four years in the Polish diplomatic corps.



He was known as "The Sacral Painter", because of the paintings and murals he executed in so many churches and cathedrals: in 1925 the Armenian Cathedral in Lwów; then the King Sobieski Chapel at Kahlenberg near Vienna, to commemorate Sobieski's victory over the Turks in 1683; the Papal Chapel at Castelgandolfo in Italy, etc.

In 1937, Count Potocki, the then Polish Ambassador to the USA, asked de Rosen to paint a mural for the Polish Pavilion at the New York World's Fair. The painter arrived in America and began his work.... but Hitler's attack on Poland, which started World War II, brought everything to a stop. De Rosen stayed in the USA. Having a PhD in literature, and being a very good poet, he was able to obtain a teaching position at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

Besides teaching, de Rosen also painted. His murals can be admired at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C., at the Washington Episcopal Cathedral, and the St. Louis Cathedral. (The mural in this church measures 13,000 feet, and is believed to be the largest mosaic in the world.)

Baron de Rosen also lived in San Francisco for many years. Here he executed the murals of the western and northern arcades at Grace Cathedral on Nob Hill. In 1946, in the Cathedral's Chapel of the Nativity, he painted the Adoration scene, in which he included a small version of his boyhood home in Warsaw, as it was before the Germans destroyed it.

Stefan Mroźewski, known as "the painter in wood", and one of Poland's most prominent graphic artists, was born in 1894 in Częstochowa. He was a student of the famous Władysław Skoczylas, at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, who also founded the Association of Graphic Artists, "Ryt". Mroźewski, and all the other important artists in this discipline were its members. "Ryt" began a period of great development of graphic arts in Poland.

Stefan Mroźewski had exhibits in Kraków, Łódź, Poznań and Warszawa, in 1929 in Paris, then in London, where G.K. Chesterton and G.B. Shaw posed for portraits. Several successful exhibits took place in Holland. In 1936, at the Berlin Olympics, he received the Grand Prix for a sports woodcut. In 1937 he took another Grand Prix at the International Art Exhibit.

World War II surprised him in the Holy Cross Mountains in Poland, and there his reproductions of German identification cards, work permits, etc. saved many lives. He was invaluable for the Polish Underground Movement, for he also recorded scenes of its life in the deep Polish forests, and later of the Warsaw Ghetto and Warsaw Uprising. During this "dark period of unheard-of crimes", Stefan Mroźewski began carving wood illustrations for Dante's Divine Comedy.

While they were living in the San Francisco Bay Area, mostly within the Polish-American community, we had a chance to get to know Mr. and Mrs. Mroźewski rather well. Stefan Mroźewski was a very honest and an unusually modest man. Were it not for his wife, Irena (nee Blizińska), who spent all her energy protecting him, promoting his art, and managing their household, financial and social affairs, Stefan would not have had the time and peace to create.

He was a "very Polish" artist, always busy executing drawings or wood-cuts on Polish themes: scenes from Polish legends and historical happenings, portraits of kings and Polish saints, of Kościuszko, Pułaski, Kopernik, Chopin, Mickiewicz, Sienkiewicz and all the most important Polish poets, authors and scientists. For the 1966 celebrations of Poland's Millennium of Christianity, Mroźewski published an album of his graphics documenting this important historical act. However, he immortalized also foreign writers who posed for their portraits besides George Bernard Shaw: Kipling, Chesterton, Wells, and many others. He made illustrations for Cervantes' "Don Kichotte", Dostojewski's "Brothers Karamazov", Eschenbach's "Parsival", and executed over 200 ex-libris plates.

Mrożewski was the only artist in the world who illustrated *all* the cantos of Dante's "Divine Comedy," which he completed only several years before his death, and the Polish Arts and Culture Foundation tried in vain to present an exhibit of this unusual work in one of the local museums. However, the Foundation had succeeded several years earlier, in presenting a lengthy interview on the local television station, KPIX, Channel 5, and arranged exhibits of his works in several galleries and at the University of California, Berkeley. Other Polish-American organizations, and some of his friends likewise promoted his beautiful works around the Bay Area and the USA.



Caria Tomczykowska, Stefan Mrożewski,
Wanda Tomczykowska, Irena Mrożewska

In 1968, Mr. and Mrs. Mrożewski spent a long time in Poland, inhaling its beautiful landscapes especially in their beloved Kielce region. The National Museum in Warsaw used this occasion to present a large retrospective exhibit of Stefan's works. A memorable press-conference was held for the artist, who was feted around the country.

Mr. and Mrs. Mrożewski, both great Polish patriots living in the San Francisco Bay Area, but with their hearts and minds in their beloved "Ojczyzna", planned to return to their homeland as soon as it became free and independent again. Unfortunately, Stefan Mrożewski died in September of 1975, and his wife several years later. They share a grave at the cemetery of the National Shrine of our Lady of Częstochowa, in Doylestown, Pennsylvania.



Stefan Juliusz Norblin was a direct descendant of the famous Jean Pierre Norblin de la Gourdain, who was born in 1745 in France, but who spent his life in Poland, under the patronage of the Czartoryski and Radziwiłł Princes, and later became court painter of King Stanislaw August Poniatowski. In 1776 he married Maria Tokarska, thus establishing a Polish line of Norblins. Stefan Juliusz Norblin was his great-great-grandson.

Stefan was born in Warsaw on June 30, 1892, inheriting his forefather's talents. He was educated in Antwerp, where in 1913 he had his first exhibition of paintings at the Memling Gallery, then in Dresden, Paris and London. In 1920 he returned to Poland, established his private studio in Warsaw, and became known for his excellent portraits of prominent Polish personalities. (Marshall Józef Piłsudski sat for a number of his portraits.) Stefan was awarded many prizes for his work, but the most important ones were the Silver and Gold Medals from the Warsaw Art Society, and the "Diploma Hours Concours", which only very few artists have received twice in their lifetimes.

Stefan Norblin was also known for his beautiful posters, book illustrations, and stage designs. He was married first to the dramatic actress Maria

Modzelewska-Lipińska, and then to the film and theater actress Lena Zelichowska. When on September 1, 1939 Hitler attacked Poland, the Norblins had time to escape to Rumania, but not enough time to pack many of their belongings.

The Norblins' journey continued in 1940 through Turkey to Iraq. In Baghdad he became court painter of H.R.H. the Prince Regent of Iraq. A year later, still looking for a permanent place to live, he became a painter to H.H. the Maharaja of Morvi, and H.H. the Maharaja Bahadur of Ramgarh Raj of India. There he painted not only portraits, but also executed a number of modern murals for their palaces. Guests of the Maharajas, such as Sir Winston and Lady Churchill, gentlemen on horses, etc., had also been captured in elegant, excellent paintings.

In February 1944, their son and heir was born in Bombay - Andre Peter. His birth was celebrated in a truly royal fashion, and Stefan Norblin presented at that time an enormous exhibit of his works.

Two years later, on August 22, 1946, the Norblins made their dream come true: they boarded the ship "General W.H. Gordon" and headed for America - more precisely - for San Francisco.

They purchased a large house on Faxon Avenue with beautiful views of the city. Stefan became busy executing murals documenting "the Wild West", the history of Wells Fargo Bank, and murals in several churches. But his main work was in painting portraits of San Francisco's high society, of Dean Acheson, General MacArthur, and many other military and political personalities.

The founder of the Bank of America, A.P. Giannini, was immortalized in such an excellent portrait that the bank reproduced it later on every "courtesy card" they issued. Giannini's portrait was displayed at the De Young Museum during an exhibition presented by the Society of Western Artists. The San Francisco Call-Bulletin of March 14, 1951, carried a lengthy article about this portrait, in which the author said: "...The man who did the painting and who succeeded where many others have failed - Stefan Norblin, a member of the Society of Western Artists and a relative newcomer to San Francisco - is a distinguished looking man (actually he resembles Charles Boyer) who was born in Poland of French ancestry and whose life story is fascinating..." Unfortunately, even though he was working very hard, he was not only unable to "make ends meet" every month, but he also began to lose his eyesight.



The Norblins moved to a smaller house on St. Charles Avenue, Lena Żelichowska became a manicurist, but their life in America was increasingly difficult. In 1952, when Stefan's health also began to deteriorate, he drove to Lake Merced, parked his car at the end of Brotherhood Way in an empty parking lot, and took a large dose of sleeping pills. Local newspapers carried the news in headlines. Andrew was then eight years old. Six years later, on August 28, 1958, Lena Żelichowska collapsed in the 19th Avenue beauty shop where she worked.

Before she passed away, she instructed her teen-age son to "give his father's paintings an honorable death" by burning them. But most of the canvasses were too large for him to handle, so he started with the smaller ones and with a portrait of himself which he did not care for. The neighbors, who became his guardians until he was 21 stored the canvasses in their cellar. It was not until 1975 that Andrew Peter Norblin, a tall and handsome gentleman, walked into the Polish Arts and Culture Foundation's office to have a legal document translated. He assured me that neither paintings nor photographs remained, but judging by the expression on his face, I doubted him. He knew it - and several weeks later an enormous roll of canvasses was at the Foundation's door. He also loaned me the photo albums, which helped me prepare a detailed documentation. Two years later, the first exhibit of Stefan Norblin's works was presented at the Foundation's gallery. As it turned out, it is the only collection of his works in the world.

Ignacy Jan Paderewski included California, and especially the San Francisco Bay Area in most of his American concert tours. When in 1915 he was invited to give a concert at the San Francisco Panama Pacific Exposition, he came gladly. He stayed at the Palace Hotel on Market Street. The concert was scheduled for the huge and bare Exposition Hall. Mrs. William H. Crocker, sister-in-law of Prince André Poniatowski, solved the problem by ordering an enormous Polish flag to cover the entire back wall. Paderewski was delighted and deeply moved. Instead of beginning the concert, he first outlined the history of Poland, and spoke on behalf of the Polish people suffering from hunger and lack of freedom. The audience listened with great attentiveness. Then he played Chopin's works so magnificently that the storm of applause could not be silenced. After it subsided, Paderewski asked if he might have the flag to carry it on his tour from state to state. San Franciscans were delighted!

Paderewski was a very charismatic person, very noble, very compassionate. When during one of his tours he visited friends in Oakland, a young reporter eager to get an advance interview, looked him up and they returned to San Francisco together by ferry. They became good friends. Years later the reporter's daughter was getting married on the day Paderewski had a concert scheduled for Los Angeles - he had the concert rescheduled in order to attend the wedding.

There is also the story of a Stanford University student who tried very hard to be Paderewski's impressario for at least one concert - the one in San Jose. The student was Herbert Hoover, who several years later sent the chief of the American Relief Administration, Vernon Kellogg, to inspect the condition in which children and war survivors were living when Paderewski became Poland's Prime Minister.

In 1915 Paderewski purchased two adjoining ranches, about five miles from Paso Robles, Southern California. The 2,544 acres he named "Rancho San Ignacio" (after his patron saint), while the 320 acres he named for his late wife as "Rancho Santa Helena." John Gnieciak, a war veteran of the Polish army, was the ranch foreman. The ranches were purchased with the intention of settling there for the rest of his life. But it was virgin territory, and it cost Paderewski \$270,000 to develop the soil and to plant almond and walnut orchards, prunes and grapes. While there, Paderewski stayed at the Paso Robles Hot Springs Hotel. Today, hardly anyone in Paso Robles is aware of Paderewski's ever having lived in their community.

PROFESSOR WACLAW LEDNICKI

Waclaw Lednicki was born into a family of old Polish nobility on the eastern borders of Poland. It was a very patriotic and influential family. His father, Aleksander, was the first Polish representative to the Russian Duma. Mr. Lednicki spoke many languages, travelled extensively, and had many illustrious friends while living in great splendor on family estates and at the Russian court.



Before 1940 Prof. Lednicki had written ten books: on Pushkin Tolstoy, and Alfred de Vigny, showing their impact on Polish letters and thought; only two were on Polish themes, and were written in French when he was Professor at the University of Brussels. This was a clear indication that Prof. Lednicki wanted to fascinate Polish readers with Russian and French literature, and the Russians and the French with Polish literature.

He continued this trend all through his life, but when he came to Harvard University in 1940, and later to the University of California in Berkeley, he opened up Polish cultural and literary achievements to the English-speaking world. He did this by publishing such books as "Poland and the World" (1956), and many more. He also published hundreds of articles in prestigious periodicals and gave lectures all over the world. Yet, he failed to achieve the one thing which meant the most to him: a Chair of Polish History to be established at the University of California in Berkeley. For years he tried to convince the Regents and the successive Presidents that it would be impossible to teach students a proper history of Russia and the Soviet Union without the history of Poland. He argued that visiting professors were not the answer to the problem. Students would still get a distorted view of the history of Central and Eastern Europe because Slavic departments and Slavic centers at various American universities were preoccupied with Russia and the Soviet Union. To this day there is no Chair of Polish History at the University of California. Prof. Waclaw Lednicki was elected to membership and honorary offices in the most distinguished scholarly societies and academies of the US, France, England, and Western Europe. He passed away in 1967.

JAN KOWALIK

Jan Kowalik has made contributions to contemporary Polish culture that are immeasurable. While he has had careers as a teacher and a writer, it was in the field of bibliography that he made his mark. Perhaps his outstanding achievement is the World Index of the Polish Press, a monumental five-volume work that brought together all the Polish emigre publications worldwide. It was published by the Catholic University of Lublin between 1967 and 1988. He also published the Bibliography of Polish Diaspora (London 1965), and the Polish Press in America (San Francisco 1978).



Mr. Kowalik was born in Skoczów in 1910. He received diplomas from the Teachers College in Blala and from the High Teachers Institute in Krakow. He taught in Polish public schools from 1931 to 1939. When the war broke out Mr. Kowalik joined the Polish Underground and worked as a wireless operator. In 1944 he was captured by the Germans and sent to a labor camp where his health suffered greatly. Liberated by the American Army in 1945, Mr. Kowalik remained for a time in Germany where he directed an international organization for displaced persons.

Jan Kowalik came to California in 1952 and was employed as a library assistant at Stanford University. In 1963 he founded the American Polish Documentation Studio in San Jose where he continued his research on the subject of the Polish emigre press.

Mr. Kowalik has received numerous awards for his efforts including the Golden Cross of Merit and the Ofcl. Cross Polonia Restituta from the Polish government-in-exile in London, and the Anna Godlewska Award. He was also the recipient of an Alfred Jurzykowski Foundation grant and award. Besides his numerous honors, Mr. Kowalik is also a member of the Academy of Polish Sciences, the Polish Society for Arts and Sciences in London, the Kościuszko Foundation, the California Historical Society, the Polish-American Historical Association of Chicago and the Friends of the Bancroft Library in Berkeley, California. His work on behalf of Polish culture outside his homeland has truly been magnificent.

HANKA "KALI" WEYNEROWSKA

KALI - This is the signature on the fascinating paintings of the most prominent Polish painter in the United States, HANKA WEYNEROWSKA, nee Gordziałkowska. But KALI was also her pseudonym during her involvement in the Polish Resistance Movement when the Nazis occupied Poland. She was wounded during the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, and decorated with the medal of valor. She was later deported to a prison camp in Germany, but escaped.



These were the young years of Hanka Weynerowska, a brilliant student at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts, and a pupil of the highly respected Professor Tadeusz Pruszkowski, who continued the traditions of the past (Dutch Baroque, Caravaggio), popular at that time also in other European countries. KALI took from the art studies creative principles and painting techniques, but combined them with her own predisposition for a specific kind of lyrical stylization. Nevertheless, she remained loyal to those principles despite her studies at the Academie Royale des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, and her exposure to the art circles of Switzerland, Sweden, Luxemburg, England and France, where she lived.

Mr. Paul Fierens, Chief Curator of the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Brussels, wrote of her works: "The principal quality in the art of Kali is a drive toward synthesis. Having reached maturity of style she achieves a sort of richness of form which corresponds to a spiritual balance and is almost in contradiction with the restlessness of the present time..."

Mr. Robert Vrinat, Paris, writes: "...Still life or scenery, human or animal, the subject.....never allows itself to be ignored, yields to the aesthetic search and is easily satisfied by the two dimensions of the canvas. Thus it acquires - deprived of all anecdotal, narrative and representational character - a transcendental nobility..."

Mr. Jorgen Mogensen of Denmark says: "...A fine example of her youthful period is the portrait of the Polish Painter Jan Zamoyski. It is a vital original work and a brilliant character study... A visiting Austrian art connoisseur, having gazed at the canvas with incredulity and having tested its texture with his fingertips, said accusingly: 'You did not tell me

that you are hoarding an unknown Van Gogh'."

Mr. James Rambo, Curator at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco: "...Kali won the acclaim of Europe's foremost art critics after successful one-man shows in the Palais de Beaux-Arts, Brussels, the London Gallery, London; Galerie Des Garets, Paris; and Galerie Louis Cousin, Brussels... In 1950 Kali left for Canada, which she represented at the International Biennial Exhibition of Modern Art in Sao Paulo, Brazil... When painting hair, the artist obtains an effect of flowing depths by placing tiny dark grooves to parallel ridges of varying lighter colors. This demanding and slow technique is even used to express such a fleeting impression as that of a herd of cattle stepping down a California hillside..."

Mr. Paul Elbogen, Switzerland: "...Kali's portrait reminded us of the oldest of the Great Masters - they are near to nature, but clarified 'gothic' and 'smooth'... She also found an entirely new way of treating skin tones: the arms, hands and face are covered with evenly distributed color-dots about two millimeters high. In this way she creates a brilliance, a 'changeant' of skin-tone, which no reproduction can bring out. It could even be a distant relative or a continuation of the color-spots of the pointilism created by Signac and Seurat... Kali's paintings will not compare with painters, but with poets - even though her art is pure and not literary..."

Professor Jan Josef Szczepański, Kraków, Poland: "...To honestly describe my attitude towards Kali's art, I would have to state first of all that I found it enchanting from the first glance; however, I can also justify my admiration as an ideological, so as to say, choice. That implies a look at Kali's paintings as positioned on the background of contemporary art, on a background of its dominant styles and trends. One of the dominant trends is the negation of beauty as a necessary element of a work of art... Kali's art, subjected as it is to the scorned idea of beauty, is in these circumstances an act of both courage and humility... Her instinct advises her that beauty lies also in solid responsible work. Kali's truly renaissance-like work, permeated with a desire for perfection in and every detail, is by itself a profession of faith - that faith, the lack of which condemns contemporary man into the abyss of nihilism."

Hanka married Henryk Weynerowski in Belgium. In 1950 they made San Francisco their home and became deeply involved in the life of the Polish community. Her exhibits at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor, at the De Young Museum, and private galleries such as the famous Maxwell Gallery, contributed greatly to burnish the image and prestige of all people in Northern California.

Wanda Tomczykowska



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