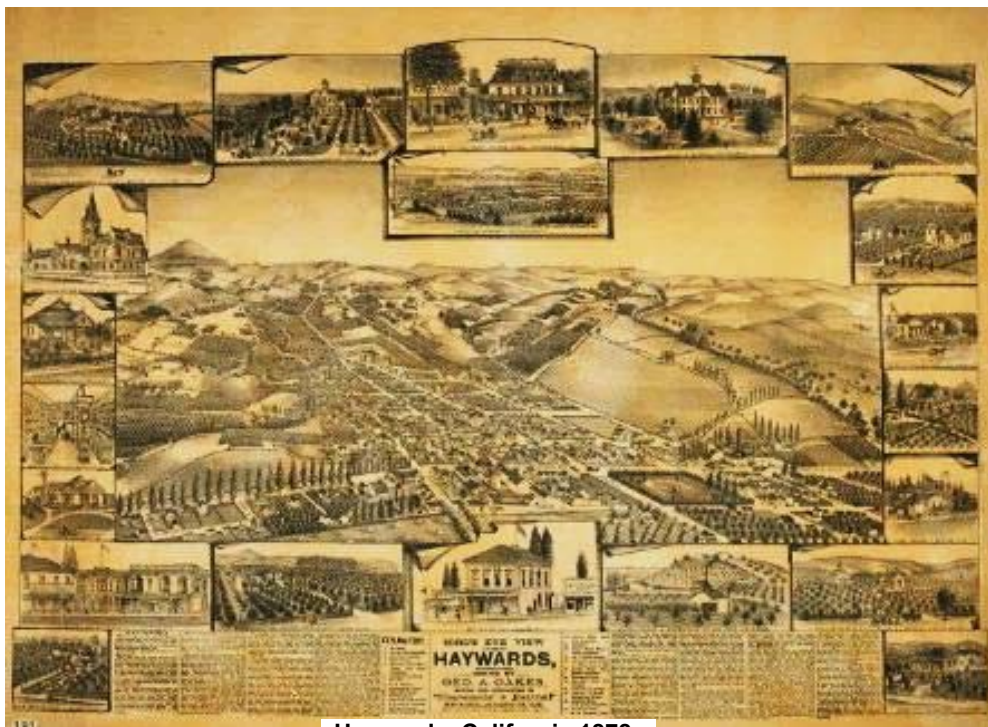


## Rudolf Korwin-Piotrowski<sup>1</sup> to Helena Modrzejewska<sup>2</sup>

Heywood [sic],<sup>3</sup> Cal., 10 April 1878<sup>4</sup>

Dear Madam!

Your letter of April 1<sup>st</sup> made me happy indeed, for it proved that, despite your



Haywards, California 1878

great troubles and triumphs, you have not forgotten an old friend. You are right that none of your devotees loves you as sincerely and disinterestedly as old R. K. Piotrowski – who prays for you every day, as for his own daughter, and asks God for your success, especially good judgment, as talent

He has given you already – all that remains is to apply it. I shall write no sermon

<sup>1</sup> Rudolf Korwin Piotrowski; co-founder in 1863 of the Polish Society of California in San Francisco; see: <http://www.PolishClubSF.org/150%20Years%20Polish%20Society%20of%20California.pdf>; and <http://www.polishclubsf.org/Piotrowski%20in%20City%20Directories.pdf>; born in Poland; lived in Sebastopol in Sacramento County and in San Francisco; served as Commissioner of Immigration

<sup>2</sup> Renowned Polish actress who adopted California as her home; Modjeska, as she was known, specialized in Shakespearean and tragic roles

<sup>3</sup> A California town known variously as "Hayward's", "Haywood", "Haywards" (since 1876), and "Hayward" (since 1911)

<sup>4</sup> The letter was transmitted in 9 days; Modjeska was evidently writing from Cleveland, Ohio, where she was performing in 1878

here, for I know that in that pretty head, when it only wishes, there's more sense and energy than under my gray scalp; all that's wanting is that once a week this be brought to mind. Remember, dear lady, to make hay while the sun shines, that one must gather for the winter, which will surely come, though one who's so adored may not believe it. So listen, Madam, to a sincere old friend – cut back a bit on spending, spare somewhat the bodily adornments, keep the savings – and later you will see how this works out, when covered with glory and admiration, you rest upon your laurels, which with all my heart I serenely wish for you!

The day before yesterday, I received the letter from *Pan* Karol<sup>5</sup> in which he graciously bestowed on me the works of Kraszewski<sup>6</sup> and Kaczkowski<sup>7</sup> (I know, at your kind suggestion). So I thank you most warmly for this. But he added that, after my demise, they be given to the library of the Polish Society in California.<sup>8</sup> Now I fear the Society will be praying for my swift departure to the bosom of Abraham,<sup>9</sup> and since I've read these works already, on my next trip to San Francisco I will turn them over to the Society in your name, and you will be the founder of the California Polish library [in San Francisco].



Library of the Polish Society of California, Group 7, Polish National Alliance

<sup>5</sup> *Pan* = Sir (Polish title of respect); Karol Bozenta (Bodzenta) Chłapowski, husband of Helena Modjeska

<sup>6</sup> Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, author of historical fiction with whom Piotrowski corresponded in the 1870s; see <http://cosmopolitanreview.com/the-korwin-letters/>

<sup>7</sup> Zygmunt Kaczkowski, author; see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zygmunt\\_Kaczkowski](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zygmunt_Kaczkowski)

<sup>8</sup> The Polish Society of California in San Francisco, founded in 1863 by Kazimierz Bielawski and Rudolf Korwin Piotrowski; see: <http://www.PolishClubSF.org/150%20Years%20Polish%20Society%20of%20California.pdf>; and <http://www.polishClubSF.org/Bielawski.pdf>; and <http://www.PolishClubSF.org/Piotrowski%20in%20City%20Directories.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Refers to the place of comfort in the Biblical Sheol (or Hades in the Greek Septuagint version of the Hebrew scriptures from around 200 BC, and therefore so described in the New Testament) where the righteous dead await Judgment Day

Now in regards to myself, I am healthy enough, but my legs are weak, and there is no question of dancing. My Lion and tiger friends<sup>10</sup> have gone out into the world, and the black Tiger,<sup>11</sup> to remember him by, has so injured my right arm that for five weeks I couldn't write, and it's by the grace of God my arm was not torn up completely, for I stuck my fingers where I shouldn't have,<sup>12</sup> and entrusted friendship to such as Krzyżanowski.<sup>13</sup> A propos of which, I have very little hope of recovering anything,<sup>14</sup> despite solemn words of honor, as fate

**IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE UNITED States, for the District of California.**  
**In the matter of W. KRZYŻANOWSKI—Voluntary Bankrupt.**  
 This is to give notice that on the tenth day of December, 1877, a Warrant in Bankruptcy was issued against the estate of W. Krzyżanowski, of the city and county of San Francisco, and State of California, who has been adjudged a Bankrupt on his own petition; that the payment of any debts, and delivery of any property belonging to such Bankrupt, to him or for his use, and the transfer of any property by him, are forbidden by law. That a meeting of the creditors of the said Bankrupt, to prove their debts, and to choose one or more assignees of his estate, will be held at a Court of Bankruptcy, to be holden at room No. 10, Court Block, 636 Clay street, of the city and county of San Francisco, before J. M. Mitchell, Register, on the NINTH day of JANUARY, A. D. 1878, at one o'clock P. M.  
 E. P. MARSELLUS, U. S. Marshal,  
 As Messenger, District of California.  
 d13

Krzyżanowski -- Bankruptcy

would have it.<sup>15</sup> Regarding accounts of him, if you know of such, please do write to me, so I may know him better, and I will keep the secret to myself. Regarding your gracious favors in Paris, dear lady, I thank you most warmly for the offer, but I have very few remaining acquaintances there any longer. Should you, however, encounter my sister, Stefania Cichorska<sup>16</sup> (who was living in Batignolles, Sauffroy Street Extension[,]



No. 11),<sup>17</sup> get to know her and kiss her from me, she will love you, for good and similar natures combine.

<sup>10</sup> The dual nature of humans is a widespread literary theme; the tiger sometimes symbolizes cruelty, unprovoked ferocity and treachery; the lion alludes to courage, greatness and generosity

<sup>11</sup> Perhaps someone known to Piotrowski as cunning and treacherous

<sup>12</sup> "Stuck my fingers where I shouldn't have"; Polish idiom meaning interference in someone else's business

<sup>13</sup> Włodzimierz Krzyżanowski, Polish engineer, politician, and military leader; fought in the American Civil War; a Brigadier General in the Union Army; his saloons in San Francisco went bankrupt; Piotrowski was among his creditors

<sup>14</sup> Korwin Piotrowski loaned Krzyżanowski \$1,000 for the latter's saloon ventures -- The New York Casino and The Louver; Korwin Piotrowski lost his investment in Krzyżanowski's ventures when Krzyżanowski declared bankruptcy

<sup>15</sup> Parts of this sentence are indecipherable

<sup>16</sup> Stefania Pelagia Piotrowska Cichorska; wife of Władysław Cichorski; sister of Rudolf Korwin Piotrowski

<sup>17</sup> Postal address of Rudolf Korwin Piotrowski's sister in Paris, France (Batignolles, rue Souffray prolongée, N. 11)



Regarding Henryk,<sup>18</sup> he did well to go back home. The country needs him, ought to serve him, and happiness may be attained, even painfully, by doing one's duty. You know that same path well through your own experience. It is only left for me to kiss those pretty hands and send you my most heartfelt wishes for success, happiness and all that a loving brother or uncle would want for you.

Tout à Vous toujours<sup>19</sup>



Henry Sienkiewicz as He Was When in California.

Rudolf Korwin-Piotrowski

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Translated from the Polish by Bob Lamming with Elżbieta Kieszczyńska (Clifton, NJ) and edited by Maureen Mroczek Morris (San Francisco) with Roman Włodek (Kraków) and Lynn Ludlow (San Francisco)

Also see "The Korwin Letters" (other letters written by Polish Society of California co-founder, Rudolf Korwin Piotrowski)

<http://cosmopolitanreview.com/the-korwin-letters/>

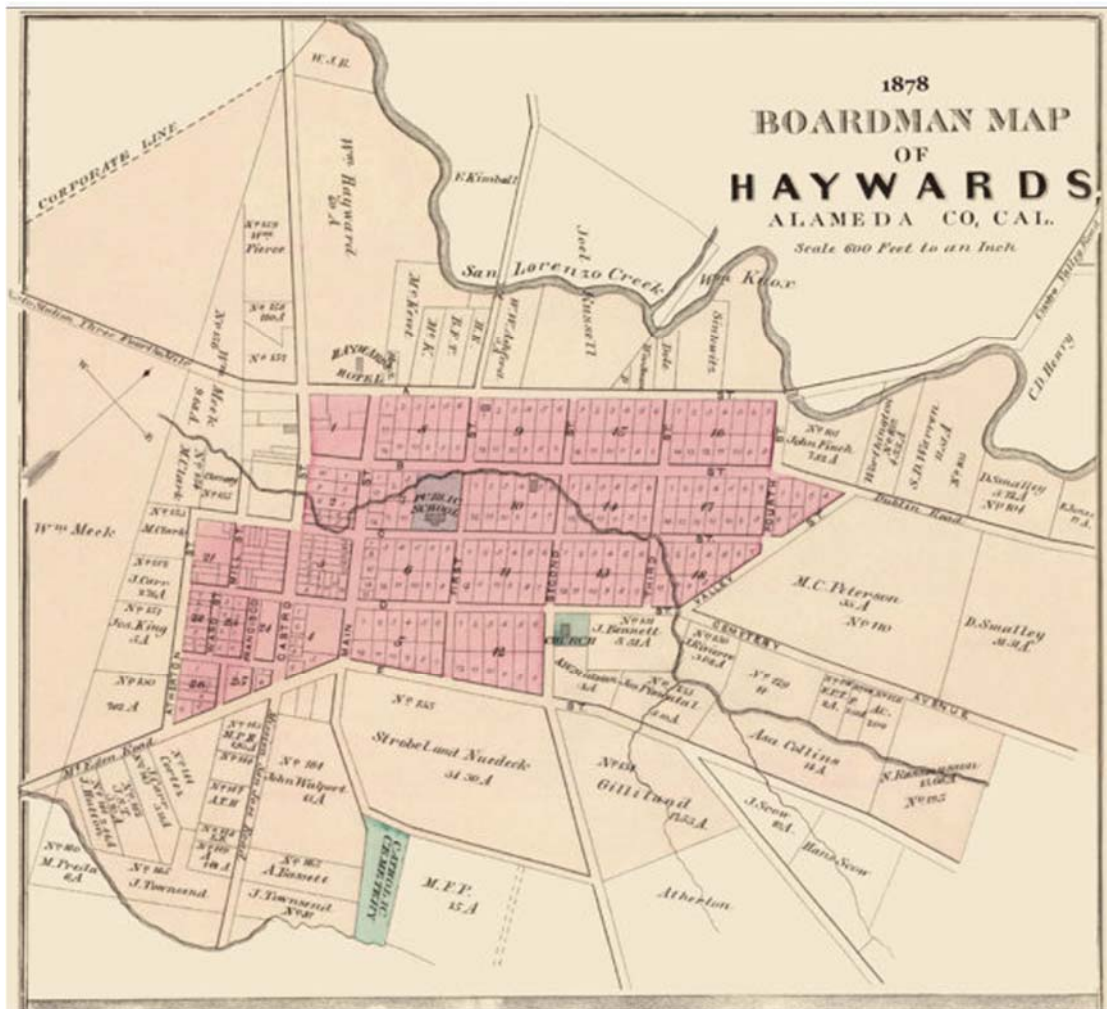
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<sup>18</sup> Henryk Sienkiewicz, author; winner of the Nobel Prize; famous for *Quo Vadis* and The Trilogy; visited California in the mid 1870s; friend of Captain Bielawski, Captain Korwin Piotrowski, Helena Modjeska, and other Polish California pioneers

<sup>19</sup> Sincerely yours, always

Also see the letter written by Rudolf Korwin Piotrowski to Karol Bozenta Chłapowski (Modjeska's husband)

<http://www.polishClubSF.org/KorwinToKarol.pdf>



Franciszek Czarnecki and William Sinkwitz, friends of Korwin Piotrowski, lived in Haywards; see:

<http://www.polishclubsf.org/Francis%20Czarnecki.pdf>

<http://www.polishclubsf.org/Sinkwitz.pdf>

