



# TRUMPETER

QUARTERLY - AUGUST, 2025

POLISH HERITAGE ASSOCIATION OF MARYLAND

## *Coming to America:* *OUR STORIES, STRUGGLES & SUCCESSES*



**In this summer issue**, we are happy to print three unique Polonia family stories that were submitted in response to our request for material for our Maryland Polonia Preservation Project. The articles will be maintained in their entirety in that collection: for here, we've had to edit for space but all the flavor is intact. Many thanks to Anne Miksinski Kimball, Joan Persing, and Brett Wilson for sharing wonderful anecdotes about their Polish forebears. This is the community from which so many of us descend and remain a contemporary part of -- a community of grit, love, humor, and perseverance. We welcome more stories from any and all for possible publication in *The Trumpeter* and for full preservation through Digital Maryland. Send your family memories and photographs to [phaofmd@gmail.com](mailto:phaofmd@gmail.com) ATTN: Trumpeter Editor. Thank you and enjoy!



## MARYLAND POLONIA PRESERVATION PROJECT



## ~THE BOLD BARBER OF EASTERN AVENUE ~

By Anne Miksinski Kimball  
Granddaughter of Boleslaw Miksinski

Long ago in Warsaw, a young man contemplated his future. Russia ruled his homeland; but, he was Polish! Conscription in the Russian Army was not what he wanted to do, so he and his friends decided to smoke and drink themselves into ill health. The Russians would not want sick recruits. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to smoke and drink enough at 19 to make yourself an unacceptable recruit for any army. So, when the young man reported to the Russian doctor, the doctor poked him in the shoulder and said, "Miksinski, you're in!"

Boleslaw started working on a new plan for his life. He was quickly dispatched to Finland. He liked the Finnish people. He decidedly did NOT like the Russian Army! So, he started thinking about Paris. After all, he was a trained "coiffeur" -- a professional guildsman! Ah, Paris, what a thought! Unfortunately, France was not a particularly hospitable place for a Russian draft dodger to hide. So he considered his next option...America. He had an uncle in Baltimore. Not preferable, but practical.

His next move was to find a way to let the Russian Colonel's wife know that he was a professional hairstylist. Then, he could ease into her good graces, which he did with great alacrity. He would walk through the officer's library and casually study the large wall map until one day the Colonel himself said, "Miksinski, I know what you are doing." The young soldier said he was just looking at the map. He wasn't doing anything.

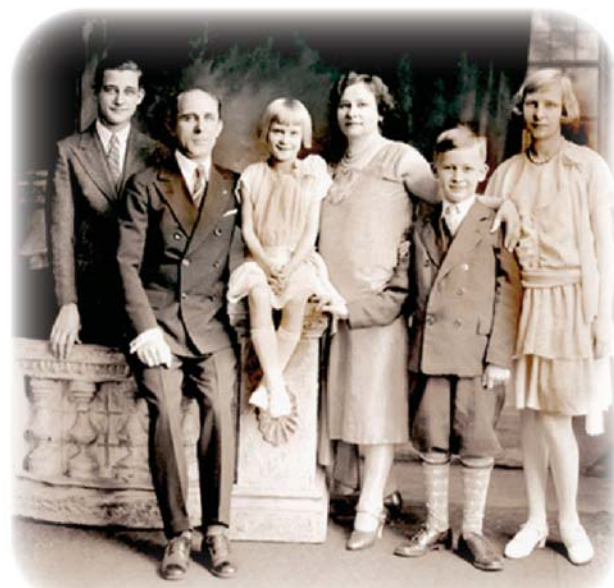
Then one day, he asked the Colonel's wife to assist him in getting a 3-day pass to go home. The Colonel was very suspicious. He felt the young soldier would not come back. So, he asked his wife to get a promise out of the young Polish soldier that he would return to Finland after his leave. The Colonel knew Poles were very proud and took their honor seriously. So, they had the young soldier promise, on his word of honor, that he would return. Boleslaw went to Warsaw and made all his plans to go to America. At the end of three days, he returned to Finland and signed in -- thereby fulfilling his promise, and immediately returned to Warsaw, said goodbye to his family forever, and left, headed for the Austrian border.



He was helped by a farmer's wife. He swam a river and luckily, he dodged some bullets from the border guards. He spent a few nights in Vienna. (Coincidentally, he stayed in a hostel. His roommate could have been the poor artist named Adolph who was down on his luck in 1911?) But Boleslaw was headed for America; who cared about unemployed artists? He went north through Germany and uneventfully boarded the S.S. Frankfurt at Bremen as a Second-Class passenger. He had his pride. He had his passage money. After all, the ice cream was better for him as a Second-Class passenger than as for one in steerage.

He arrived in Baltimore on April 13, 1911. Upon disembarking, he was very disappointed. Baltimore had open sewers with a dense array of overhead power lines darkening the sky! It was nothing like beautiful Warsaw! But, despite his misgivings, he stayed. (Generations of our family have been grateful for that!) He acquired a barber shop, he joined the Board of Directors of a building and loan, he bought land, he got married, he had 4 children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, great great grandchildren. He passed away in 1988 at the age of 100.

My Grandfather was quite a feisty, spunky, proud, determined Polish man who valued his honor and loved the new country that had brought him freedom and happiness and a long, prosperous life.



Proud father(seated) Boleslaw Miksinski and his family circa late 1920s - early 1930s

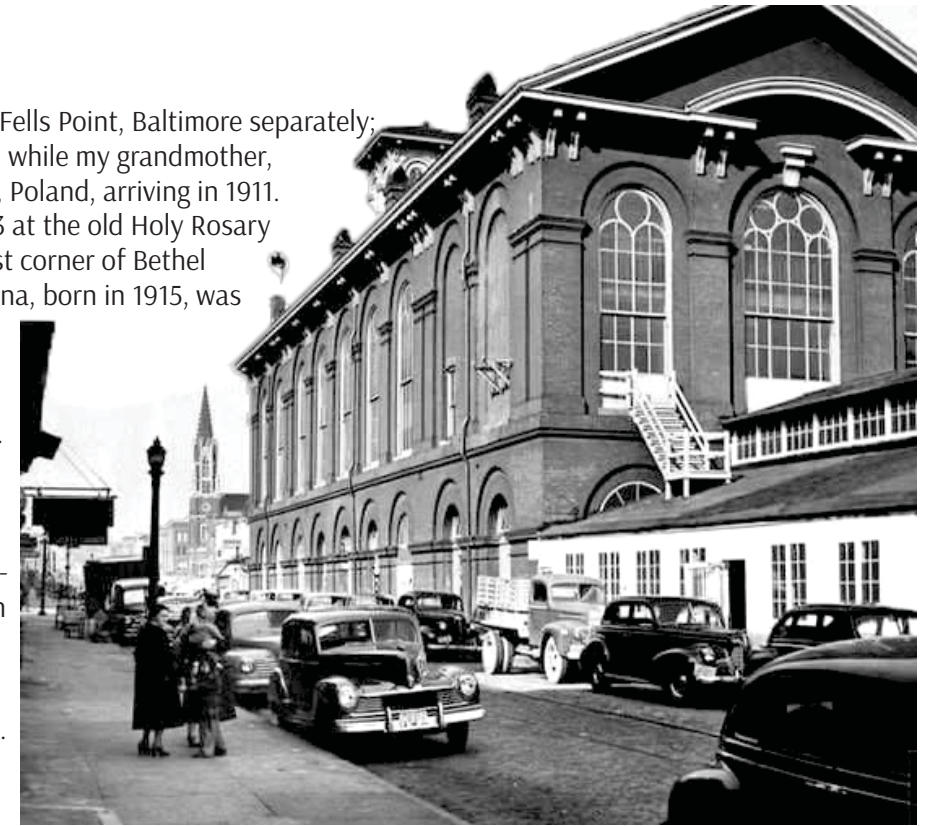
## ~MY FAMILY'S LIFE IN BROADWAY MARKET~

By Joan Persing  
Granddaughter of Jan Calka

My maternal grandparents emigrated to Fells Point, Baltimore separately; grandfather, Jan Calka, arrived there in 1909, while my grandmother, Władysława Kaliczinska, traveled from Lublin, Poland, arriving in 1911. They eventually met and were married in 1913 at the old Holy Rosary Roman Catholic Church, then at the northeast corner of Bethel St. and Eastern Ave. Their first daughter, Janina, born in 1915, was my mom. In true American fashion, everyone called her Jane or Jenny. My grandparents, being typical entrepreneurial immigrants, started a grocery store at their home at 117 S. Ann St. in 1924. As they prospered, in 1935, they moved on to live in Montford at Fairmont Avenues where they continued with a corner grocery. Later on, grandfather expanded his business and opened a produce stall in Broadway market.

Just before World War II, in 1937, mom married a serviceman named John Harris Persing. They had three children -- first James, then Joan (me), and then my younger brother John. After my grandfather took ill, my parents took over operating the grocery store. Jenny, as most knew her, was a hardworking, smart businesswoman, like her father. With her husband serving in the military, she managed to run the corner grocery store while opening her heart to those in need during the hard economic times.

At the time dad returned home in 1947, grandfather was no longer able to run his businesses, so my parents decided to sell the Montford Ave. location and occupy grandfather's space in the Broadway Market (Stalls 13 and 15) which was located between Castle



Broadway market hall, looking north, 1947

Farms dairy and Panzer Pickles. The business operated under the name of J & J PERSING for more than 20 years. The J and J initials were derived from everyone's name in the family, since they all started with a J -- Jane, John, James, John and Joan.

Rent for each stall was paid to Baltimore City. Business owners supplied their own equipment, butcher blocks, machinery, refrigerated walk-in boxes, and display cases. Fire insurance was unavailable as the structures were part wood and brick. After the fire in 1968, the salvaged equipment was given to younger business owners who could start over at another space in the south market building. Since my parents were in their mid-50's they decided to seek employment elsewhere.

For me, growing up in a family that operated a meat business selling pork, beef, veal, spareribs, pigs feet, eggs, chicken, ground beef, cheese, cream cheese, fresh and smoked Polish sausage and luncheon meats was a very interesting experience.

The days were long. The business was open



Market stall number chiseled into curbstone





# ~THE HISTORY OF MARTIN BOCHINSKI~

## A POLISH IMMIGRANT IN BALTIMORE

By Brett S. Wilson  
Great grandson of Martin Bochinski

Martin Bochinski emigrated to the U.S. from Poland in the early 20th century. He owned a hotel in the Fell's Point neighborhood of Baltimore, then eventually moved to the Glen Burnie area, where he and his wife helped raise my grandfather and his brother. His life is best described as a representation of the large wave of Poles who emigrated to the U.S. at the turn of the 20th century. Like many late 19th and early 20th century immigrants, his life story is both supported by documentation and records and has unanswered questions. Specifically, why did he and many other Polish immigrants come to the U.S. and what did they do when they got here?

Many immigrants left Poland in the late 19th century due to the turmoil in Poland caused by the partitioning of the country by three imperial powers—Russian, Prussian, and Austro-Hungarian. Martin Bochinski was born on November 11th, 1869 in Poznan, Poland under Germanic (Prussian) occupation. Martin would have known about the Polish insurgencies from the previous generation and experienced the Germans' increased military presence in Poland and the attempts at "Germanification" of the area.

Military occupation would be hard to live under, especially when "Poles were unified by a belief in their own independence, in their freedom to worship as Roman Catholics, and in their distinct identity as a people. The difficulty of maintaining this identity under hostile imperial regimes led many Poles to seek freedom overseas".

In response to revolts against the Russian occupation of Poland, Germany put together a strategy to radically change the Polish culture, and strengthen the military inside of Poland to protect itself from incursions like the Russians had dealt with.

These events, and the many intolerant actions taken towards their religion and culture, moved many Poles to seek a better life elsewhere. Economics played a large part as well, as during the industrial revolution many of the trades that local village and townspeople worked in were being eliminated due to the rise of factories. While Germany was one of the few economic "powerhouses" in Europe, it would be hard for someone to move to Germany and work



for them. Martin was Polish, Roman Catholic, and an apprentice blacksmith. The combination of religious persecution, German occupation, and needing to find work are driving motivators.

Martin arrived in the U.S. in 1899 at age 30. But why Baltimore? One reason Polish people came to Baltimore were the advertisements that were sent to Poles living in Western Poland about work opportunities and easy passage on the German shipping line Norddeutscher Lloyd or NDL. NDL had a partnership with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad whereby immigrants arriving in Baltimore (Locust Point) from Bremen could immediately take trains to points farther West.

While no precise arrival records have been found, Martin most likely made the same trip from Bremen. The first document that shows Martin and his family's existence is the 1910 Census where Martin "Bachenski" is listed with his wife and two daughters, living at 800 S. Broadway, and stating that he and his wife had come to the states in 1897. His occupation is listed as "saloon keeper".

In the 1920 Census, Martin, his wife, and his five daughters and two sons are still living at 800 S. Broadway, and his occupation has changed from "saloon keeper" to "café proprietor". In the 1930 Census, Martin, has his wife and six of his seven children living with him. One of the interesting pieces of information is the listing of all the "boarders" or "lodgers" that were staying at 800 S. Broadway—approximately 24 in total. In the 1940 Census, the address changes from 800 S. Broadway to 802 S. Broadway, with my grandfather, his brother, and his mother all staying at this address. In the 1950 Census, the family had left Baltimore for Point Pleasant in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. Juxtaposed to other



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## In Memoriam

It is with a sense of profound sadness and great loss that we announce the passing of our dear friend, Thomas L. Hollowak - historian, archivist, author, and long-time member of the Polish Heritage Association of Maryland. Tom passed peacefully Thursday afternoon, July 31, after a long fight with cancer.

In 1992, he founded Historyk Press, which is dedicated to publishing the genealogy and history about and for Marylanders of Polish heritage. As an archivist at the University of Baltimore Library Archives, Tom created a special collection called the *Archives of Maryland Polonia*. It houses a significant collection dedicated to the history of Baltimore's Polish immigrants and people of Polish heritage in Maryland. In his retirement, Tom was the Associate Director for Special Collections, Emeritus, at the University of Baltimore.

Tom's last published book, a labor of love which he had been compiling over the course of 20 years, *Picking, Packing & Shucking: The Migrant Experience of Baltimore's Polish Community*, was finally published in February of 2025. It tells the story of Baltimore's Polish immigrants, who, during the spring and summer,

worked on farms in Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania, picking strawberries, string beans, and tomatoes.

Tom's passion for his Polish heritage extended to his decades-long active participation in the Polish Heritage Association of Maryland. Tom served as an officer, chairman and member of the scholarship committee, contributor to the scholarship fund, and chief editor of the Association's newsletter, *The Trumpeter*.

Even during his bout with cancer, Tom managed to attend the 50th Anniversary Gala of the Polish Heritage Association of Maryland in September of 2024.

Tom was a superlative representative of Maryland's Polonia in his professionalism, knowledge, integrity, and deep commitment to promoting knowledge and appreciation of his beloved Polish heritage -- its history, culture, and traditions.



Maryland Polonia has suffered a great loss with Tom's passing. We are forever grateful for Tom's time with us and will sorely miss him. Please join us in conveying our sincerest and most heartfelt condolences to Dave Amos and Tom's entire family. A Celebration of Life and prayer service was held at the Evans Life Celebration Home, Parkville, on Sunday, August 10, 2025.

THOMAS L. HOLLOWAK  
FEBRUARY 4, 1954 - JULY 31, 2025

Polish Immigrants at the time, Martin seems to fit in with the rest of his Polish compatriots. One such article from the *Baltimore Sun*, dated July 22, 1928, describes the overall lives of Polish immigrants living in Baltimore. "Sixty percent of them own the homes they live in... [they cover a solid portion] of East Baltimore, with Curtis Bay and Locust Point as a sort of suburb." I find this interesting, because Martin would live and own his homes in East Baltimore and Glen Burnie, which is just a little further south of Curtis Bay. The article goes on to describe some of the prominent churches founded by Pol-

ish immigrants, like Holy Rosary, where Martin and his wife were married and where they have also been laid to rest. The last part of the article describes how English is becoming the more spoken language of "Little Poland". When I'd asked my grandfather if he knew any Polish, his answer reflects that change: "My grandparents didn't want us learning Polish. They believed that we were in America, and we should speak English." However, in a more recent conversation he stated how when he was growing up, much of the community spoke Polish fluently, which the article from the *Sun* describes as

-continued on page 6



## THE HISTORY OF MARTIN BOCHINSKI...

well: "Polish is only indulged in by the older heads, and even they intersperse it with splatterings of English."

Many Poles who landed in Baltimore had been farm laborers in Poland and used Baltimore as a passthrough on their search for workable farmland. Those who were unable to purchase land stayed in Baltimore and lived in Polish communities. Martin is then somewhat of an anomaly, in that he had enough of his own capital to purchase a building, yet stayed in Baltimore. One may find this strange, as some scholars write that those with means did not stay in Baltimore, yet Martin and his family did.

The story of Martin becomes more unique when information of his arrests is found. On two separate occasions, Martin

was arrested for liquor distribution charges. On December 12th 1912 in the *Baltimore Sun* under "Court Proceedings", Martin's name pops up: "selling liquor on Sunday". In the *Morning Sun*, October 1st 1919, he was arrested again:

"Five Saloonists Arrested...Federal Agents Charge Selling of Intoxicating Liquor... Martin Bochinski 800 S. Broadway"

Was this involvement in criminal culture during the Prohibition era? The answer may likely be 'no'. During Prohibition, Maryland was known as "the Free State". According to Michael T. Walsh, author of *Baltimore Prohibition: Wet and Dry in the Free State*, "In the November 1916 referendum... all twenty-eight of Baltimore's wards tallied more votes against prohibition than for it". After the passage of the 18th Amendment and the Volstead Act, Maryland's legislature attempted to write its own enforcement laws on liquor sales. However, "[although the Supreme court ruled the 18th Amendment Constitutional it also] made certain that Maryland was not required to take any enforcement action." Thus, Maryland's enforcement, especially in Baltimore City, was best seen as lackadaisical.

Walsh goes on to mention my great grandfather by name, in his writing about criminal activity during the "Jazz Age":

*Judge John Carter Rose, a respected U.S. district judge who had been a major Progressive leader in Baltimore City, handled the most notable violations in the early days of Prohibition. Four men—William B. Fosbender, Martin Bochenski, William Berger and Thomas Malloy— who were saloonkeepers, café owners and bartenders, faced jail terms for serving drinks after January 16, 1920. Judge Rose, however, did not deliver severe sentences, claiming that the wisdom of the law of Prohibition was a legislative matter and not a judicial matter. However, he did hand out jail sentences ranging from sixty days to four months.*

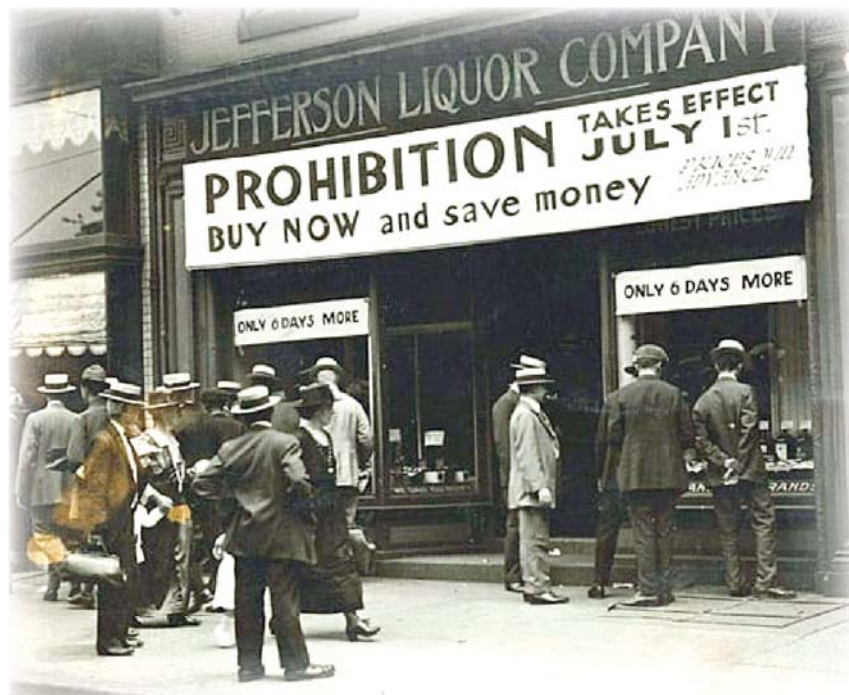
Up until finding this information, my grandfather had mentioned that Martin had indeed gone to jail, but he could not determine the specifics. Now it can be inferred that his prison time was between sixty days to four months for Prohibition violations according to Walsh's findings

Martin Bochinski passed away at the age of 91. During his life, he lost his first wife and three of his first four children in Poland; traveled to the U.S. with his remaining daughter, remarried, had six more children, became a business owner, and helped raise his grandchildren on a small piece of farmland. Martin's story is one that many can relate to. Many are battered by the tragic events of life

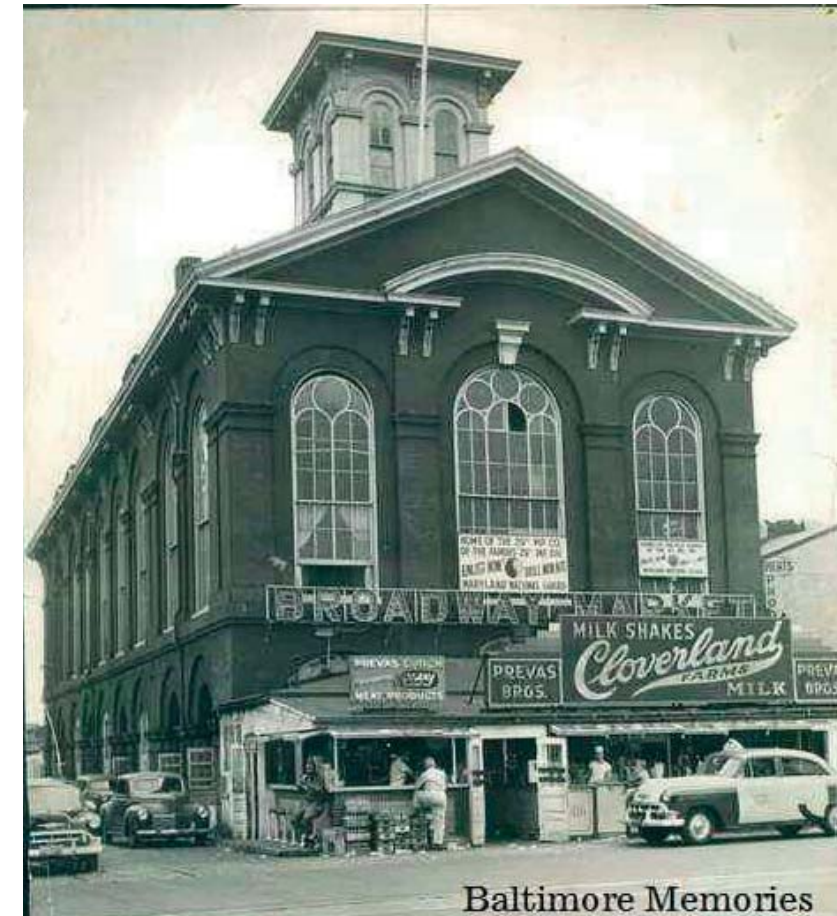
and long for a good job, strong family, and comfortable life.

Many Americans carry with them a story like Martin's. Despite many of the harsh beginnings of life, my great-grandfather endured to help bring part of my family to the United States, and that has allowed our family to flourish. Although there are still many questions that have yet to be answered — what year he entered the U.S.; what the specifics of his jail sentence were; how did his first wife and children pass away — the biggest moral to his story is that, despite many trials and challenges, he took it upon himself to try hard in America and was able to succeed for his family.

*1 Quote from the Library of Congress's "The Nation of Polonia" page.*



## MY FAMILY'S LIFE IN BROADWAY MARKET...



white aprons and shirts, gloves, snuggies, thermal underwear and a hat to retain body heat. Actually, sometimes it was warmer in the huge refrigerated walk-in boxes than it was in the market! That is where we got a little relief from the cold. In the summertime we wore white shirts and shorts and would walk into the refrigerated boxes to cool off.

My younger brother John (Butch) and I walked around the corner to the Comfort Station (bathroom), located on Aliceanna Street between Broadway and Bond Streets, with a five-gallon empty bucket to fill it with hot water so that we could wash the meat display trays and the inside of the refrigerated cases where the lunch meat was displayed. We welcomed the water trips especially in the winter, as we could get warmth off the heat of the water.

On the north side of Broadway between Aliceanna and Fleet Streets farmers sold their fruits and vegetables out of the backs of their station wagons. There were two market buildings: one between Fleet and Aliceanna Streets and the second between Lancaster and Aliceanna Streets. My parents' business was located in the first Broadway Market that burned in 1968 and was rebuilt years later.

all year long from 7 am to 5 pm Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Fridays and Saturdays were different. I recall my parents leaving the house at 3:30 am on Friday morning and returning home at 7:30 pm that evening. Saturdays, they were at the market from 2:30 am to 7 pm. In the 1950's approximately 90% of the customers were the Polish immigrants, just as my mother, who spoke the language fluently and was of Polish heritage.

Before we were fourteen years of age, the age at which you didn't need a permit to work, my brothers and I were expected to help out with the business after school and on Saturdays. However, we were not allowed to operate a meat slicer, meat grinders to grind ground beef, or handle knives or cleavers to chop meat. There was no weekly monetary allowance, but our parents gave us opportunities for dance, music, and art lessons.

Working conditions were not ideal. There was no running water to wash your hands or to clean the meat display trays, no heat in the wintertime, and no air conditioning in the summertime. In the wintertime we wore layered clothing,



Looking back on this interesting experience, I often ask myself, "How did we do it?" -- working without running water, air conditioning, and heat? But we did it because we had to. I wouldn't trade this memorable experience, as it gave me the work ethic that I have today.

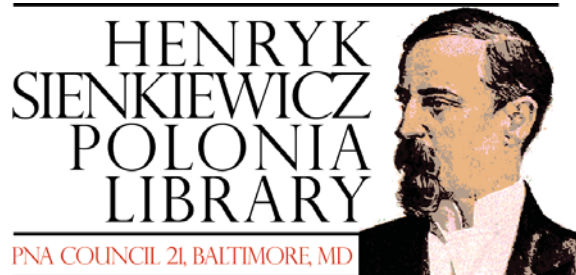


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# PAGES/STRONY: PHAM BOOK CLUB NOTES AT THE

You are invited to the inaugural meeting of the 2025-2026 reading season of the Polish Heritage Book Club, which will be held via Zoom on **Saturday, September 13, 2-4 pm**. We will discuss our summer reading, *Jadwiga's Crossing*, by Aloysius A. and Richard J. Lutz. We hope to see you then!



Concerning the upcoming reading cycle, Professor Dorothy Pula Strohecker has chosen some representative Polish literature selections, and the Book Club members have voted for some additional titles, so that the readings have already been tentatively identified. Here is the schedule as it now stands, although we do respond to events that might change it.

- 09/13/2025: **Lutz**, Aloysius A. and Richard J. *Jadwiga's Crossing*. Historical fiction.  
10/11/2025: **Szczypiorski**, Andrzej. *The Beautiful Mrs. Seidenman*. Novel about WWII.  
11/08/2025: **Guzlowski**, John. *Echoes of Tattered Tongues*. Memoir.  
12/13/2025: **Conrad**, Joseph. "Christmas Day at Sea." Essay.  
01/10/2026: **Konopnicka**, Maria. Poetry including the song "Rota," and possibly a short story.  
02/14/2026: **Brykczynski**, Gosia. *Blessed Hanna Chrzanowska RN*. Biography.  
03/14/2026: **Zeromski**, Stefan. "Ashes" and "Forebodings." Short stories.  
04/11/2026: **Brzozowski**, Stanislaw. Excerpts from *The Legend of Young Poland*. Literary criticism.  
05/09/2026: **Wirtemberska**, Maria. *Malvina, or The Heart's Intuition*. Poland's first modern novel (1816).  
Translated by Ursula Phillips.  
06/13/2026: **Mrozek**, Slawomir. *Tango*. Absurdist play.

To participate in any of these meetings via Zoom, email Dot Tassone for the link during the week prior, at [dstassone@gmail.com](mailto:dstassone@gmail.com). The Henryk Sienkiewicz Polonia Library on the second floor of the PNA Building, at 1627 Eastern Avenue, will be open for those who would like to attend the September meeting in person. Librarian Adam Mazurek will host.

## ~MEMBERSHIP~

*PHAM welcomes all people, from all backgrounds, young and old, who wish to share in this cultural legacy and to learn more about Polish culture, history and traditions.*

**Interested in Poland? Love your Polish Heritage?**

*Please Sign up Online at [phaofmd.org](http://phaofmd.org)*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

— **Maryland's Polish Community: When and Why We Came** As part of our ongoing community outreach, PHAM is very excited to make a presentation for the summer program at the Wise and Well Resource Center at Keswick on **Friday, August 29 at 1:00 pm**.

— **Pulaski Day** commemoration and wreath laying on **October 19 at 2 p.m.** at Patterson Park Pulaski monument, with a gathering afterwards at PNA great hall.

— **Lech Walesa Lecture, Sept. 27** Although the PHAM discount is no longer available, there are still tickets for this event. Visit its website at <https://historyexplorer.com/>.

*Witamy!*

Polish Heritage Association of Maryland is pleased to welcome new members.

*Erik Kruk, Kimberly Kruk, Ryan Kruk*

*Gloria Anne Bartus*

We also welcome back *Natalie Boyd* of Belair Md who has recently renewed her membership.

## TRUMPETER STAFF

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The Editor reserves the right to edit material for content and available space.

Submission Deadlines: Feb. 7, May 7, Aug. 7, Nov. 7