

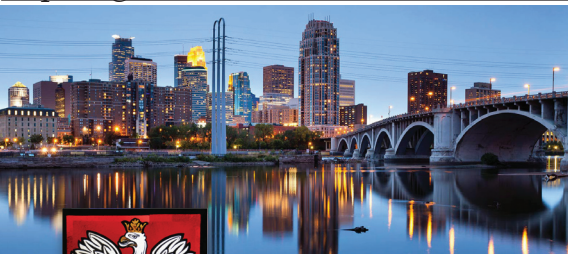


# Polish Heritage

Published Triannually by the American Council for Polish Culture

Spring, 2018

Vol. 69 No.1



**ACPC 2018  
Convention**

“Celebrating a Tradition  
of Independence”

The 2018 ACPC Annual Convention will be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 8 - August 12, 2018. The Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota (PACIM) is the affiliated organization organizing and sponsoring the convention. Their web site is:

[www.pacim.org](http://www.pacim.org)

Convention meetings and the awards banquet will be held at the Crowne Plaza Northstar Hotel, located in downtown Minneapolis

[www.cpmnneapolis.com](http://www.cpmnneapolis.com)

Rooms are available for convention attendees for \$129.00 plus tax. Rooms can be reserved using the above website, and the group code “PAC” when selecting dates. Rooms can also be reserved by phone at: 1-800-556-7827.

The cost per convention attendee is as follows:

**Arrival Wednesday** 08/08/18 - \$ 475

**Arrival Thursday** 08/09/18 - \$ 375

**Arrival Friday** 08/10/18 - \$ 325

Attendee costs shown above include the Awards Banquet, Sembrich Concert, Twin City bus tour, and the Twin City Polish Festival. The Festival web site can be viewed at:

<http://www.tcpolishfestival.org/>

**Awards banquet only** 08/10/18 - \$ 75

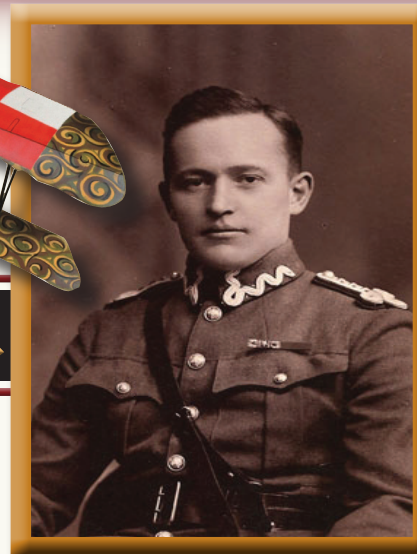
**Sembrich concert only** 08/09/18- \$ 30

Please refer questions to:

Terry Kita

612 927 0719

[terrykita@earthlink.net](mailto:terrykita@earthlink.net)



**MERIAN C. COOPER**

## UNSUNG HERO

by David J. Motak

Merian Cooper was many things. Explorer. Adventurer. Author. Aviator. Twice Prisoner of War. Hollywood Mogul. Friend of Poland.

He was born in 1893 in Jacksonville, Florida, to a family that traced its lineage to before the American Revolution. The image of the fighting, gallant Polish spirit was instilled in Merian Cooper since he was a child. His great-great-grandfather, Revolutionary War Colonel John Cooper, was a close personal friend and comrade of Kazimierz Pułaski, Father of the American Cavalry. When Pułaski was mortally wounded during the Battle of Savannah, he was taken off of the battlefield by Colonel Cooper. Later that day Pułaski died in Cooper's arms. Stories of this incident were often repeated in the Cooper household. This family legend infused young Merian with an admiration for Poles and the debt of gratitude America owes Poland for the services of Polish patriots such as Pułaski, who gave their lives for American independence. Deep in young Cooper's mind was implanted the idea that he was obligated to personally repay America's debt to Poland for Pułaski's sacrifice.

At the age of 23, Cooper joined the Georgia National Guard to help fight Pancho Villa in Mexico. In October, 1917, when the United States entered WWI, he went to serve on the Western Front in France with the young United States Army Air Service as a DH-4 bomber pilot in the 201st American Squadron. Less than a year later his plane was shot down over enemy lines. The plane caught fire, and, with his rear gunner heavily wounded, Captain Cooper extinguished the flames through some extreme maneuvers and crash landed his plane. Cooper was presumed dead, and his general issued a death certificate. However, Merian survived, although he suffered severe burns on his face and especially his hands. German soldiers saw his plane's incredible landing and took him to a prisoner of war hospital. Within two months, the war ended and he and his crewman were returned to France from the POW camp.

Despite this harrowing experience, Cooper decided not to return home, instead he offered his service to Herbert Hoover's American Food Administration, which provided humanitarian aid to Poland. Poland at the time was in shambles and recovering from over 123 years of foreign occupation. It had been one of the

*Airplane image above: Illustration for the Kościszko Squadron Albatros "Cooper" plane model kit by Encore Models.*

*continued on page 9*





# AFFILIATE & SUPPORTING MEMBER NEWS

DETROIT



## Friends of Polish Art

*Members of Zakopane Folk Dance Ensemble who performed at the FPA Wigilia with members of the Wigilia organizing committee.*

Marking its 80th year in 2017, the Friends of Polish Art ended its anniversary celebrations on a high note Saturday, November 11, with an elegant banquet at Detroit's historic Scarab Club. A perfect venue for the celebration, this art deco building was founded in 1907 by a group of artists and art lovers who met regularly to discuss art and socialize. The banquet, organized by a committee led by Mary Ellen Tyszka, included exquisite dining and ambiance, camaraderie, reminiscences of many past FPA accomplishments, and a chance to see an excellent exhibit created by Marcia Lewandowski on the history of Friends of Polish Art.

A week later, on Sunday, November 19, FPA concluded another edition of its annual Szopka Competition. Announcement of the award took place at the Polish Art Center in Hamtramck, MI, which again hosted the display of szopki. The winning szopka, prepared in the children's category, was created by a group of young ladies from the American Heritage Girls Troop MI 0124 and was declared by the judges to be of exceptional quality. Congratulations!

A most celebrated and enjoyable event on FPA's annual calendar is our Wigilia Dinner. For the second year, the "Friends" organized the Wigilia jointly with Wayne State University's Polish Culture Club. The event



*Exhibition developed by Marcia Lewandowski.*



*Newly elected officers and members of the Friends of Polish Art Board of Directors: Standing (from left) Sebastian Szczepanski, Jacqueline Kolowski, Dr. Alina Klin, Stella Szczesny, Rik Lapham, Carol Surma, Barbara Hantz, Tony Wachocki, Mary Ellen Tyszka. Seated: Brian Malski, Marcia Lewandowski, Joe Serwach.*

*Prize sponsor Ray Okonski with some of the young ladies who created the winning szopka.*





took place on December 16 at the PNA Council 122 Banquet Hall in Hamtramck, MI. Dr. Alina Klin, Emily Collette, Nicole Beller (WSU Culture Club) and Jacqueline Kolowski, Richard Lapham and Barbara Lemecha (FPA) coordinated this festive evening. The Wigilia was once again (or for some for the first time) a chance to experience some of our cherished Polish Christmas traditions: sharing of *oplatek*, meatless Wigilia meal and caroling (led by Dr. David Troiano). Also featured were dances by the Zakopane Polish Dance Ensemble, presentation of the First Place Szopka Prize to its young creators (invited as guests to experience Polish Christmas Eve traditions) as well as a special monetary award donated by FPA member Raymond Okonski.

The Friends of Polish Art marked the beginning of 2018 on January 26 at the American Polish Cultural Center in Troy, MI, with the election of the organization's Officers and Board of Directors. Marcia Lewandowski was elected its new President, Brian Malski and Joseph Serwach will serve as Vice Presidents, Rik Lapham as Treasurer, Carol J. Surma as Recording Secretary, Sebastian Szczepanski as Corresponding Secretary and Mary Ellen Tyszka as Financial Secretary. Directors for 2018 are Barbara Hantz, Dr. Alina Klin, Jacqueline Kolowski, Stella Szczesny and Tony Wachocki. The Officers and Board look forward to another exciting year of activities in promoting our Polish culture and traditions.

*Article and photos Submitted by FPA Corresponding Secretary Sebastian Szczepanski.*



## SAVE THE DATE!

25TH ANNIVERSARY  
OF

### CHOPINIANA

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2018

AMERICAN POLISH CULTURAL CENTER  
2975 E. MAPLE ROAD, TROY, MI 48083

PERFORMING:

THE MACOMB SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
THOMAS COOK, MUSIC DIRECTOR

&

KAZIMIERZ BRZozowski - PIANIST

CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY  
OF POLAND'S INDEPENDENCE



## From the President



*Thomas Payne*

Since the majority of our affiliates are located in colder weather climates, I congratulate you on surviving the harsh winter weather and I hope that the flu did not affect you too badly. I know of so many Polish-Americans going very strong in their later years, it makes me proud and confident to share this genetic heritage.

In this newsletter, I wanted to introduce you to the new Head of the Culture, Science and Information Section of the Embassy of Poland in Washington DC. She is Jolanta Chojecka, and I had the pleasure of meeting her recently. Jolanta already has an affinity for ACPC, having received sponsorship for her film-making efforts from the ACPC in the past. Jolanta produced an excellent documentary film on Pulaski with partial sponsorship from ACPC. Jolanta has established friendships with some of our members. ACPC has enjoyed a good relationship with the Embassy and I have high hopes that under Jolanta's leadership, this relationship will get stronger and we will be able to cooperate to advance mutual interests. Jolanta is not one to bide her time quietly during her tenure at the Embassy and I expect great things from her office.

I also want to acknowledge and express appreciation for a very generous donation from the estate of the late Walter Zachariasiewicz. Walter passed in September 2016 at the age of 104, again a tribute to good Polish genes. Walter was a former 3-time President of ACPC and a pillar of the Polish-American community. He dedicated his entire life to the promotion and understanding of Polish culture and history and to humanitarian causes worldwide. He was a proud patriot of the United States and of his native Poland. He was a former Polish diplomat and military officer, a Gulag survivor, a political and social activist, U.S. Government official and a founder and organizer of numerous cultural and religious institutions, clubs and organizations here and abroad.

Walter's very generous bequest of \$50,000 is donated to the ACPC to be used for college scholarships to deserving Polish-American students. This gift will have potential multiple benefits as it will free up other previously targeted funds that might be used for other cultural projects. The scholarships will be administered in the names of Walter and Adeline Zachariasiewicz. We are thankful for this and similar estate bequests that allow ACPC to sponsor worthy cultural and educational pursuits advancing Polish culture and history.

I have high hopes for the ACPC in this calendar year and await positive reports and plans from committee members at our upcoming Spring Board meeting in Rochester and at our August Convention in Minneapolis.

I wish all of you a Happy Easter!

*Thomas Payne*



Far Left: Wigilia attendees Pat Checko with her three guests.

Center: Helen Rogalsky, Lauren Stebbins, Kathy Stebbins. enjoy Wigilia.

Near Left: Distinguished Service Award Recipient Virginia Pudlo, (left), with Genevieve Bednarz, Centrala Committee member.

## Polish Cultural Club of Greater Hartford, Inc.

October 2017, Polish Heritage Month, was a busy and memorable one for club members.

On October 8, Maria Brodowicz received the Cavalier Cross Order of Merit Republic of Poland at a special ceremony at SS. Cyril and Methodius Church in Hartford. This honor, awarded to Polish residents abroad for merit rendered to the Republic of Poland, was presented by Maciej Golubiewski, Consul General of Poland on behalf of the President of Poland. Ed Farley, Fran and Gini Pudlo, and Lilia Kieltyka hosted a Polish imports table at the 2017 Polish Genealogy Conference held in New Britain on October 14. This event is sponsored every two years by the Polish Genealogical Society of Connecticut and Northeast, Inc. and the S.A. Blejwas Endowed Chair of the Polish and Polish American Studies Program at Central Connecticut State University and attracts participants from around the nation.

Cheered on by colleague and friends, Virginia Pudlo received the 55th Annual Polonia Distinguished Service Award on October 22 presented by the United Polish Societies (Centrala) at the Polish National Home in Hartford. This award celebrates an individual's contributions and dedication to the Polish-American cause. A graduate of Saint Joseph College with a BS in Nursing and a MS in Gerontology, Gini has devoted her life to serving others. She enjoyed a successful nursing career at Hartford Hospital, as well as in community and home-based practices. She initiated and coordinated a Parish Nurse Program at SS. Cyril and Methodius Church for ten years, designed and created unique banners for the church, school, and Ladies Guild Society, and served in various capacities in the PCCGH currently acting as Co-Chair of the Scholarship Committee and Chair of szopka vendors.

A community event, "Mount Everest and the Golden Age of Polish Mountaineering," featured a fascinating lecture/slide presentation by member Mark Milewski on October 26. Relating the experience of his 50-day-

long expedition to the summit of Mount Everest on May 20, 2016, Mark also put into context the history of Polish mountain climbing since the 1980s and 1990s.

The holiday season opened with the 37th Annual Szopka Festival and Competition held on November 26. Hundreds of guests enjoyed the many beautiful wares displayed by vendors, tempting Polish foods, and the radiance of Święty Mikołaj (Cliff Archie). Marek Czarnecki, Szopka Competition Chair, assisted by Carol Oleasz, organized and displayed the dozens of stunning szopka entries submitted by students.

Spirits were high as 70 guests celebrated the annual Wigilia event on December 15. The sharing of the *oplatek*, dining on a traditional meatless meal, and the singing of *kolędy* only added to the festive and warm camaraderie that ensued.

Submitted by Frances Pudlo and Patricia Kaczynski, Co-Presidents

Two Szopka competition entrants.







# SPRING BOARD MEETING



**POLISH  
HERITAGE  
SOCIETY  
OF ROCHESTER**



*At the Cavlier Cross, Order of Merit presentation are (left to right), the Hon. Maciej Golubiewski, Consul General of Poland, awardee Maria Brodowicz, daughter Ursula Brodowicz, granddaughter Milena Brodowicz and son Jacek Brodowicz.*



**Spring Board Meeting  
Rochester, New York  
April 27-28, 2018**



*Mark Milewski, lecturer on Mount Everest and the Golden Age of Polish Mountaineering.*



*Gini Pudlo, Ed Farley, Fran Pudlo at the 2017 Genealogy Conference.*

Hosts: Polish American Heritage Society of Rochester  
link: [www.polishheritagerochester.org](http://www.polishheritagerochester.org)

Besides our normal Board Meetings, our Rochester hosts have planned a very nice weekend for us, including:

- Meetings at the charming St. John Fisher College.
- A tour of the George Eastman (founder of Kodak) House.
- Saturday evening dinner at a highly acclaimed Polish restaurant.



Hotel accommodations at the Hilton Garden Inn, Rochester address: 800 Pittsford-Victor Road, Pittsford, New York 14534 tel: 585-248-9000. Booking deadline is March 28

The daily rate is \$128 per night and it includes breakfast for two people. Please go to the website below to make your reservations.

For a link to the hotel web site, please visit the ACPC web site: [http://www.polishcultureacpc.org/board/Rochester\\_2018/index.html](http://www.polishcultureacpc.org/board/Rochester_2018/index.html)





# AFFILIATE & SUPPORTING MEMBER NEWS

PHILADELPHIA

## Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia

### Polish Heritage Poloniase Ball 2017

Our Annual Polonaise Ball on Saturday, November 11, 2017 (also the 99th Anniversary of Poland's Independence) took place at the SugarLoaf Hill Chateau in Chestnut Hill, PA and was a wonderful event enjoyed by all. On arrival, guests were greeted by the piano music of Wojciech Hollender. There were cocktails and appetizers, followed by dinner in the main ballroom and presentation of the Polish Heritage Society Award.

This year's honoree was Father Edward Volz from the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Doylestown, PA. His spiritual journey started in 1984 when he entered the Holy Apostles Seminary in Cromwell, Connecticut. He was ordained into the priesthood in 1988. For many years he served as pastor in several Pennsylvania parishes. Has been director of the Shrine since 2015.

In addition, after the award ceremony there was dancing to the music of the Dennis Ostowicz Band, and the PKM Dancers led the audience in the traditional *polonaise*. Fund raising for the Scholarship Fund included a Chance Raffle with many nice prizes and a Silent Auction for a home wine tasting party. Those who missed this very elegant event have a chance to join us next year.

*submitted by Jean Joka*



*A member of the PKM Dancers.*

*Irene Musman presents the award to Fr. Volz.*



*PHSP President Jean Joka, Fr. Edward Volz and Ball Committee Chair Marie Hejnosz.*

## AFFILIATE GRANTS



*Featured at the Affiliate Grant Award presentation on October 15, are (left to right) Mary Ellen Tyszka, Committee Chair Marcia Lewandowski, PAAA President Cecilia Larkin, Debbie Majka and ACPC President Tom Payne.*

On October 15, 2017 at ACPC's 2017 Fall Board meeting in Savannah, Georgia, our Affiliate Grants Committee awarded its 2017-18 fiscal year grant to the Polish American Arts Association (PAAA) of Washington, D. C. PAAA's President, Cecilia Larkin accepted the \$750 matching award on behalf of her affiliate, indicating that the grant would be used to help defray costs associated with producing its annual spring Chopin Concert, which helps increase funds available for PAAA's projects and scholarships. Congratulations, Washington!

Members of the Affiliate Grants Committee – Chair Marcia Lewandowski, Florence Langridge, Debbie Majka, Tom Payne and Mary Ellen Tyszka invite applications for 2018-19 fiscal year grants from our eligible affiliates. The application deadline is **September 30** of any given year. Affiliates interested in more information will find the Grant Criteria and Application Form is located on the ACPC web site at: [www.polishcultureacpc.org](http://www.polishcultureacpc.org).





## Polish American Arts Association of Washington, D.C.

### Wigilia at the Arts Club of Washington

The Polish American Arts Association of Washington, D.C. (PAAA) celebrated a traditional Polish Wigilia on December 10, 2017, jointly with the Washington, DC Office of the Kościuszko Foundation (KF), at the historic Monroe Mansion, home of the Arts Club of Washington.

Close to a hundred PAAA and KF members and friends shared the *opłatek*, blessed by Father Philip Majka, and after exchanging wishes, partook in the Wigilia supper, feasting on *barszcz* with *uszki*, herring salad, and other traditional Polish dishes, ending with poppy seed cake and delicious dried fruit compote. PAAA President Cecilia Larkin, introduced the President of the KF D.C. Chapter, Cecilia Kocinski-Mulder and Director Barbara Bernhardt, leaders of Polish organizations and other special guests.

The after-dinner artistic program included a special new arrangement of Polish *kolędy* performed by soprano Laura Kafka-Price with pianist Alvin Smithson and oboist Caleb Bradley. They were then joined by all those present in the singing of our beloved age-old melodies, bringing to mind Christmas celebrations in Poland. A big thank you to Wigilia Chairman Renata Greenspan for organizing the event, Ted Mirecki for keeping an eye on reservations, Rose Kobylinski for her overall assistance, Bożenna Plawner, Mary Piergies and others who helped with the raffle and book sales, Father Philip Majka for his gift of *opłatek*, Ewa Szczepanska for the exquisite centerpieces, Krystyna Ahrens for the Polish candy, Basia Bernhart and Cecilia Kocinski-Mulder for the KF publicity and participation, and everyone who contributed to the evening's success. For more photos go to: <http://www.paaa.us/photogallery.htm> and click on Wigilia 2017.

### PAAA's Book on Polish Customs Presented at the Polish Embassy

The PAAA gratefully acknowledges the generous grant from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs which made it possible to print two thousand copies of the book *POLAND, a Portrait of the Country Through its Festivals and Traditions*. Last November, the PAAA Children's Book Project Chairman, Cecilia Glembocki, and author, Carla Tomaszewski, presented a copy of the book to the Polish Embassy's Head of the Consular Section, Mr. Zygmunt Matynia. Consul Matynia praised the PAAA's effort to promote Polish culture and indicated that the Embassy will support future editions of the book, and perhaps even a translation into Polish.

The book is available for \$24 for hard cover and \$15 for soft cover. Volume discounts are available. Please send your order with a check made out to *The Polish American Arts Association*, noting it's for the *POLAND book project* - to: Mrs. Cecilia Glembocki, 911 Saddleback Ct., McLean, Va 22102. Cecilia's email is [polandchildrensbook@gmail.com](mailto:polandchildrensbook@gmail.com). To learn more about the book, visit our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/PolandChildrensBook>.



Photo captions: (left to right) Top: PAAA President Celia Larkin, KF Director Barbara Bernhardt and Wigilia Chairman Renata Greenspan; Second photo: Pianist Alvin Smithson, soprano Laura Kafka-Price and oboist Caleb Bradley; Third photo: Father Philip Majka distributes *opłatek*. Bottom photo: Carla Tomaszewski, Consul Zygmunt Matynia, Cecilia Glembocki during the book presentation at the Polish Embassy.





# AFFILIATE & SUPPORTING MEMBER NEWS

CHICAGO

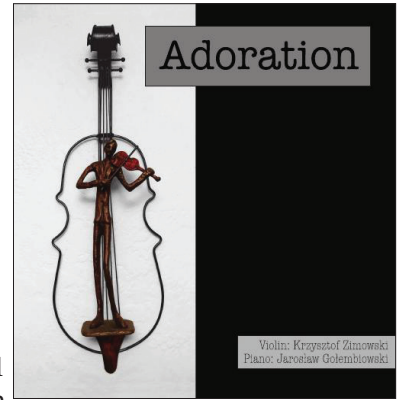


Chicago Chopin Society

The Chicago Chopin Society and American Music Festivals brought the 2017-18 International Cultural Exchange Festival to a close with the CHINESE NEW YEAR CONCERT 2018, on February 10, at St. Barbara Church in Chicago. The Lincolnwood Chamber Orchestra, with conductor Philip Simmons and composer/pianist Jarosław Gołombiowski (pictured on left above at microphone) again joined forces for a special diversity concert celebrating the Lunar New Year. The program included the world premiere of *Fantasy for Violin and Piano with String Orchestra* by Gong Qian Yang, Bao Yuankai's *Chinese Sights and Sounds*, selections from the *Butterfly Lover's Concerto*, and a new arrangement of Fritz Kreisler's *Tambourin Chinois* with violin soloists Claire Arias-Kim and Esme Arias-Kim. Dr. Gołombiowski performed Polish piano music, sharing a special cultural

connection with China.

The 2017-18 Cultural Exchange Festival in Chicago opened at St. Barbara's in June with *Kupala: A Summer Solstice Concert* (presenting music of Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, and Poland) and continued with two concerts at the Copernicus Center: a Polish-American Friendship Concert at *Taste of Polonia*, and a Christmas spectacular which featured Czech music.



The Festival continues to bring Chicago communities together by connecting cultures and exploring musical languages. We like to extend the deepest thanks to sponsors of the Festival: the Kristyna M. Driehaus Foundation, Copernicus Foundation, Polish and Slavic Federal Credit Union, Chicago Czech Center, Polish National Alliance, the American Council for Polish Culture, and Loeber Motors.

Says Dr. Gołombiowski: "On a personal note I would like to say that I am one year older but 1,000 times richer through the good experience of working with American Music Festivals. Composing, arranging, accompanying, performing, organizing, etc. keeps me on the edge."

The Chicago Chopin Society is proud to announce the new release the CD *Adoration*, a compilation of music composed by Borowski, Chopin, Wieniawski and myself, with Krzysztof Zimowski as violinist, and myself on piano. The disc is available from <http://chicagochopinsociety.com>

On February 10, CBS TV channel 2 was present at our concert and we were mentioned on the local news.

## POLISH HERITAGE POSTER SERIES EXPANDS WITH NEW ADDITIONS

by Raymond Glembocki

**D**o you like bagpipe music or wanted to wear a kilt? Well, it may be your genetics. We have created a new poster on Polish male genetics which states that the second largest genetic marker found in Polish men is the same as that found in Wales and Scotland. Apparently, several hundred years ago workers from those countries settled in Poland and their descendants can be considered as Polish as you and I. Interestingly, last year I met a fellow who had grown up in Poland who was planning to visit his family in Scotland who came to Poland 300 years prior.

I am continually amazed that a country which had been in such political turmoil has produced so many world-famous scientists during the interwar years. Our newly developed poster discusses the work of three men whom the scientific community credits with eliminating polio. Albert Sabin and Hilary Koprowski were born and educated in

Poland; Jonas Salk was born in New York to Polish parents. In addition to new posters, we have also added new information to our popular CD. Additional new items include three comic books on Polish history that were produced by the Kościuszko Foundation and have not been available for some time. We have modified our Jamestown poster to a folder format to emphasize the Polish Craftsmen's 1619 civil rights action for the right to vote. We have a new John Paul II poster which presents six items of interest relating to St. John Paul II. We have a new Poland activity poster which includes a page with interesting facts located on a Polish map and a back side for coloring.

We also have a folder which has Sites in the national capital area of special interest to persons of Polish heritage. It has pictures and the location of eighteen sights in the D.C. and Baltimore area which you should see on your next visit to the area.

Our science posters include Marie Skłodowska-Curie who discovered the science of radioactivity, Maria Siewionow, who performed the first face transplant in the United States, Kazimierz Funk who created the concept of



# UNSUNG HERO

continued from page 1



*Merian C. Cooper*

primary battlefields of the war and faced the daunting goal of establishing a government, transportation and distribution systems as well as an armed forces. Starvation was a stark reality in newly-independent Poland and America relief was a welcome contribution. Young Merian's administra-

tive ability made such an impression on Mr. Hoover that he was soon put in charge of food distribution in the entire Galicia region, headquartered in Lwów.

In March, 1919, Poland's independence was once again put to the test when the 800,000 strong Red Army marched west into the newly independent country. The Soviet Union attacked Poland under the slogan, "Over the dead body of Poland we will bring communism to the heart of Europe." With the Soviet onslaught on Poland Merian oversaw the distribution of food during two months of siege and bombardment of Lwów.

While in Poland, Merian often discussed the importance of the air force in modern warfare. With the outbreak of the Polish-Bolshevik War, he wrote to Marshal Józef Piłsudski to offer his services to the beleaguered nation in any possible way. In his eloquent letter to the Polish leader, Merian presented his familial debt to Poland and requested that, regardless of what rank he would be given, he be assigned to actual active duty with Polish fighting forces at the front. Piłsudski agreed and asked Cooper to form a Polish air squadron consisting of airplanes acquired after the defeat of Austria. Cooper returned to France, recruited eight more American pilots and returned to Poland with his friend Cedric Fauntleroy. All of the American flyers were assigned to the Polish 7th Air Escadrille, better known as the Kościuszko Squadron. Fauntleroy was commander;



*Looking quite dashing in their newly adopted Polish uniforms, the American volunteers changed from their U. S. Army olive drab into Polish military attire. They all wore the Polish Rogatywka cap except Fauntleroy, who adopted one shortly after this photo. Merian Cooper is in the back row, second on the right.*

Cooper led the second group which he named "Pułaski." In all, 21 American and several Polish pilots flew in the Squadron, utilizing mostly bomber and reconnaissance aircraft left by Austro-Hungarian forces at the conclusion of WW I.

Cooper and his Escadrille fought on the front in 1920. They supported many actions, including the Polish Advance on Kiev, reconnaissance missions and in battles against Budyonny's Cossack Cavalry. On one of these missions, Cooper and his crew mate were shot down, yet they managed to escape on foot. Two months later Cooper became a commander of the Kościuszko Squadron which was stationed in the city of Lwów. The Kościuszko Squadron was the first air squadron to use a railway train as a mobile flying base with specially designed railroad cars that could transport their aircraft as the front moved and developed. The train also included the squadron's operational headquarters, aircraft spares, repair workshops and living quarters.

On July 13, while flying his 70th mission, Cooper was shot down for a third time. This time, it happened behind enemy lines. As the Russians had placed a sizeable bounty on his

*continued on page 10*

the vitamin, Albert Michelson known for his work on the measurement of the speed of light and Stanislaw Ulam, who, among other scientific accomplishments, told Edward Teller that his calculations for the hydrogen bomb were incorrect.

The Polish pavilion at the 1939 World's Fair brought together several artists who became famous for their work for the pavilion. Muralist Jan Henryk de Rosen and artist Arthur Szyk were sent by the Polish government to work at the pavilion, but when Poland was invaded, they could not return home. They remained in the United States and de Rosen established a successful career in church art and Szyk had diverse subjects including promoting Polish-American fraternity. A lesser known fact was that a Polish American sculptor, Korczak Ziolkowski, produced a stone monument which was judged the "Peoples' Favorite" at the Fair. He then joined the Army and afterward dedicated the rest of his life to carving the 600-foot-high Crazy Horse Memorial in the Black Hills. There is also a poster of Charles Wysocki whose paintings portrayed a stylized version of American life in a folk style.

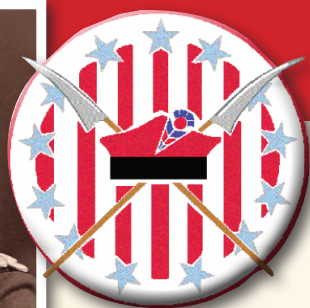
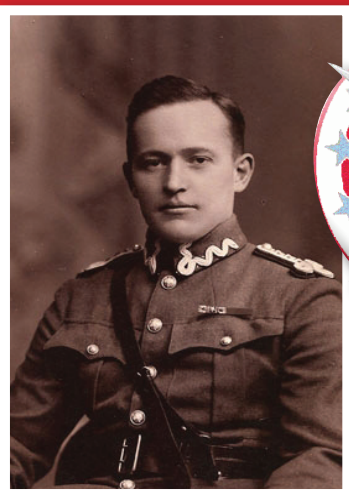
We have a poster on musicians Ignacy Jan Paderewski and Frédéric Chopin, and another on Leopold Stokowski and Arthur Rubinstein. These men were superstars of their era. We include Paderewski in another series with him and President Wilson and the Fourteen Points. We added posters on the Polish Partitions and a comparison of the American Constitution and the landmark Polish Constitution of 1790.

A poster covering the American War of Independence includes information on the contributions of Kościuszko and Pułaski as well as Kościuszko's will and friendship with Thomas Jefferson. Another poster includes information on lesser known individuals, such as Haym Salomon, one of the primary financiers of the Revolutionary War and August Globensky, a British army physician and one of the first Polish settlers in Canada.

You can receive a CD, free of charge, which contains the information described in this article. Please send your request to [raymondglembocki@gmail.com](mailto:raymondglembocki@gmail.com).

*Raymond and Cecilia Glembocki are project Co-Chairs*





A scene from  
"Gwiaździsta Eskadra"

Insignia of the Kościuszko Squadron incorporated the "rogatywka" cap and scythes to commemorate the Kościuszko Uprising of 1794.



head, the Poles feared that Cooper would be immediately executed by the Bolsheviks. A strange set of circumstances saved Merian. Just before the unfortunate flight, he had mistakenly left his officer's coat behind, and was wearing only an Army surplus shirt with the name Corporal Frank Mosher written in the collar. With his identity obscured and with his rough, scarred hands, Cooper was able to convince the Cossacks that he was not an aristocratic "bourgeoisie" but just a mere worker and member of the proletariat. After he tried to escape the Russians sent him to a labor camp near Moscow. He finally escaped with two other Polish POWs. This time, he was successful and, after a trek of nearly 450 miles, they reached Latvia and returned to Poland. Witnessing many communist atrocities against Poland and his experiences in communist Russian prison camps made a lasting impression on him and he was an avid and vocal anti-communist until the end of his life.

Poland successfully repulsed the Bolshevik onslaught and Merian Cooper repaid his family's debt of gratitude to Poland. For valor, he was decorated by Marshal Piłsudski with the highest Polish military decoration, the *Virtuti Militari* as well as the Polish Cross of Valour (*Krzyż Walecznych*), Poland's two highest honors for heroism and courage in the face of the enemy in war.

During his time as a prisoner of war, Cooper wrote his autobiography "Things Men Die For" which was published in America in 1927. However, one year later Merian began to regret releasing some details about his lover "Nina" (Małgorzata Słomczyńska) with whom he had an out-of-wedlock affair. Consequently, Merian located nearly the entire printing run and bought back over 5,000 copies of the publication. His romance with Słomczyńska did result in one child, Maciej Słomczyński, who later became a prominent Polish translator and writer.

Cooper's exploits in Poland were widely acclaimed and admired. He was prominently featured in the Polish media, such as in an early Polish comic book or "powieść graficzna."

However, it was in the Polish film industry that Cooper's fame was most widely celebrated. *Gwiaździsta Eskadra* (*The Starry Squadron*, 1930) was the most expensive and lavish film produced in Poland prior to WW II. Directed by Leonard Buczkowski, the film was inspired by Cooper's experiences as a Polish Air Force officer and made

with the cooperation of the Polish army. The plot centered on a romance between a Polish girl and an American volunteer pilot. With the Soviet invasion of Poland in 1939, still angered over the Russian loss to Poland in 1920, Joseph Stalin gave strict orders that all copies of *Gwiaździsta Eskadra* be found and destroyed. Consequently, not a single copy of the landmark film has survived.

Upon returning to the United States, Merian realized another childhood dream and embarked on the life of an explorer. With his friend Captain Salisbury, he traveled around the world on the "Wisdom II" sailboat, visiting the Solomon and New Hebrides Islands, Fiji, Singapore, Sumatra, Thailand, the Indian Ocean, Sudan, and Abyssinia, where he and his old friend Ernest Schoedsack were guests of Emperor Haile Selassie. On their return voyage, Cooper and his crew narrowly missed being captured by pirates when their ship was burned and sunk. Later, in 1925, Cooper and Schoedsack created one of the first ethnographic documentary silent films *Grass* a moving documentary film that follows the journey of the Bakhtiari, an impoverished nomadic tribe in Iran, in their never-ending search for fresh grass for their herds. Cooper collaborated on other films including *Chang* and *Four Feathers*, which was filmed among the fighting tribes of the Sudan and which was one of the last major Hollywood pictures of the silent era.

Between 1926 and 1927, Cooper served as a member of the board of directors of Pan American Airways and, during his tenure at Pan Am, the company established the first regularly scheduled transatlantic service for which he was a vocal advocate.

But perhaps Cooper's most lasting legacy was in Hollywood. Cooper facilitated the hiring of David Selznick at RKO Pictures, which was struggling financially. Selznick became the vice president of RKO and asked Cooper to join him in September 1931. Cooper did things on a grand scale. Once, in 1934 — when the Great Depression was on in full force — he announced plans to put 17 motion pictures into immediate production. This meant an expenditure of \$4 million and employment for 3,500 persons. In total he was a producer of 67 movies, writer of 12, director of six, cinematographer of five and an actor in one. Many of these films are quite well known and include *Little Women*, *Northwest Passage*, *Flying Down to Rio*, *The Last Days of*



*Pompeii, Lost Patrol, Fort Apache, She Wore a Yellow Ribbon, Wagon Master, Rio Grande* and *The Quiet Man*. He also helped to pave the way for the ground-breaking technology of technicolor and was an avid promoter of the wide-screen process *Cinerama*.

However, it is with one of his films that Cooper's reputation was solidified. It was while at RKO that Cooper wrote and directed the landmark epic film *King Kong* in 1933, about a giant ape that terrorizes New York City while clutching the vivacious blonde damsel in distress, Fay Wray. The film was a tremendous success and helped to give RKO financial stability. Although *King Kong* can be viewed as a horror or adventure film, the similarities between the film and Cooper's experiences in the Polish-Bolshevik War can be seen as more than a little coincidental.

The personification of Poland as a besieged young maiden *Polonia w łańcuchach* ("Poland in Chains") was a frequently used artistic metaphor during the Polish Partitions. Artists - both foreign as well as Polish - often used this reference in depicting Poland as a beautiful young damsel enslaved by the partitioning powers, particularly Russia. During the Bolshevik War, Polish propaganda poster artists extensively exploited this image, depicting the Bolshevik Russians as animalistic, gorilla-like ogres intent on massacring Poles, raping Polish women and destroying the Western civilization that Poland represented. With his service in Poland at this time, it is not without reason to assume that Cooper was exposed to such images and, with his adverse, first-hand experiences with the Bolsheviks, such impressions surely fed his anti-communist emotions. It is interesting to transfer this motif to Merian Cooper's film *King Kong*.

As seen on celluloid, the image of a beautiful young woman in peril beset by a monstrous attacker is evocative of the images experienced by Cooper during his service in Poland. In fact, during the final scene of *King Kong*, when the monster is holding Fay Wray captive on top of the Empire State Building, he is attacked and killed by bi-planes similar to those Cooper flew during the Bolshevik War. Cooper even featured himself in a close-up cameo as one of the pilots attacking Kong. So, in Merian Cooper's case, art met reality.

Cooper was 47 years old at the outbreak of World War II, yet he re-enlisted and was commissioned a colonel in the U.S. Army Air Forces. He served with distinction in India, China and the South Pacific. At the end of the war, he was promoted to brigadier general. For his contributions, he was invited aboard the USS Missouri to witness Japan's surrender.

Cooper was awarded an honorary Oscar for lifetime achievement in 1952 and he has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, though his first name is misspelled "Meriam."

Merian C. Cooper died in 1973 at the age of 79 in San Diego, California.

*Biographical material for this article was obtained from various web sources, including Wikipedia and the American Polish Cooperation Society.*

*"Polonia w łańcuchach" was a popular 19th century cultural motif, as seen in this cartoon depicting the chained "Maiden Poland" being ravaged by a savage Russian giant.*



*At right: Polish propaganda posters issued during the Bolshevik War. As in the poster "Bij Bolszewika" ("Kill the Bolshevik") the Bolsheviks were often portrayed as half-human, gorilla-like animals bent on raping the women of Poland. (far right).*



*Detail of advertisement poster for the premiere of Merian Cooper's "King Kong."*



*Above: The final scene of "King Kong" featured Kościuszko Squadron veteran Marian Cooper (in plane at left) in a cameo role as a fighter pilot, this time, attacking another type of "monster."*



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**Contributing photographers for this issue of Polish Heritage include Jackie Kolowski and Peter Obst.**

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