



Your Polish Genealogical Family Newsletter, In Print and on the Internet.

by Larry Plachno



A Seminar Presented at the
23rd Annual Conference of the
Polish Genealogical Society of America
“*Bridging the Gap*”
Saturday, October 7, 2000

Introduction

Background and Notes

This information was initially researched and developed for a presentation at a regular meeting of the Polish Genealogical Society of America on April 19, 1998 in Chicago. Since there was substantial interest among PGSA members and ongoing e-mail, the author was invited to expand and update this information for a seminar at the annual meeting of the PGSA in October of 2000. Hence, this version has been revised and updated from the initial 1998 presentation. A small new section on the internet has also added.

It is impossible to cover all of this information in detail during the seminar. Since more and more people are now on the internet, it was decided to provide this information as a PDF file for free download from the Web to make it available to those who attend the PGSA seminar as well as others. I have tried to keep this format as simple as possible so that those people with an early version of Adobe Acrobat Reader and those people with simple printers will still be able to view or print it.

About the Author

Born in Chicago and raised in Chicago and its suburbs, Larry Plachno first got into commercial publishing at age 17 while still in high school and living just off Milwaukee Avenue in the Jefferson Park area on Chicago's northwest side. He later earned a B.A. degree in English from DePaul University in Chicago and worked for several years in publishing and as an advertising manager for an international manufacturing company.

After serving in the army for two years working with computers, Larry got back into publishing with a village newsletter. In 1977, he started a new publication as a hobby that soon grew into a business. After a few years in Wisconsin, Larry moved to a rural area in northwest Illinois where he built an office. Today he edits and publishes two trade magazines, has a division that specializes in publishing historical transportation books, and employs a staff of a dozen people. He also is active in giving technical seminars, as well as being a researcher and contributing writer to several other publications.

Larry has been involved with computers for many years. He started in the 1960s with unit record machines, operated an IBM 1440 while in the Army, and installed some of the first multi-partition CRT computers in Chicago in the early 1970s. He currently has 15 Macintosh, IBM and Compaq computers in his office and house. He and his company presently have three internet web sites.

All four of Larry's grandparents were born and raised in Poland. His paternal grandparents came from Borzecin and Jagniówka which is a few miles east of Kraków. His

maternal grandfather was born in Hankówka, a little town just east across the river from Jaslo, and his maternal grandmother reportedly came from the Gdynia area near the Baltic.

His family got involved with genealogy in 1996. Larry joined the PGSA and took on the responsibility for searching for his ancestors in Poland. Due in large part to hours spent at a Family History Center, he has been very successful in tracing the lines of three of his four grandparents. As you might guess, he uses a family newsletter to share his genealogical findings with other family members. Larry has also been a contributor to the PGSA *Bulletin*. Larry can be reached via e-mail at lplachno@plachno.com. —

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1 • Why Start a Newsletter?

Everyone seems to have different reasons for starting or continuing a Polish genealogical family newsletter. In my case, I can think of several reasons behind my own decision to start or continue a Polish Genealogical newsletter for my family.

- **It keeps your family together.** In my case, I was born and raised in Chicago and its suburbs. However, by the time we became interested in genealogy, my family had moved out of the area. I was in western Illinois. One of my brothers is a vice president of a major electronics manufacturer and was running a plant in England. My youngest brother had moved to California where he designed and manufactured computer chips. And my parents had retired and moved to California. My genealogical newsletter did more to get and keep us in touch than anything else.

- **It fosters family interest in genealogy.** After starting my family genealogical newsletter, both of my brothers not only purchased genealogy programs for their computers but began researching our family tree in the United States. Some cousins also took an interest. And, because of the genealogy newsletters, we made contact with several distant cousins also interested in genealogy.

- **It creates a more permanent record.** In the pre-genealogy years in our family, all of the documents and information about our family in Poland had been gathered together and kept in one box. Eventually, the inevitable happened and the box disappeared with everything inside because someone felt there was no reason to retain the items. A family newsletter is just the opposite of the box concept. With the box, you bring everything to one place and take the chance that it will survive. With a newsletter, you take information from one place and disseminate it throughout your family in several locations. Hopefully, the newsletters you put together this year will survive so that future generations will be able to see your information and add to it. In fact, it might be a good idea to keep a copy of your newsletters in a lock box or other safe place.

- **It forces you to be more professional.** Sharing your genealogical information with other family members and friends tends to make you work a little more carefully and professionally. In many cases I felt obligated to go back to my notes or go back to the Family History Center to double check or verify a date or some other piece of information before putting it in our newsletter. I did not want a mistake to go out in print in what might end up being a permanent family genealogical record.

- **It prepares for long term publication.** Writing and distributing a family genealogical newsletter is an excellent way to prepare for eventually writing a book on your family history. Once you have your basic information in several newsletters, it is relatively easy to go back and rework it into chapters for a book. Most family genealogists know that it is possible to write a book on your family genealogy

but many are not aware that with new technology, the cost of doing something like this is now well within reason. For example, there is now a process that combines attributes of printing and copying and is controlled by computer. I was able to create a 100-page book on a computer, send it to a printer, and have 100 copies printed and perfect bound for only about \$3.30 per copy.

- **Increased contact with distant relatives and other researchers.** One of the things which I did not expect is that copies of my newsletters or information that they exist has found its way to distant relatives and to others researching the same family or area. From time to time I get letters and e-mail from distant relatives and others requesting that I send them a copy of one or more of my newsletters. I am always delighted to reply because I am flattered that people are interested enough in our newsletters to ask for a copy.

- **It can be fun.** If you enjoy genealogy and researching your family tree, you might find that assembling and rewriting this information can be fun. It certainly adds a whole new aspect to your genealogy activities and can make everything more enjoyable. =

2 • The Standard Objections

There are four typical reasons people give for not starting a genealogical family newsletter. These include a lack of time, the cost, a lack of proper equipment or facilities and a lack of knowledge. None of these objections are significant if you look at them closely.

- **Time.** Anyone currently involved already knows how time consuming genealogy can be. The time involved in putting together a newsletter is actually quite small when compared with most genealogical research. If you have your material written and you are familiar with the procedure, you can actually put together and mail a dozen copies of a family genealogical newsletter in one evening.

- **Cost.** The actual out-of-pocket cost for producing your newsletter will most likely be less than the postage if you limit it to four or six pages and keep it in black and white. Because of the price of ink jet cartridges, costs will increase if you produce your newsletter in color. Costs will also increase if you purchase things like photographs and books which will be included in the newsletter or will be used to help you write information that will be included. However, you have total control on what you spend and do not spend.

- **Equipment and facilities.** Even twenty years ago, it would have been expensive and difficult to produce your own family genealogical newsletter. That is no longer true today. For equipment you only need either a typewriter with a carbon ribbon, or a reasonable computer equipped with an ink jet or laser printer. I put my family newsletter together on a desk in my den at home although other people use a kitchen table, or a computer desk in their family room.

- **Knowledge and skill.** To some people, the idea of putting together a newsletter is overwhelming. At one point my own magazine staff determined that there were 86 different operations involved in putting out a magazine. This is the key to your success. Instead of looking at a newsletter as one overwhelming task, you should look at it as a number of smaller but manageable tasks. If you take the time to plan ahead, and have a little help getting started, the task of putting together your newsletter can not only be relatively easy but also a lot of fun. Moreover, while it does take a professional staff and equipment to produce a commercial magazine like *Time* or *Newsweek*, virtually anyone who can write reasonably well and has minimal experience in genealogy can produce a genealogical newsletter.

This same type of situation applies equally well to the internet. I never knew what I was missing with e-mail until I tried it. Not only does e-mail require very little training and skill, but it is much easier to use than writing a conventional letter. Putting together Web pages may seem difficult at first, but it gets much easier with time and some experience. =

3 • Including Family News

One of the first questions you need to ask yourself is whether you wish to limit the contents of your newsletter exclusively to genealogy or whether you plan to include current family news. Many people tend to feel strongly one way or the other about this decision. There are two obvious positive reasons for including current family news and at least one negative reason.

On the positive side, including current family news in your newsletter may make it more interesting and readable for your family and relatives. Being able to read about other family members may encourage some people to read your newsletter and hence become more interested in genealogy.

A second reason given for including current family news is that portions of this information may be significant from a genealogical standpoint in a generation or two. Today's news is tomorrow's genealogy. In my own experience, I can often find basic information on my ancestors but in most situations I cannot locate any information on their work or occupation, their likes and dislikes, and how they lived. Had my ancestors put current family information in a newsletter, some of this information would be available to me today.

On the negative side, current family news can easily dominate your newsletter if you are not careful. It is faster and easier to include information from Aunt Victoria's recent letter in your newsletter than to spend six hours at the local Family History Center looking for that next elusive ancestor. Moreover, it is a certainty that it is easier to get a graduation photo of your grandson than a wedding photo of your great, great grandfather. Hence, if you do include current family news, you must constantly guard against letting it push your genealogy material aside. =

4 • Paper and Page Size

Technically, you can make arrangements with a paper supply house or cut your own paper to virtually any size you want. However, the practicality of the situation is that if you are only going to produce and mail out a dozen copies of your newsletter, it will be both easier and less expensive to use a size or type of paper that is readily available at the larger office supply stores in ream (500 sheet) packages. This factor, combined with the usual limitations on copying machine and computer printers, leaves you with the practical choice of only three paper sizes and four page sizes.

- **Letter Size.** The most popular size of paper for office use is called “letter” size which is 8.5 x 11 inches. Larger office supply stores will stock in it different types, weights, finishes and colors. It can be folded in thirds to be mailed in a standard #10 business envelope or folded in half and mailed in a standard 6 x 9 inch envelope, both of which are readily available. You can get two columns of type on a page easily, although three columns is possible. This letter size paper and page is undoubtedly the most popular for newsletters.

You can also fold this paper in half to give you a booklet or folio arrangement with a page size of 5.5 x 8.5 inches. This is a relatively small page size that normally only accommodates a single column of type. Most people would say that this page size is too small for their newsletter. However, it could be a good size for booklets, directories, small books, and similar projects if you find a need for this.

- **Legal Size.** The second most popular size of paper for office use is called “legal” size. This is 8.5 x 14 inches in size or about 25 percent longer than the regular “letter” size. Why is legal size paper 25 percent longer than letter size? Because lawyers need 25 percent more paper to say the same thing! Larger office supply stores will often stock this size paper in different types, and colors.

There are both pros and cons on this size paper. The first negative attribute is that not all copying machines and not all computer printers can handle legal size, so check

your production method before you purchase this size of paper. The second is that it is difficult to locate mailing envelopes for legal size paper folded in half, although these sheets will fit into a standard #10 business envelope if folded in half and then in half again.

There are also two positive things about this paper size. One is that this size paper is often the largest you can print in most copying machines and computer printers. Hence, it gives you the largest print area and is the most economical. The other positive thing is that this paper can be folded in half to provide a booklet or folio with pages that are 7 x 8.5 inches. This page size is wide enough to get two nice columns per page.

- **Tabloid Size.** Many of the larger office supply stores also carry 11 x 17 inch paper which is usually called tabloid, ledger or “B” size. However, in most cases, you probably will not be able to locate paper in different colors or weights. This page size is used by small newspapers and hence is too large for most newsletter applications. However, if you fold it in half you get a booklet or folio with pages the standard “letter” size of 8.5 x 11 inches. Hence, the finished product can look and feel much like a professional magazine.

Again a word of caution. Only a very few copying machines and computer printers will handle paper this large so make sure you have the facilities to use it before you buy it.

- **Notes.** There are three suggestions or comments that I would offer in regard to paper and page size. The first is that if you plan to print with colored inks, you are almost always better off using white paper. However, if you plan to print your newsletter in black ink only, I strongly suggest that you print it on a colored paper with a light, pastel color. An ivory or pastel green or pink is probably the best. Avoid dark colors because your type will be harder to read on a dark background.

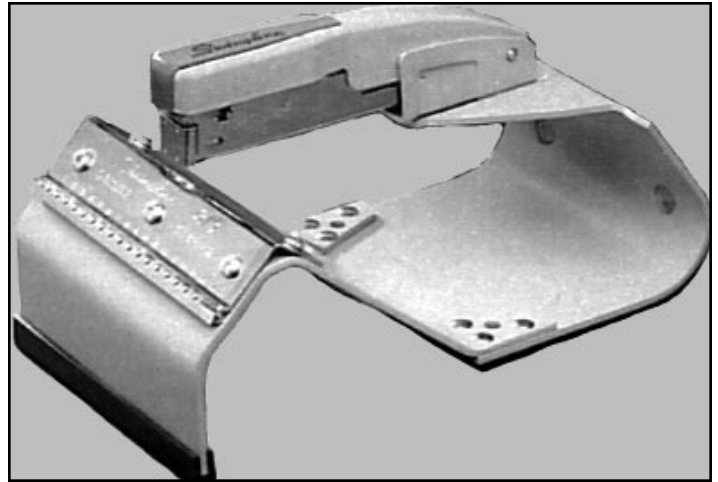
My second suggestion is that if your equipment can handle it, do not be afraid of going into a brochure or folio

Paper and Page Size Chart

Paper Name:	Letter	Legal	Tabloid
Actual Size (inches):	8½ x 11	8½ x 14	11 x 17
Number of Columns:	One or Two	One or Two	Not Recommended
Folded in Half:	5½ x 8½	7 x 8½	8½ x 11
Number of Columns:	One	One or Two	One or Two
Envelopes			
Full Size:	9 x 12	Not Recommended	Not Recommended
Half Size:	6 x 9	7½ x 9 - Hard to find	9 x 12
Thirds:	Business #10	Not Recommended	Not Recommended
Quarters:	Not Recommended	Business #10	6 x 9

type of format where you fold a sheet of paper in half. I guarantee you that the mechanical end is not a problem. All you have to do is carefully fold the sheets of paper in half and then run something round and hard along the edge of the fold. The old printers used the jawbone of a whale but you can buy a modern plastic “folder” which is nothing more than a piece of heavy plastic. The economy minded can probably get by with a thick pen. The resulting booklet is then stapled using a device called a saddle stitcher which is nothing more than a stapler with a V-shaped base or “saddle” for the paper. The Swingline company makes a small desk-top saddle stitcher that is available at many stationery stores.

Third, if you plan to eventually convert your material to PDF files, you are probably better off using the 8.5 x 11 inch page size since this is virtually universal for computer printers. You will find that if you use 8.5 x 11 inch paper and leave a three pica or half inch margin on all four sides, the paper will print on almost all computer printers. =



The Swingline company makes this desk top saddle stitcher which now sells for slightly more than \$100. Bostitch offers a lighter-duty unit for under \$100.

5 • Format and Covers

There are really only two basic types of format or page layout that are suitable for this type of newsletter. These are called the letter and magazine styles.

- **Letter.** The letter format is by far the easiest to deal with and the one most often used for small newsletters. Each item is started with a heading that can be centered or flush left, can be the same size as your body type or larger, and is often set in bold type to attract attention. As each item or article is completed, you skip a space and then insert the heading for the next item. Hence, your various items or sections flow from page to page from the beginning of the newsletter to the end. This is very much like writing a letter except that you insert the headings to break apart the different sections, articles or ideas.

- **Magazine.** The magazine format differs in that major articles or sections are assigned to specific pages and usually have a title or heading at the top of the page. You might prefer this type of format if you have several "standing" columns or larger articles you plan to run in each issue of your newsletter. For example, maybe you plan to include a letter from Uncle Jan and Aunt Marianna in Poland in each issue, and a report on current success with the microfilms from your sister, and then family news will be another column. In this situation the magazine type format might be for you.

The obvious advantage of the magazine type format is that your columns and articles are not only better separated,

but your headings and titles can be more elaborate. Since the individual pages effectively stand alone, you can complete your pages at different times. The obvious disadvantage is that very few of your columns will end perfectly and exactly at the bottom of a page. Hence, you will have white space left over at the bottom of some pages. You might be able to fill this space with a photograph or other illustration, but the odds are that you will have to use another article or column to fill up the bottom of the page in what might be called a modified letter format. The *Bulletin* of the Polish Genealogical Society of America is done primarily in the magazine format because most major articles or columns start at the top of a page. However, it does use a modified letter format to fill out remaining open space at the bottom of pages.

Incidentally, there is no law that prohibits you from mixing and matching these two formats any way you want. For example, you may want to use the letter format for a string of family news items, but use the magazine format to report on major research and genealogical information.

In my case, I like to present one primarily topic or article in each issue of my newsletter and then fill in with other current or interesting information and research. However, your own newsletter should reflect your own thoughts and feelings so feel free to do whatever you want.

- **First page.** Take some time to seriously consider what you want to do with your first page. The simplest solu-

My Polish Genealogical Newsletter

Volume 1, Number 1
January, 1998

My Name • 123 Main Street • Anywhere, USA 12345 • (123) 456-7890

Another new contact

I not only located Carol Drew in Denver but she graciously copied her genealogy work and sent me a whole pile of stuff. The good part is that it gave me more information on our direct Plachno line than I had... particularly in regard to children and siblings. The bad part is that she was unable to help me with any Plachno residents of Borzecin in the late 1700s that I could not connect up. I can only hope that I can eventually track these people down by house numbers or find some records mentioning parents or some other means of identifying them. In any event, this will require that I spend some time with the Borzecin microfilms and I will be unable to do that until the Family History Center opens again in January.

A knight in our family tree

One of the more interesting pieces of new information is that Franciszek Plachno, who is probably our great, great, great, great grandfather, was a part of the court of the manorhouse in Borzezin, possibly even an official knight, and ranked at least as a very important person and possibly even a nobleman. Is it possible that the Plachno name really did come from a suit of armor? In any event, this goes a long way towards explaining why our ancestors were reasonably well off and owned land.

Family tree research

On the negative side, one of my biggest problems is that I am still trying to connect up Thomas Plachno Sr. (great, great grandfather) with Simon Plachno ("Simon the proselit"). While the records show the correct house number and name, and the dates appear correct, I am baffled because the maiden names of the wives differ. I need to get to the Borzezin microfilms and figure this problem out before I do anything else. One possibility is that he may have remarried, which is why the names do not agree. Remarriage was very common with these people. If a young died, leaving the other parent with young children, the surviving parent frequently remarried within months. In fact, Simon Plachno lost his first wife after two children and within seven weeks had found and got remarried to a 19 year old widow who then gave him 10 more kids.

News on the Cholewiak family

The other piece of good news is that we finally found records for the Cholewiak family. My contact from Lublin made an appointment with a parish priest in Jaslo and then drove down.

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June, 1997

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More Onomastics

These four wooden knights guarding their king were carved from tree trunks 20 feet tall. The location is near an entrance to a park near Gniezno in Wielkopolska. Gniezno was the first capital of Poland and witnessed the crowning of the first Polish king, Boleslaw Chrobry in 1025. WIKISOURIA/CHROBRYA.PHOTO.

The Plachno Report

Why our ancestors left Poland

by Larry Plachno

One of the most pervasive questions to come up in researching our family tree is: Why did our ancestors leave Europe? All four of my grandparents decided to leave the land of their ancestors behind, board a ship, and come to America. They were certainly not unique. One reference says that more than four million people left ethnic Polish lands between 1870 and 1914. Another report indicates that 174,365 Polish people arrived in the United States in 1915.

An interesting side note is that all of this traffic to and through Poland made it one of the most metropolitan countries in Europe. The Slavonic tribe known as the Polanie (which means the people who dwell in the fields and open country) gave Poland its name. They were joined by groups of Celts, Balts, Goths, Huns, Swedes, Germans, Russians, Ukrainians, Tatars, Armenians and Latvians. The net result being the Polish people have quite a diverse heritage.

On the negative side, Poland's geographic position as the crossroads of Europe and Asia made it a prime target for war and occupation. Virtually every European dictator or leader, including Attila the Hun, Julius Caesar, Napoleon, Catherine the Great, Hitler and Joe Stalin, occupied or controlled Poland to some extent. In between these major problems, Poland often found itself simultaneously fighting off Germany on the west and Russia on the east. Poland's times of peace and self-government were often measured in years rather than centuries. It is interesting that in spite of these conflicts, the Polish people not only retained their national identity but also became a major influence on neighbor-

Here are three miniature versions of page layouts which may help explain things. On the left is the standard "letter" format used by most family newsletters. All you need is a nice nameplate at the top and then a bold heading to introduce each item. A single column is possible but this two-column format looks nicer. In the center is a cover page which begins to look like a magazine. On the far right is a typical "magazine" format page layout showing how columns and articles are given their own page or pages rather than following letter format. This format is great if you plan larger articles or regular columns.

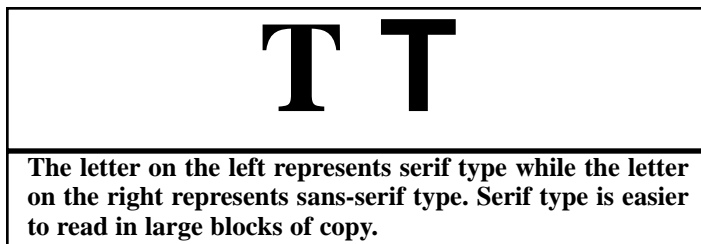
tion, particularly if you are using a letter format, is a nameplate across the top two or three inches of your first page. This should contain the name of your newsletter, a date, a number or a volume and issue number as appropriate. It also sometimes includes the name, address, phone number and E-mail address of the editor.

However, if you feel so inclined, you can go into more of a magazine cover with a photograph or illustration and possibly even some headlines or teaser lines. In this case, you may decide not to start your actual sections or articles until page two or three.

- **Notes.** There are three suggestions or comments I can offer in this area.

One, always number your pages (if it looks better, you can skip numbering the cover or first page). Numbering the pages helps the reader and keeps you from getting confused when assembling your newsletter.

Two, use serif type for body type. Most standard type faces are split into two categories: serif type (sometimes also called “Roman” type) and sans-serif type. “Sans” is latin for “without.” A serif is a little foot that hangs out at the end of a letter. If a type face is perfectly squared off at the ends, it is said to be sans-serif. If you see little “feet” at the ends, then it is serif type. Professional typographers know that serif type is easier to read in paragraphs or large areas. Sans-serif type is more appropriate for listings and columns of numbers where the type is scanned but not read.



I might also mention that type set in ALL CAPS is also difficult to read and is considered offensive by professional typesetters except for short headings or subheads. Do not set more than a few words of type in ALL CAPS unless you are a person who would pick your nose at the Queen’s formal dinner party.

Those of you who use a computer can purchase Polish type for your newsletter. This not only makes your newsletter look more professional but it allows you to correctly spell Polish names, cities and other Polish words with the proper accent marks. In some cases you may have to switch keyboard layouts or strike additional keys to get the proper accent marks, but the procedure is relatively simple once you get used to it. My Polish type came from Linguist’s Software, PO Box 580, Edmunds, Washington 98020-0580, phone (206) 775-1130. I purchased three different type faces and all of them have given me no trouble with any of my programs and printers. I suspect that Polish type is probably also available from several other sources.

Third, seriously consider using two columns of type on a page, particularly if you have a pagination program on

your computer. The human eye is most comfortable reading columns of type where the length of the column in picas is approximately 1.6 times the height of the type in points. If you are working in inches then you should know that there are 72 points in an inch and six picas in an inch. Elite typewriter type is usually assumed to be 10 point while pica typewriter type is usually assumed to be 12 point. Most newsletters will use type in the range of 10 point to 12 point. Hence, they are more easily read if you put two columns on a standard letter-size page. I have seen a few newsletters to go three columns on a page (like most magazines) but I do not recommend it unless you have some experience with typography and a professional pagination program. =

6 • Printing

Years ago, there were several different printing processes that could be used for a family newsletter. Included were mimeograph, spirit duplicator, multi-graph, and even instant printing. Today, if you are talking about only a dozen copies, there are really only two practical alternatives: Xerox-type copying machine and computer printer.

Numerous people simply type their newsletter on plain paper and then take it to a store or an office to make the copies needed on a copying machine. I strongly suggest use of a typewriter with a carbon ribbon because they produce a neater and darker image than a cloth ribbon typewriter.

Today, the best way to produce a family newsletter is probably with a computer. In addition to being able to use a pagination program, you have access to different styles and sizes of type. Unless you need substantially more than a dozen copies of your newsletter, you can probably produce the copies you need right on the computer printer in your home. Here is a listing of various computer printers with comments on their applicability to newsletters.

- **Ink Jet** – The ink jet or bubble jet printer has the advantage of being inexpensive to purchase and is probably the most popular type of printer for home computers. Most will also print in color if you invest in a color print head. However, this type of printer has two disadvantages in printing a family newsletter which you want to last. One is that the ink in most ink jet printers is usually water soluble. This means that if it gets caught in the rain or you sneeze on it, the type will run or disappear. This may be a substantial disadvantage for a document you would like to see people keep for several generations. The other disadvantage is that the ink, particularly color ink, is expensive on a cost-per-copy basis.

If you are looking for more permanency, you can print your newsletter on your ink jet at home and then take it to an office and copy it on an office copier. This will give you more permanency but you will probably lose your color since most office copiers are only black and white.

- **Monochrome Laser** – Another appropriate computer output device for a newsletter is a monochrome (black & white) laser printer. The three major advantages of the laser printer is that the type is relatively permanent, the cost per copy is relatively low, and most laser printers print multiple copies much faster than ink jet printers. The two major disadvantages of a laser printer are a higher initial cost than ink jet, and the fact that the laser printers which are reasonably priced will only print in black.

- **Micro-Dry** – The Micro-Dry printer manufactured by Alps in San Jose uses colored ribbons similar to typewriter carbon ribbons. It has two major advantages. One is that it seems to do a good job of printing in color. The other advantage is that the printing is relatively permanent.

Hence, this is probably the least expensive printer with relatively permanent color printing.

The major disadvantage of the Micro-Dry printer is that it is slow. One model takes up to four or five minutes to print a color page. However, this may be a viable alternative if you want permanent color printing on a budget.

- **Wax/Solid Ink** – These printers work by actually melting wax and putting it on paper. They are most often found in an office environment and make good network printers. I mention them because more of the older models are coming on the used market and because some models will print 11 x 17 inches.

The major disadvantage is the initial cost of purchase. However, at one point I used a Tektronix wax printer for my genealogical newsletters and was very pleased. The wax from my Tektronix printer was permanent and did not soften or stick to other pages. It also did a nice job with color.

- **Color Laser** – Of course, if you can afford it, the best printer for a genealogical newsletter is a color laser. It offers the permanency of laser plus color. As you can guess, the major disadvantage of the color laser printer is its initial cost. However, some very nice units are now selling for less than \$2,500.

At one time or another, I have used all five types of printers listed for my newsletters. I would rate them in the order presented, with the ink jet being the least suitable for newsletters and the color laser being the most suitable.

The quality of printing on both the ink jet and laser printers is based on “dpi” which is supposed to mean dots per inch but more accurately means pixels per inch since it takes several pixels to make one dot. In any event, a printer at 300 dpi generally has the quality for printing type. For printing photos, I would prefer 600 dpi. There are laser printers rated at 1,200 dpi which can produce photographs which are almost as good as commercial offset printing. =

7 • Illustrations and Photos

My first suggestion in regard to illustrations and photos is to always take a moment or two to make sure that you are not violating a copyright or similar law when taking and duplicating an illustration or photograph. While most copyright holders will not take you to court for a dozen copies of a family newsletter, there are some who might want to make an example of you. There is also the possibility that someone might copy the illustration that should not have appeared in your newsletter. This could put you in the middle of two corporations battling in court.

If you are printing on a Xerox or similar copying machine, then you need only paste the clip art or photo to your original page. However, the edges of an item pasted in place will often print as a black line on a copying machine. In most cases, photos could be improved by screening before being pasted in place. Your local newspaper or a graphic arts service bureau can do screening like this. If you are lucky enough to use a color copier, you can paste color photos in place.

If you are printing on a computer printer, a great deal depends on your pagination program and printer. Many word processing and pagination programs will allow you to import both clip art and photos. Clip art is often available inexpensively on a CD ROM but the quality varies from company to company and even from disk to disk. There are stock photos available on CD ROM and I even occasionally find Polish photos.

Those of you with computers can purchase a scanner and scan and process your own photographs. If you can afford it, try to get a copy of Adobe Photoshop and try to learn how to process and improve your scans prior to printing them.

Some people are using digital cameras to take photos but I continue to use regular film and even slides. Most of the professionals are still using regular film for archival purposes because it can be easily stored and scanned in several ways.

However, one of the things I plan to do in the future is to take my genealogical photos, scan them in at least two different formats (72 dpi JPEG and 300 dpi EPS) and place them on CD ROM for several family members. This will hopefully ensure that our old photos are preserved for future generations in digital format. =



If you cannot go to Poland yourself, you can purchase high quality photos which will impress your family. This photo was taken by Jim Durham of European Focus Photography. It shows the parish priest and a boy in front of the church in Jaslo, Poland. My maternal grandfather was baptized here and attended church here before coming to the United States.

8 • Putting it Together

Start out by determining your frequency of publication. Do you plan to produce a Polish family genealogical newsletter every month, four times a year, or simply when you have a chance? Unlike commercial magazines, which have to comply with post office regulations, you have no need to stay on schedule if you have no time or information. However, your readers will lose interest quickly if you let too many months slip by between issues. I would like to maintain a monthly frequency but a lack of time or information usually prevents that.

I tend to run my family newsletter with a procedure similar to commercial publications. Articles and items for publication are always written in advance and then typed into the computer. Working well in advance gives you at least four major advantages.

One, it gives you plenty of time to review and proofread the article. Always proofread the article for grammar, spelling and punctuation, even if you have a spellchecker. If at all possible, have someone else read your material prior to publication. Two sets of eyes are better than one, particularly if one was the original writer.

Two, doing things in advance gives you an excellent idea of whether you need to worry about researching or writing more material, or whether you have a good supply on hand.

Three, doing the text in advance gives you an opportunity to look around to see if you have any drawings or photos that could be used to illustrate the article.

Four, when it comes time to put your newsletter together, you merely copy your text and drop it into your pagination program. You can then concentrate on being an editor and page designer and need not take the time to type everything.

As suggested, when you decide to put your newsletter together, you merely pick the items, columns and articles you want and import them into your pagination program. Like Santa Claus, there is no need to empty your sack at every stop. Pick what you want for this newsletter and save the rest for future issues. In fact, feel free to change the number of pages in your newsletter if you feel so inclined. I have run as few as two pages or as many as six pages depending on what I wanted to include with each issue. =

9 • Editorial Ideas

One of the typical situations of a new newsletter editor is that you will become enthusiastic, create two or three interesting newsletters, and then quit because you have no more current or interesting information to share. The leading nightmare of editors is reaching a deadline and having nothing important worthy of publishing. This is by no means limited to amateurs since even the editors of major publications have similar problems. However, the big difference between the professionals and the amateurs is in how they deal with the situation. The pros will make their own news by picking topics that might be interesting to their readers and then they research and write these in advance so they can be held and used when little else is available. Here is a brief listing of several potential topics that might be interesting to your family and readers. They can be researched or completed in advance and then kept on file until the day they are needed.

- **Maps.** Many, if not most, of your newsletter readers may not have the same understanding of Polish geography as you do. When things are slow, you may want to print and explain a map of Europe, a map of Poland, or even a large scale map of the area around the city where your ancestors came from. The only caution here is that most maps are copyrighted, but even a copyrighted map can be used as a template for you to draw your own map using a pen and ink or a computer drawing program.

An excellent source for large scale maps of Poland is Elaine S. Larson at Travel Genie Maps, 3815 Calhoun Avenue, Ames, Iowa 50010-4106, phone (515) 232-1070. Computer owners who are familiar with using Adobe Illustrator will find that maps from a company called Cartesia are great. You can import them into Adobe Illustrator and modify them to suit your needs. You can buy Cartesia maps from many graphic arts suppliers or find them on the internet at www.map-art.com. Polish maps are also available from Polart, 5700 Sarah Ave., Sarasota, Florida 34233. Phone: (800) 278-9393 or find them on the internet at www.polart.com.

- **Photos.** Polish photographs are almost always a good way of taking up extra space in your newsletter. You may be lucky enough to have friends who have visited Poland who would be willing to make extra copies of their photos for you. However, if you can spare a few hundred dollars, the person to contact is James A. Derheim at European Focus Photography,

Post Office Box 550, Bountiful, Utah 84011-0550, phone (800) 401-7802. Jim will actually visit the city where your ancestors lived and provide you with an excellent selection of photos.

- **Słownik Geograficzny.** Looking for something to impress your newsletter readers? Provide them with a translation of the description of your ancestor's town from the *Słownik Geograficzny* which was published in the 1880s. Some have already been published in the *PGSA Bulletin*. Copies of the others are available for a \$5 fee but you have to find someone to translate it into English for you.

- **Onomastics.** My newsletter readers were delighted with a list of several names in our family tree with information on the origins and meanings of these names. Much of this information is in William F. Hoffman's second edition of *Polish Surnames: Origins and Meanings*. Or, if you want to take the time, you can write to the Onomastics Institute in Kraków.

- **Coming to America.** Most newsletter readers would be fascinated to hear how their ancestors came to the United States. There are several services that try to locate this information for you. There is also a government agency you can turn to. Write to the General Reference Branch



Maps can be a good addition to any newsletter. Those of us who work with genealogy on a regular basis get to know some of the basic geography of Poland, but many of our relatives and friends may not have that knowledge. This particular map was drawn in a program called Adobe Illustrator using a simple printed map as a template.

(NNRG), National Archives and Records Administration, 7th and Pennsylvania Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20408. Ask for copies of NATF Form 81. When you return the form, they will take the time to search for ship passenger arrival records. If you are lucky enough to find this information, you can even take it a step further by trying to locate photos of the ship your ancestor used to come to the United States.

- **Other items.** Other items that fall into this category are limited only by your imagination. Most of your newsletter readers are probably not fully aware of the occupation of Poland in the 1800s, the sickness and the famine. This would obviously require some research but would also explain why many of our ancestors left Poland. I have a four-page manuscript on this topic that I plan to use in my newsletter some day. I also have three or four pages explaining about the similarities and differences between Poland and the United States. Information on the Polish language, words and pronunciation would make an interesting filler topic, particularly if many of your readers do not speak Polish.

You can also write about Polish history, Polish arts and culture, or even about different geographic regions and cities. Since I and some other members of my family are interested in transportation, I put together a little bit of a history on Polish railroads along with some photos. One of the most informative series of books I have yet found are the "Lonely Planet" travel books which are available at many major bookstores or can be reached on the internet at www.lonleyplanet.com. I have the *Eastern Europe* and the *Poland* books, both of which contain an amazing amount of information that could be easily rewritten for your genealogical family newsletter. =

10 • The Internet

Like many people beyond school age, I was reluctant at first to embrace e-mail, the internet and the World Wide Web. In my case there was no logical reason for this since I had been involved with computers since the 1960s, had installed and programmed them, and use computers extensively in my business. However, and in spite all of the evidence to its benefits, I was somewhat of a stick in the mud in regard to the internet. In retrospect, I guess I can only ascribe my initial negative reaction to a fear of the unknown and the time honored fear of us old timers to change.

Now that I have been using e-mail for years and recently started creating Web pages, I do not know how I ever lived without it. At least 70 percent of my business correspondence goes out via e-mail and an even higher percentage of my personal mail. Moreover, I am finding that the internet is a great place to find and share genealogical information. More and more of my contacts with fellow genealogical researchers come about through internet contacts fostered by links from other sites or search engines.

From the standpoint of Polish genealogy, the internet and World Wide Web has both good and bad points. In my mind the two best advantages of the internet are the fact that it is relatively inexpensive and the fact that there already is a lot of information (as well as a lot of people) out there to help you. The biggest negative is that Polish type and Polish characters are not as easy to deal with on the internet as they are on paper. Hence, if you want to use Polish type on the internet you should plan well ahead and make sure that your system works before you invest a great deal of time or money.

While there are numerous ways to use the internet and World Wide Web to distribute a family newsletter or genealogical information, we can talk about three of the most popular: e-mail, HTML and Web Pages, and PDF Files. I will also direct your attention to Publishing to the Web from Genealogical programs. Those of you who are Web experts please note that this information is very basic and is intended primarily for someone who knows little about the internet but may be considering using the internet for genealogical purposes.

E-Mail

There are several people I know who use conventional e-mail to distribute their genealogical information to friends and family members. Expectedly, this has both positive and negative features. One positive feature is the very reasonable cost compared with printing and mailing information. Another is that it is considerably more private than posting information on the Web since your information goes only to those people on your mailing list.

This can also be a negative since there is no web site to attract other genealogical researchers. In addition, your ability to format material and include photos is somewhat limited with conventional e-mail. You will also find that conventional e-mail will not support many Polish characters.

The single biggest negative about using conventional e-mail is its lack of formatting capabilities. You can type a letter and even attach a few photos, but it will not look like a newsletter or magazine.

HTML and Web Pages

HTML stands for Hyper Text Markup Language and is the code structure used to develop Web pages. It is considerably easier to work with than any computer programming language, which is why even kids in grammar school can put together Web pages with apparent ease.

Developing a Web page or Web site for your family genealogy is easier than most people think. The cost of owning a Web site can be little or nothing unless you want to pay for a specific URL or address. Many internet service providers offer limited space for a personal Web site with an e-mail account at little or no additional cost. There are also ways to get free space for a Web site on the internet. The easiest is to sign up for e-mail at Yahoo, which then entitles you to a small free Web site at GeoCities. You can buy special programs to develop Web pages. However, effective simple Web pages can also be created with available programs like Netscape Communicator. You will need some type of file transfer program to place your pages on the Web, but GeoCities and other hosts will often provide their own programs to help you with this.

There are several advantages to having your own genealogical Web site. It is both quick and inexpensive to post material to your Web site. Once out there, other researchers can find you or link to your site. And, you can include your e-mail address so that people who find your Web site can correspond with you. It is also possible to link to other Web sites and have them link to your site. This makes it easy for someone to find similar Web sites.

One major disadvantage of a standard Web site is that HTML does not support all Polish characters. In addition, formatting in HTML is much more difficult than on paper. Since different browsers and different computers look at Web pages differently, sophisticated formatting is difficult in HTML. It is not easy to create Web pages which look like and print like magazine pages. HTML and conventional Web pages will work well for text and a minimum amount of graphics but can to be a problem when you want to include many photos or illustrations.

PDF Files

Portable Document Files (PDFs) are becoming more and more popular on the Web. More and more companies are providing sales and service literature as PDF files and Amtrak has offered their schedules as PDF files for several years now.

PDF files have two major advantages. One is that you can design pages with photos, maps, and different type using different programs. Hence, your newsletter can look like a newsletter. A second advantage is that if you do things properly, you can use Polish type and Polish characters.

There are also two disadvantages. One is that you must download the file from the Web to your computer. The second is that you need a program called Adobe Acrobat to view or print a PDF. This is not a major problem since Adobe Acrobat is available free on the Web and is easily downloaded to your computer.

I have had substantial success with creating PDF files from family newsletters and calendars with conventional English type and making them available on the Web. Bill Succollosky tells me that if you use newer computers, newer operating systems, and the right kind of type, you should be able to create PDF files with Polish type.

Publishing to the Web

Some genealogical and family tree programs have options which allow you to take genealogical information from your own data base and publish it to the Web on your Web site. I used Reunion for the Mac and have the options of publishing Web Reports and even Web Family Cards on the internet. The program even provides a cover sheet and an index. My tests show that they will work properly on the internet. But I have not yet actually published this information because I am still trying to resolve the question of Polish type on the internet. If you have this option and if you are using English type, it is not at all that difficult to put your genealogical information on the internet. =