Moving Polish American History into the Mainstream

by

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NOTE: When I was asked to make this presentation, it was suggested that I speak a little about Polish American contributions to the US and how we might better integrated material on Poland and Polish America into the American mainstream. So, this presentations begins with an example of an opportunity missed – the recent Year of the Woman celebration – and an example of Polish American contributions to just the STEM field. Then I give some examples of strategies that can be used to inject information on Poland and Polonia in the American mainstream.
Celebrate Women’s History Month
Marie Elizabeth Żakrzewska
Berlin, Germany

Founded First Teaching Hospital for Women

Enrolled First African American Female Student

Close friend of William Lloyd Garrison and German radical Karl Heinzen.
Ernestine Potocka Rose
Piotrków Trybunalski, Poland

Women’s Rights Activist.

Abolitionist.

Responsible for first married women’s property rights law in the United States.
Polish Women’s Alliance
Founded May 22, 1898 in Chicago

IN THE IDEALS OF WOMEN IS THE STRENGTH OF A NATION
A History of the Polish Women’s Alliance of America

Angela Pienkos
Donald Pienkos

Fought for women’s right to:

Vote
Higher Education
Pursue Professions
Purchase Insurance in their Name
STEM Programs

Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics
Information Technology
Jack Tramiel
Łódź, Poland

Invented the Commodore Computer
Steve Wozniak  
California  

Developed the Apple I Computer
Joanna Hoffman
Poland

One of the original members of both the Apple Macintosh team and the Computer NeXT teams.

Wrote the first Macintosh User Interface Guidelines.
Paul Baran
Grodno, Poland

Invented distributed networks

“Grandfather of the Internet”
Stephan Poplawski
Poland

Invented the Electric Blender
Edward Pulaski
Ohio

The “Pulaski Tool,” the modern firefighting axe
Henryk Magnuski
Warsaw, Poland

Invented first walkie-talkie used by US army in World War II
Kazimierz Gzowski
St. Petersburg, Russia

Engineered the first bridge across the Niagara River from the U.S. to Canada
Joseph Tykociński-Tykociner
Włocławek, Poland

The first person to reproduce synchronized sound on a motion picture film.
Józef Kazimierz Hofmann
Kraków, Poland

Inventor of
windshield wipers,
shock absorbers,
oil burning furnace.
Iwo Cyprian Pogonowski
Lwów, Poland

Designer of the hexagonal-based oil drilling platform.
Rudolph Modrzejewski
Bohnia, Poland

Engineered
Benjamin Franklin Bridge
in Philadelphia and others
Frank Piasecki
Pennsylvania

Pioneer in helicopter engineering and design
Tadeusz Sendzimir
Lwów, Poland

120 patents in mining and metallurgy revolutionized US steel industry
Gustaw Mokrzycki
Lwów, Poland

Autopilot Technology
Mieczysław Bekker
Strzyżów, Poland

Invented Lunar Rover
Polish Americans Who Are “Out of this World”

Karol Bobko
Veteran of 3 space flights

Christopher Ferguson (Polish/Scots)
Piloted Space Shuttle Atlantis

Scott Parazynski
Over 8 weeks in space, 4 space walks

James Pawelczyk
6.3 million miles in space
Former vice president in charge of product management and engineering at Google.

Since 2014, CEO of YouTube.

Net worth of $480 million.
Casimir Żegleń
Tarnopol, Poland

Invented the bulletproof vest in 1897
Stephanie Kwolek
New Kensington, PA

Invented Kevlar

National Medal of Technology and Innovation
Mathematics

\[ y = ax^2 \]

\[ V = \frac{1}{3} \pi r^2 h \]

\[ x^2 + \frac{v}{u} = c \]

\[ \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac} \]

\[ E = mc^2 \]
Jerzy Neyman
Bendery, Poland

Developed statistics
cluster sampling
used in Gallup poll
Stanisław Ulam
Lwów, Poland

Mathematician who worked on the Manhattan Project and became one of the most famous US mathematicians.
Alfred Tarski
Warsaw, Poland

Logician and Mathematician

Famous for work on theory of mathematical modeling
Leo Gerstenzang
Warsaw, Poland

Invented the Q-Tip
Kazimierz Funk
Warsaw, Poland

Discovered Vitamins
Albert Sabin
Białystok, Poland

Invented the polio vaccine formula credited with eradicating polio

Hilary Koprowski
Warsaw, Poland

Invented the oral polio vaccine
Co-founder of 23andMe, a personal genomics and biotechnology company.

Genetic testing, genealogical DNA testing, medical research.

Anne Wojcicki
California
Breakthroughs in understanding hereditary blindness and developing treatments to slow retinal degeneration.
Maria Siemionow
Krotoszyn, Poland

Performed the world’s first face transplant in Cleveland.

Commander’s Cross Polonia Restituta (2009)

Outstanding Achievement in Clinical Research Award from the Plastic Surgery Educational Foundation (2010)

Casimir Funk National Science Award (2013)
Learning Polish history would be “beautiful, absorbing, and useful.”

But it is most important that they learn the history of their ancestors “who have lived on the same soil ... and functioned in the same geographic, economic, political, and religious conditions” because that “will be of more concern to him and a hundred times more useful.”
What upcoming events or anniversaries could be used to promote Polonia?

Must plan ahead including how to market the events.
Local Museum Exhibits, or Virtual Exhibits
Published Guides with Bibliographies

*The New American History*
*Revised and Expanded*

*American Labor History*
*Leon Fink*

*Slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction*
*by Eric Foner*
Teaching Modules

0.18 percent of the US population speaks Polish

1. Learning Objectives
2. Text (for content reading)
3. Original Documents
4. Videos
5. Questions for Discussion
6. Questions for Quizzes
   a. Multiple Choice
   b. Short Answer
   c. Essay
THANK YOU