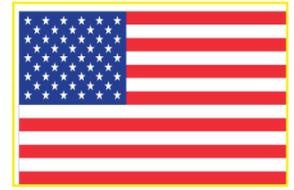




A Brief Outline of Polish and Polish American History - Part 2



1870-1920 - Millions of Poles immigrated to the United States seeking better economic opportunities. They settled in Polish American neighborhoods, built churches, schools, and cultural organizations in major American cities to preserve the heritage of their homeland for their descendants. Polish Americans continue to add to the way of life in America and every aspect of society.

1873 - The Polish Roman Catholic Union of America, the first Polish Fraternal Life Insurance organization in the United States, is founded. It continues to provide life insurance and other benefits to Polish Americans.

1908 - Polish American Social Services is established in Philadelphia to welcome Polish immigrants coming to America through the Washington Avenue Port of Entry in South Philadelphia. Large numbers of immigrants from many European countries were processed at the Washington Avenue Port of Entry between 1872 and 1914. Polish American Social Services, also known as PASS, sponsors United Social Services and remains a well-known social service agency assisting the general population in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

1918 - At the Treaty of Versailles, Poland regains its independence after 123 years of political partitions. At the close of World War I, supporters of Poland's interests, such as famed Polish activist Ignacy Jan Paderewski and President Woodrow Wilson, advocated Poland's political restoration. On November 11, 1918, the last day of World War I, an Armistice Agreement was signed that restored Poland's Independence and rightfully restored Poland on the political map of Europe.

On May 3 and on November 11 each year, Polish people all over the world mark two historic events in Polish history. May 3rd marks the anniversary of Poland's 1791 Constitution, the second oldest written democratic constitution in the world. November 11, 1918, marks the Restoration of Poland to the political map of Europe, a historic event known as Poland's Independence Day.

1920 - The newly-independent Second Polish Republic drives back the Red Army at the Battle of Warsaw, destroying Lenin's objective of bringing all of Europe under Communism.

1939 - September 1 - World War II begins as Hitler's German troops invade Poland.

September 17 - Soviet troops seize the eastern territories of Poland in agreement with Nazi Germany.

1940 - Soviet Agents murder nearly 22,000 Polish military officers, police, and intellectuals in the Katyn Forest on the orders of Josef Stalin.

1945 - The Yalta Conference between the US, USSR, and UK occurs, with the Western Powers allowing Poland to come under Soviet Communist control.

1945-1989 - An additional large wave of Polish immigration came to the United States following World War II and the fall of Communism. They added to the already strong presence of Poles active in American Society.

1952 - The Polish People's Republic comes into existence.

1966 - Poland observes the 1,000th anniversary of its Christianity and statehood.

1970 - The Polish government attempts to raise prices of basic foods, leading to protests and deadly confrontations.

1978 - Cardinal Karol Wojtyla is elected Pope John Paul II, to the great celebration of Polonia across the world.

1980 - Solidarity is founded under the leadership of Lech Walesa, starting protests at the Lenin Shipyards in Gdansk.

1981 - General Wojciech Jaruzelski, accompanied by the Military Council of National Salvation, declares martial law in Poland.

1981 - Polish American Heritage Month was established in Philadelphia, celebrated during the Month of October. In 1981, it became a national celebration in conjunction with thousands of Polish American groups including, organizations, churches, schools, and radio, print and electronic media. The main goal is to promote Polish and Polish American history, culture and pride. PolishAmericanHeritageMonth.com.

1983 - Martial law is lifted in Poland.

1988 - Polish American Cultural Center Museum opens in Historic Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to welcome tourists from across America and around the world.

1990 - The Polish People's Republic and Polish government-in-exile from World War II dissolve on December 9, 1990, as Lech Walesa becomes the first democratically elected President of Poland since before World War II.

1997 - Poland adopts a new constitution to replace the modified Polish People's Republic Constitution.

1999 - Poland joins NATO.

2004 - Poland joins the European Union.

2010 - The crash of the Polish presidential aircraft kills President Lech Kaczynski, members of his cabinet and high-ranking Polish civilian and military officials during a flight to Smolensk to attend a ceremony to commemorate the Katyn Massacre.

2013 - Pope John Paul II is officially canonized as Saint John Paul II.

2018 - Poland marks the 100th anniversary of its restoration on the map of Europe. Despite invasions and occupations, that at times, removed Poland's boundaries, the population remained intact.

Throughout its history, the people of Poland have fought for the freedom of not only their own homeland, but for the freedom of other nations. The Polish language, culture, and history are kept alive not just in Poland, but across the world wherever people of Polish heritage live. Polish communities outside of Poland are known as Polonia. In the United States, millions of people of Polish heritage live and maintain thousands of organizations that keep Polish and Polish American heritage alive for Polonia in America and for future generations.

For more information visit the Polish American Cultural Center Museum, 308 Walnut Street Philadelphia, PA 19106, Located in the Heart of Historic Philadelphia, America's Most Historic Square Mile.



Visit us on the Internet at:

PolishAmericanCenter.com