

Philadelphia and Tri-State Polonia Honor Kosciuszko

General Thaddeus Kosciuszko 1746 - 1817 Hero of America and Poland



Thaddeus Kosciuszko was born in Poland on February 4, 1746, son of Ludwik and Tekla Kosciuszko. He attended school in Lubieszow and then the Cadet Academy in Warsaw before continuing his engineering studies in Paris, France. By the time Kosciuszko arrived in America from Poland in 1776, he was a skilled engineer who came to offer his services to the American colonies in their struggle for independence.

On October 18, 1776, Kosciuszko was commissioned as Colonel of Engineers by the Continental Congress and began his outstanding service of fortifying battle sites, many of which became turning points in America's fight for independence against the British.

Shortly after arriving in Philadelphia in 1776, Kosciuszko read the Declaration of Independence and was moved to tears because he discovered in this single, concise document everything in which he truly believed. When he discovered that Thomas Jefferson was responsible for drafting the Declaration, he felt compelled to meet him. Eventually, while moving south with the Continental Army, Kosciuszko stopped in Virginia to meet with Jefferson. After a very warm reception, the two men spent the day comparing philosophies and eventually became the best of friends.

In the early days of the war, Kosciuszko helped to fortify the Philadelphia waterfront at Fort Mercer. Shortly after, he was transferred to New York, where he helped with fortifications along the Hudson and planned the defense for Saratoga. The Battle of Saratoga, ending on October 17, 1777, became known as one of military history's most famous struggles for independence and proved to be a turning point in the war.

In 1778, Kosciuszko was made chief engineer of West Point, New York. This fortification became known as the American Gibraltar because it was unable to be penetrated by the British Army. Eventually West Point became a military academy, as suggested by Kosciuszko to General George Washington.

In 1783, Kosciuszko was appointed Brigadier General and was awarded the Cincinnati Order Medal by General George Washington, Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army. Washington also presented Kosciuszko with two pistols and a sword as gifts for his outstanding service to America.

After the colonies won their independence, Kosciuszko returned to Poland in 1784, to help his own country win independence from the surrounding European powers. Kosciuszko was wounded in the failed revolt and taken prisoner by the Russians. Upon his release from prison, he returned to America on August 18, 1797, which he considered his "second home." He received a hero's welcome when he reached the Philadelphia waterfront along the Delaware River. Afterward, he secured a residence at 3rd and Pine Streets, which is now the Kosciuszko House, a national memorial to this hero of the American Revolution.

Kosciuszko was admired by general and foot soldier alike, both for his technical knowledge and for his sympathetic understanding and generosity. Jefferson wrote of Kosciuszko, "He is as pure a son of liberty as I have ever known." Tragically, Kosciuszko, a devoted champion of the poor and oppressed, never witnessed the arrival of freedom in his homeland, Poland.

Kosciuszko was a firm believer in equality and requested that the money from his American estate be used to buy freedom for slaves, help to educate them and provide them with enough land to support themselves.

Kosciuszko spent the last years of his life in Switzerland, where on October 15, 1817, he died at the age of 72. He is buried in Wawel Castle, in Krakow, Poland, among the tombs of the Polish Kings.

You can learn more about General Thaddeus Kosciuszko when you visit the Kosciuszko House, Third and Pine Streets, or the Polish American Cultural Center Museum, 308 Walnut Street, both in historic Philadelphia. Or you can visit the Kosciuszko House on the Internet at: www.nps.gov/thko and the Polish American Cultural Center on the Internet at: www.PolishAmericanCenter.com.

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Everyone Is Invited To Attend a
Polish American Community Celebration Honoring

General Thaddeus Kosciuszko

American Revolutionary War Hero
and Freedom Fighter for Poland
Marking the 264th Anniversary of his birth

**Saturday, February 6, 2010
12 Noon**

Betsy Ross Ballroom

Holiday Inn Hotel

4th & Arch Streets in Historic Philadelphia

This event is sponsored by the

Polish American Congress

Eastern Pennsylvania District

**We welcome you to join us for this
Celebration of Unity and Pride!
Admission is Free!**



Following the public ceremony the

Kosciuszko Day Luncheon

will take place at **1:30 P.M.** in the

Franklin, Jefferson & Hancock Ballrooms

Holiday Inn Hotel • 4th & Arch Streets in Historic Philadelphia

For additional information or luncheon reservations call:

Polish American Congress at **(215) 739-3408** or the

Polish American Cultural Center, Monday through Friday

between 9 A.M. and 5 P.M. at **(215) 922-1700**

For more information about General Kosciuszko & Polonia
visit the Museum on the Internet at:

PolishAmericanCenter.com

Visit "The Kosciuszko Room"

During February, the month Kosciuszko was born, or anytime throughout the year, visit the Kosciuszko Room in Ansonia, CT.

The Kosciuszko Room, established in 1980 by Joseph Wardzala and sponsored by the Kosciuszko Historical Society of Ansonia, Derby, Shelton and Seymour, is located in the General David Humphreys House, 37 Elm Street, Ansonia, CT.

The Kosciuszko Room displays many artifacts honoring General Kosciuszko, including photographs, books, portraits, and dolls dressed in traditional Polish dress. It is open admission-free Monday through Friday from 1 to 4 p.m., or by appointment by calling Joseph Wardzala at 203-732-5886.

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