In Memory of Alexander & Helen Bagdzinski
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404th Anniversary of the Arrival of the First Polish Settlers in America on October 1, 1608
A Salute to Early American Workers

On October 1, 1608, the English ship Mary and Margaret arrived at Jamestown, Virginia. Aboard the ship were several persons of Polish descent who had been hired by the Virginia Company of London, at the request of Captain John Smith, leader of the Jamestown Colony. Captain Smith, who had first learned of the Polish craftsmen’s work while traveling in Eastern Europe, invited them to Jamestown for the specific purpose of helping to establish a glass industry in the colony. Upon their arrival, the Poles made a vital contribution to the survival of the colony by digging a well to provide fresh drinking water, which was seriously lacking in the colony.

The next accomplishment was the building of a furnace to produce glass products, which became the first factory in America. In addition to producing glass products, the Polish settlers also produced pitch and tar, vital building materials for expanding the new colony. Despite many hardships due to the climate and living conditions, the Poles and their fellow settlers persevered and eventually were able to produce enough glass, pitch and tar for export to England. These products became the first commercial items to be exported from America to Europe.

Special Greetings from
Richard L. Kryzanowski, Esq.
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