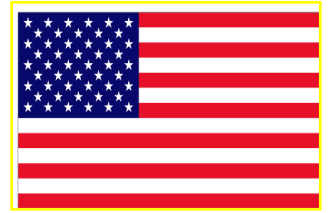




# A Brief Outline of Polish and Polish American History - Part 1



**120,000 B.C.** - First records of Protoslavic cultures in the Ojcow region of Poland.

**1300 B.C.** - First evidence of Lusatian culture, the progenitor of modern Polish and Slavic cultures.

**700 B.C.** - Biskupin Settlement is built in central Poland in what is now the voivodeship of Torun. It is now a museum in Poland featuring the oldest settlement.

**100 A.D.** - Contact with Roman Danubian provinces made by Slavic peoples, although Rome never expands into their territories.

**500** - West Slavic tribal federations begin to form.

**850** - Polanie and Wislanie tribal groups appear, eventually merging together into the first state of Poland.

**966** - Duke Mieszko accepts Christianity for himself and for Poland and the documented history of Poland begins.

**1000** - The foundations of the Catholic religion are laid with the establishment of the Archbishopric of Gniezno and three suffragan sees.

**1025** - Boleslaw the Brave becomes the first Polish King.

**1138** - Boleslaw Wrymouth's order of succession starts the dynastic division of Poland.

**1253** - Poland's patron, St. Stanislaw Bishop of Cracow, is canonized.

**1364** - The University of Cracow is founded under the direction of the Roman Catholic Church.

**1410** - Polish-Lithuanian forces defeat the Teutonic Knights at Grunwald. This collaboration between the two nations would lay the seeds for the creation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

**1473** - The "Father of Modern Astronomy," Mikolaj Kopernik (Nicolas Copernicus), is born.

**1543** - Copernicus' revolutionary work "The Revolution of Heavenly Spheres" is published shortly before his death, the first strike against the theory that the sun revolved around the Earth.

**1569** - The merger of Poland and Lithuania into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth takes place. (Lublin Union).

**1596** - The Union of Brzesc unites most of the Orthodox Bishops of Poland-Lithuania with Rome - the largest, most successful reunion movement in the history of the Catholic Church.

**1608** - The first Polish settlers arrive in Jamestown, Virginia, on the English ship Mary and Margaret. They were craftsmen invited by Captain John Smith to establish a glass industry in the Jamestown Colony. They opened a glassblowing shop, which became the first American industry. After fulfilling the needs of the new Jamestown colony, the Polish settlers produced glass, pitch and tar for export to England. These products became the first commercial items to be exported from America to Europe.

**1619** - After being denied participation in the new Virginia Assembly, the Polish settlers staged the first labor strike in America. The strike was not for wages or working conditions but for the right to participate in the newly-formed House of Burgesses. Recognized for their vital role in the Jamestown settlement, the Poles were granted the same voting privileges as those enjoyed by the English.

**1683** - John Sobieski defeats the Turks at Vienna.

**1745** - Casimir Pulaski is born in Poland.

**1746** - Thaddeus Kosciuszko is born in Poland. He attended school in Lubieszow and later the Cadet Academy in Warsaw and then undertook engineering studies in Paris.

**1776** - Thaddeus Kosciuszko came to America to offer his services to General George Washington. He was appointed engineer of the Continental Army with the rank of Colonel. He distinguished himself throughout the American Revolutionary War. His engineering and fortification skills along the Delaware River and at Saratoga, N.Y., helped win battles for the Continental Army. Kosciuszko is well known for his fortification at West Point, which is the site of West Point Military Academy. The name General Thaddeus Kosciuszko is listed on organizations, bridges, schools, and other local and national landmarks.

**1777** - Count Casimir Pulaski arrives in the United States and is welcomed by General George Washington to serve in the Continental Army. Using his own money, Pulaski formed the first cavalry unit in the Continental Army. He became the Father of the American Calvary. For his service the U.S. Congress appointed him Brigadier General in charge of Four Horse Brigades. General Pulaski, distinguished himself in several key battles during the American Revolutionary War.

**1779** - In October, General Casimir Pulaski was killed during the Battle of Savannah. The British, amazed by his courage, tended to his wounds before he died. Across America many organizations, bridges, streets, schools, and other landmarks are named after General Casimir Pulaski.

**1791** - The Constitution of May 3rd, the first democratic constitution in Europe and the second in the world, after the United States Constitution, is adopted. This event is commemorated annually as "Polish Constitution Day."

**1794** - The Kosciuszko Insurrection occurs in Poland to protest Russia's interference in Polish politics. Kosciuszko, after successfully assisting the United States in its fight for freedom, attempted to help his homeland restore its independence.

**1795** - The Third Partition of Poland by Russia, Prussia and Austria eliminated Poland from the political map of Europe. Despite the efforts of the partitioning powers, the Polish language and customs continued to flourish throughout the years of partition.

**1797** - Kosciuszko returns to Philadelphia greeted by a hero's welcome. He resided at 3rd and Pine Streets, which today is called Kosciuszko House, a national monument to Tadeusz Kosciuszko, operated by the U.S. National Park Service.

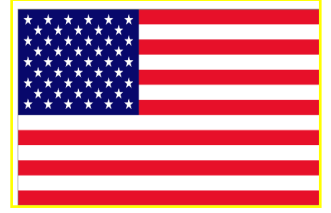
**1830** - The November Insurrection occurs - the first of several unsuccessful Polish attempts in the 19th century to regain independence.

**1863** - The January Insurrection against Russian rule in Poland takes place.

**1867** - Marie Sklodowska Curie, the first scientist in history to win a Nobel Prize in both chemistry and physics, is born in Warsaw.



## 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](http://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.

**Submitted by Michael Blichasz**



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](http://PolishAmericanCenter.com)**