



The Polish Archive

By Ewa Bronowicz



In this column you will learn or review what you know about Polish history through a series of articles featuring important events ranging from the Early Middle Ages to the Third Polish Republic.

If you'd like to suggest an important event in Polish history send us an e-mail. Please include your name, address, brief summary of the event, and why you think it's important. If your event is selected, your opinion will be quoted in the column.

The King Who Didn't Want To Be King (of Poland)

After the death of Zygmunt August (Sigismund II Augustus), about fifty thousand people gathered in the spring of 1573 to choose a new king of Poland. A French candidate seemed like a better option than a Russian one (Ivan the Terrible) or a German one (Maximilian II), among others. It is not surprising that the majority vote elected Henry I as the King of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Henry, who was only twenty-three years-old, was the fourth son of Henry II, King of France, and therefore an unlikely candidate for the French throne. He accepted the Polish crown, even if he was also expected to marry Anna Jagielonka (Anna Jagiellon), the sister of the recently deceased king. She happened to be thirty years older than him, but it was not the first time the young French man was confronted with the prospect of marrying an older woman: his mother had wanted him to wed Queen Elisabeth, almost twenty years his senior.

Henry, whose reputation included romances with princesses and adventures with prostitutes, finally arrived in Cracow in February 1574. Rumor has it that he pretended to be sick and locked himself in his chamber to escape from his future wife. To make things worse, he didn't speak Polish. And the biggest problem was that he didn't know much about Polish politics, and wasn't interested in learning about it, either. He was apparently more enthusiastic about parties, fashion, and sleeping his afternoons away. In other words, Poles can look back on Henry's rule and know who not to vote for.

In June of that year, Henry was trapped: his engagement to Anna Jagielonka had been announced at a ball. Coincidentally, the very next morning he learned of the death of his brother, King Charles IX. That, for Henry, meant a possibility to rule France. He didn't waste any time: a few days later he left Cracow in secrecy and ran for the border. A group of Polish envoys was soon on his trail. According to legend, they confronted the king just after he crossed the border whereupon he promised to return to Poland—soon. He did not keep his promise. No wonder a few weeks later Henry received a letter from the members of the Polish parliament with an ultimatum: if he didn't return to Wawel by May 1575, he would lose the crown. By then, Henry had bigger fish to fry: he became King of France.

Henry's rule of Poland (and Lithuania) was brief—from 1573 to 1574—and yet truly historic. First, he was the first Polish king ever elected by free election. And second, he signed The Henrician Articles, which established Poland as an elective monarchy, a pre-cursor to representative democracy. Interestingly, the French also benefitted from Henry's Polish experience—upon his return to Paris, he brought back the fork (invented in Italy a century earlier), and knowledge of the outhouse, both of which he quickly introduced to the French people.

Tips On Choosing An Insurance Agent

TRENTON, NJ – New Jersey Department of Banking and Insurance Commissioner Ken Kobylowski today provided advice to consumers when shopping for insurance coverage. Whether buying and insuring a new car, starting a small business or moving into the state, insurance shoppers should understand who they are dealing with and know that there are three main ways to secure an insurance policy in New Jersey.

"Consumers can buy insurance through different pipelines," said Commissioner Kobylowski. "Whether purchasing a policy directly from a company, through an agent employed exclusively by one carrier, also known as a captive agent, or an independent agent or commercial broker, insurance shoppers in New Jersey can be confident that they are getting the best coverage if they understand basic issues and their market choices."

Research Insurance Options

Expanding insurance knowledge is the first step in making informed decisions about coverage offered. Understanding terms and standard policy conditions used in various lines such as auto, homeowner's and business insurance is a key

step toward selecting the best protection. For more information on these insurance lines, visit: www.state.nj.us/dobi/division_consumers/insurance/ins_menu.htm

Direct Writers – Carriers offer coverage directly by phone or through online purchasing. They may also employ licensed agents who operate local offices. When buying directly from an insurer without an agent, consumers need to verify that the carrier is licensed by the State. To verify online that a carrier is licensed in New Jersey visit:

www.state.nj.us/dobi/data/inscomp.htm

Agent Types

When shopping for coverage, it is important to understand the types of agents in the marketplace.

Independent Agent – Some agents have contracts with several different insurance carriers. These agents can assist consumers in comparing coverage options offered by multiple companies on the same risk.

Captive Agent – Other agents write exclusively with one insurance company. Consumers who are certain of the carrier they want to use may want to utilize these agents.

Insurance Broker – Brokers typi-

cally write commercial coverage and life and health insurance for businesses. Business insurance coverage tends to be a more complicated transaction. Owners may want to utilize a broker who specializes in finding insurance for business risks to maximize coverage for the best possible cost.

"There is no set formula for finding the best coverage to fit your needs," said Kobylowski. "However, word of mouth may be the most popular and reliable indicator that you have found the right coverage source."

Commissioner Kobylowski provided the following suggestions if consumers decide to search for an independent or captive agent rather than buy insurance directly from a company:

* Referrals from family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues – A recent National Association of Insurance Commissioners survey found that 79 percent of consumers asked said they received insurance advice from family and friends. Also, 65 percent said they asked colleagues and social acquaintances. Consumers should ask about and find out why they like the agent. Customer service,

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2014 EASTER SCHEDULE

APRIL 17: HOLY THURSDAY - Mass of the Lord's Supper at 7:00pm.

APRIL 18: GOOD FRIDAY - Liturgy of the Passion and Death of the Lord at 3:00pm. Stations of the Cross in English & Polish at 7:00pm. Divine Mercy Novena begins.

APRIL 19: HOLY SATURDAY - Easter Vigil Liturgy at 7:30pm. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at the Tomb, Confession & Blessing of food 9am to 6pm.

APRIL 20: EASTER SUNDAY - Resurrection Procession and Mass at 8:30 AM in Polish. Polish Masses: 10am & 12:30pm. English Masses: 11am, 2:30pm & 5pm.

APRIL 27: DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY - Divine Mercy Celebration begins with Holy Mass at 2:30pm. **Canonization of Blessed John Paul II.**

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