



# THE POLISH HERITAGE OF OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND

Issue No. 3

AUGUST 1999

*A big welcome to all our members & supporters.*

## Inside this Newsletter

- 1 Chairperson's Report
- 2 Dunedin Festival  
*Champion of Champions*
- 3 100 Years Journey  
*Waihola Church Celebrations*
- 4 Polish Culture  
*Visiting Kindergarten & Schools.*
- 5 Jadwiga Michalik
- 6 Genealogical Research  
*Proposed Cultural Weekend*
- 7 Mass Times
- 8 Polish Dance Group
- 9 Polish Genealogy of NZ
- 10 Multi Ethnic  
*Proposed week of events to celebrate millennium.*
- 11 Trust Membership
- 12 Celebrations & Condolences
- 13 Bon Voyage
- 14 Polish Heritage Trust of NZ.
- 15 Polish Poet  
*Juliusz Slowacki*
- 16 Polish Film  
*'Ogniem i mieczem'*

### CHAIRPERSONS REPORT

In the last newsletter, I commented on the future

projects and directions of our Trust. Perhaps at that time they seemed too ambitious. Now we are in the second half of 1999 and we are well on track with our projects. Since then, we have added new ones.

Our participation in the 99' Dunedin's festival parade culminated 1st place, \$2000 & three trophies. It was an exiting and rewarding experience.

The 1999 Polish weekend celebration was a wonderful success too. The theme was the 100 years journey of the Historical Church from Waihola to Broad Bay. This celebration was marked by placing an historical plaque in the Allanton Cemetery, an informative panel at Broad Bay and a week long historical display added to this broad spectrum of events offered by our group to the Dunedin community.

Congratulations, & again, well done.

Swava Pociecha (Chairperson).

### DUNEDIN FESTIVAL 1999

06 March 1999

The group enthusiastically entered this years Procession for 1999. Our theme was Celebration of Harvest - an old custom to celebrate the end of the harvest season.

The Society received three cups for their efforts. The float was

placed First by the Dunedin Festival & Opoho District and placed Champion of Champions. Many thanks to all those keen supporters who worked hard in the preparing of the float & the amazing array of colour & costumes. There is no denying the fact that we are making ourselves visable & proud. Again congratulations to all those who took part.

### 100 YEARS JOURNEY - WAIHOLA & BROADBAY

Well another successful display of events to celebrate the Centennial of the Polish Church at Broad Bay.

The classical concert was performed magnificantly & many thanks to the organisers & especially to Terence Dennis & performers.

The Bus trip & unveiling of plaque went off very well. Despite the grey day our spirits were not dampened. Thanks to the organisers & to our members & guests who took part. Thanks to Mona Todd, Paul Klemick & John Devereux for the unveiling & to Fr. McGettigan.

The Celebration Dinner was patronised very well & many thanks to the members of the Society & to the Waverley Parish for making it a great success. Many Thanks to our guest speaker Fr. C. Schmelz & to the well received Polish & Rock 'n' Roll Dances performed by Kayleen Gilder, Pat Docherty & Paul Klemick. Paul & Kayleen would like to thank Joy Pearson for her time in teaching the Polish dance "Kujawiak".

The Latin Mass was received very well & celebrated in true Latin style. Amazing how most remembered our Latin while some of us were just too young to remember. Thank you to the organisers and to Fr. Maloney & Fr. McGettigan. Also a big thanks to

# THE POLISH HERITAGE OF OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND

Sister Kathleen for her time spent in the singing side of things, again thank you.

The unveiling went off very well in great weather. Many thanks to Ray Orlowski, David Benson-Pope & Patrick Ball.

We would like to thank all those able hands who played a part in the success of the display in the Community Art Gallery, especially to Keith Clark & Paul Bungard. I'm sure you will agree that this is a great way to show the public our past, present & future.

Thanks goes out to Edward & Ludmila Sakowski and to Margaret - Ann Howard for their amazing talent of art works on display.

Again a big thank you to all those who helped make this event a successful & memorable one.

## POLISH CHURCH

On April 16th, 1899, in the township of Waihola, the church of "St. Hyacinth" was opened for worship.

August Orlowski, the local carpenter, had helped the builder, Mr J. Agnew, to do the major work. Later on August did all the repairs on his own accord. Paul Baumgardt also supported, and voluntarily assisted in the building of the church. Paul presented to the church of "St Hyacinth" the bell. It's tolling could be heard throughout Waihola calling its parishoners to mass.

It is also noted that August Orlowski helped build the Waihola Hall and was regarded as a wonderful tradesman of the old class. He had only a few basic tools and no modern machinery. In appreciation of the work that had been done to the church, the parish presented August a bible which is still in the family today.

After the church was opened, the Polish settlers during the week

days prayed there on their own as there was no resident priest in Waihola at any time. Holy mass was celebrated by visiting priests who mostly came from Milton usually on Sundays.

Hyacinth Wisnesky was born on the 21st of April 1900, the son of Bernard & Henrette Wisnesky, and he was the first child to be baptised in the Waihola Church.

Hyacinth recalled as a boy helping Mr August Orlowski by holding the ladder for him when he was doing repairs to the church.

It is noted that Michael Wisnesky was the real leader of the Waihola Community. He used to ring the church-bell on occasions such as funerals, etc. All visiting priests used to have breakfast at their home where all the meetings were also held.

Johann Orlowski had gifted to the church four large candle stick holders and made the two milking stools. In 1921 his nephew, August Orlowski (son of the original builder) presented to the church a water-font made of Oamaru stone.

It is believed that one of the "Palmerston" immigrants brought out with them from Poland the Picture of the Holy Mary of Perpetual Succour. This was presented and still hangs in the church today. The writing below the picture has the following words:

*"CUDOWNY OBRAZ NAJSWIETSZEJ MARYJI PANNY OD USTAWICZNEJ POMOCY W KOSCIBLE SW. ALFONSA W. RZYMIE. ARTYSTYCZNEGO ZAKLADU C.F. CALOWA W KOLONII."*

*(Miraculous Picture of the Holy Mary of Perpetual Succour, as it hangs in the Church of St. Alfons in Rome. Made by C.F. Calowa in the artistic studio in Coln.)*

On Sundays Anna Wisnesky (nee Orlowski) allowed no physical work and this was very strictly observed in the family. Michael Wisnesky used to read extracts from the bible in Polish. He could read Polish but not German or English. When they needed a letter written in German or English they asked Mr

Hilgendorf of Waihola for help. Hyacinth remembers two such occasions.

Aunt Anna Wisnesky, (daughter to Michael & Anna), was the organist and washed the altar linen and cleaned the church. She was very distraught & upset when the church was moved to Broad Bay in 1948.

Due to all the original Polish settlers passing on, and most of their children moving to bigger centres in search of employment, the number of Catholics at Waihola diminished sharply.

Since about 1918 there was no Mass celebrated in the Church. Father Michael Howard, later he became Monsignor Howard in Invercargill, was the last visiting priest. However, it wasn't uncommon on passing the church just to pop in for a short prayer. The Church Authorities decided to shift the church to Broad Bay in Dunedin, where a number of Catholics were without a church.

It is believed the church was removed by truck on the 17th of March 1948 (St Patricks Day). During the haul the workers stopped off at the Henley Hotel for a quick one before continuing on their way.

The bell tower was dismantled during the removal of the church and was sent down to the Catholic Church in Balclutha. It was during April 1999 that this bell had been located & was re-purchased by the Bungard family & re-located to its rightful place in time for the church's Centenary celebrations which were held in May of 1999.

On the 7th of November 1948 the church was re-opened for service as "Mary Queen of Peace", the right Rev. Mgr. Delany, V.G., officiating at the ceremony.

The stained glass windows which the Polish settlers of Waihola and Catholics of Broad Bay were so rightly proud of, were unfortunately, broken by vandals in the early 1960's and replaced by plain green glass.

The altar was changed to face the congregation on the 21st of

## THE POLISH HERITAGE OF OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND

September 1968, and the first Mass the new way was celebrated there on the 28th of July 1968.

Since 1995 the church has provided a place of worship for the Polish community & descendants with the locals of Broad Bay.

### A TASTE OF POLISH CULTURE

In the memory of her Father who died as a Polish Officer during the Second World War, Teresa Wesilewska, visited the Roslyn Kindergarten & shared with the children there a part of her Polish

Culture. We believe that is was greatly received & the children really enjoyed themselves.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Czeslawa Panek who visited Columba College and shared with the pupils there, events during & after the Second World War through the eyes of a Polish Child and the settlement of the Polish children in New Zealand.

Columba College also got another treat of Polish Culture

together with a bit of 50's kiwi culture, when Kayleen Gilder & Paul Klemick performed the Polish Dance Krujawiak & some modern Rock 'n' Roll to keep the pupils interest. Both were received very well. Thanks to both Kayleen & Paul and to Cyclopedia Klobokowska for organising the event.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank those members of the trust who with their motivation & encouragement help the promotion of our Polish Culture.

# Polish exile much loved in Dunedin

Jadwiga Michalik, a Polish exile invited to live in New Zealand in 1944, died in Dunedin earlier this month. She was 89.

Mrs Michalik had lived for almost 29 years at Little Sisters of the Poor in Brockville, making her one of the home's longest term residents.

She became a much-loved personality in the home, where until shortly before her death, she took special pride in helping staff organise the dining room. As a memorial to her, her family presented the home with a photograph which included a complete table setting.

Known as Mamusia to her children and extended family, Babcia to her grandchildren, Big Babcia to her great grandchildren and Jadwiga to her friends. Mrs Michalik was born in Kansk Russia in 1909.

Her life was marked by hardship and loss.

The daughter of a Polish couple, both sets of her grandparents had been deported from Poland as a consequence of active resistance to Czar Nicholas II. The year after the Czar was deposed in 1918, the family returned to northeast Poland — now the Ukraine — where her father was a mechanical engineer.

Mrs Michalik trained as a primary school teacher. In 1935 she married a Polish army lieutenant, Franciszek Michalik. They had two sons.

Her husband was killed soon after the beginning of World War 2, and in 1940 the family was again deported to Russia.

## Obituary

### Obituary



Jadwiga Michalik,  
teacher and refugee

As the family was being deported, her mother died — after she had secreted the family's jewellery in food they took with them. Then soon after they arrived in Kazakhstan, Mrs

Michalik's youngest son died.

As the only labourer in the family she received a small allocation of fish and black bread for each day's work, not enough to keep her family. By selling the jewellery her mother had hidden, she bought extra food.

In 1942 an armistice allowed the family to leave Russia for Persia (now Iran). With hundreds of exiled Poles, the family was looked after by the reforming Polish army.

Two years later, Mrs Michalik, her surviving son Wojtek and nephew Zbigniew Poplawski were in a group of 800 Polish exiles invited to New Zealand by Prime Minister Peter Fraser.

They lived in the Polish children's camp, 5km south of Pahiatua in the Wairarapa. Mrs Michalik taught Polish history and national dancing along with other school subjects, and played an important role in the cultural life of the community.

At the end of the war, New Zealand offered permanent residency to the people living in the camp, and Mrs Michalik, her son and nephew chose to stay. They became citizens of New Zealand in 1966.

After the camp closed, she moved to Wellington where she taught at the Polish girls hostel, and then in 1952 joined the Post Office.

She retired in 1967, and came to Dunedin to live with her family. She is survived by her son and nephew, six grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

# THE POLISH HERITAGE OF OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND

## GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

We are proposing to put together a Polish Cultural Weekend (Past & Present) in the form of a seminar on Polish Family Research & Poland's History today. Will include Video's & slides etc.

One suggestion is to have this event in the form of a retreat somewhere out of town.

If you would like to help in any way please contact Paul Klemick - 481 1277 or Cecylia Klobokowska - 489 6438.



## Masses at Broad Bay

- 22 Aug - 9am
- 26 September - 9am
- 24 October - 9am
- 28 November - 9am
- 26 December - 9am

## DANCE GROUP

There is an interest in forming a Polish Dance Group for the Society & have at hand about 3 to 4 couples who are keen. If you would like to take part in some fun please contact Kayleen Gilder - 481 1277.

## POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF NZ

A desire has been expressed by some members for a research help/lecture get together to share information, listen to guest

speakers and enjoy a dinner together.

Suggested dates are 18th/19th September or the 16th/17th October 1999 to be held in New Plymouth.

There will be a representative from the Trust to attend so that we can pass on any skills to our members.

## MULTI ETHNIC

The Polish Trust is proposing to work together with the Multi Ethnic Counsel in a week of events to help celebrate the new Millennium with other ethnic groups of Dunedin. This may involve activities such as dancing, singing, craft & art works of all ethnic groups involved under one umbrella. This has been proposed for December 1999.

It has also been proposed to have an art auction during these events. Anyone interested in submitting any arts or crafts please contact Ludmila Sakowska at 487 7763.

We would like to congratulate Swava Pocięcha & Ludmila Sakowski for gaining positions & representing our Trust on the Multi Ethnic Counsel Committee. I am sure your ideas & contributions will be greatly received.

## TRUST MEMBERSHIP

Membership is growing and if you are still interested in becoming a financial member of the Trust fill out the membership form and send it to - Polish Heritage of Otago & Southland C/- 723 Highgate, Dunedin.

## Celebrations

Colin & Betty Bungard celebrate their 40th Wedding Anniversary.

Keith & Trish Clark celebrate their 40th Wedding Anniversary.

Clive & Angela Donaldson celebrate their 25th Wedding Anniversary.

Angela Donaldson was elected President for the Altrusa Club & Cycelia Klobokowska elected as President Elect.

Rosalie Prescott (nee Klimeck) was 100 years old last month.

## CONDOLENCES

Our condolences go out to Helen Bungard-Davies and the Bungard family, of the death of Helen's husband, Gary Davies who died early this year and to the death of Helen's brother Raymond Bungard. Our hearts are with you all.



## BON VOYAGE

We wish all the best to Keith & Trish Clark and to Clive & Angela Donaldson on their holiday & touring around Europe. We wish you fit & well on your journey and come back safely as we will be waiting in anticipation on how everything went.

# THE POLISH HERITAGE OF OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND

Polish Heritage Trust of New Zealand

C/o John Roy-Wojciechowski

✍ Project "Polonia". I have now completed arrangements with Victoria University and legal documentation is taking place. Theresa Sawicka will be doing the project including co-ordination of other writers into a single volume book which will most likely be styled "Anthology of Polish Immigration to New Zealand". Shortly I will be writing to the individual persons who have agreed to co-operate with this project to give them details of what and how they should proceed from now on.

✍ Honorary Consulate Office. I am pleased to inform you that I have been nominated and will be appointed an Honorary Consul for the Republic of Poland in Auckland.

✍ Home Page for Polish Heritage Trust of New Zealand. I am pleased to inform you that the Polish Heritage Trust of New Zealand has opened a web page which will be formally linked to the office of the Polish Consulate. It will encompass activities of all Polish organisations in New Zealand including Polish Studies at the Auckland University, Polish Literary Club and other associations. It is intended to maintain a permanent exhibition and information on these pages and we would like to include the following materials and data:

- \* List of all Polish organisations, companies, activity groups etc operating in New Zealand and the Pacific region.

- \* List of all New Zealanders having some Polish roots or being interested in Polish culture, history etc.

- \* Information about Polish memorabilia, books and documents illustrating the past and present of the Polish community in New Zealand and the Pacific region.

- \* We wish to make a permanent place on the internet of photographs, documents, books, awards, civil and military decorations etc. I invite you to support this initiative and join me in providing information. This information, if you are agreeable, can be e-mailed to me or sent by letter and it should include the following data:

- \* Name & Address

- \* Contact telephone numbers faxes etc

- \* e-mail addresses, home page addresses (if any)

- \* Exhibits, books, documents, photos, memoirs etc you are willing to make available for this internet project

- \* Organisation or activity groups you feel should be included in this project

You may view the page on the internet as follows:

<http://www.polishheritage.co.nz>.

Look forward to hearing from you.

John Roy.

## POLISH STUDIES

Polish, which is not taught elsewhere in the New Zealand university system, is financially supported by the Polish community in New Zealand and

abroad and is administered by the Russian Department. Polish Studies are available at Stage 1 only. There is also Polish content in some European Languages papers, specifically 194.201SC *The Languages of Europe*.

284.100SC *Beginners' Polish (Semester II, 1999)* Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays at 9.00-10.00 am

This course features the sounds, spelling and pronunciation of Polish; the case system; verbal conjugations and aspect; and the development of basic reading and speaking skills. It will appeal both to students of Polish origin who have no formal knowledge of the language and to those who wish to acquaint themselves with a West Slavonic language. This paper is especially recommended to students who wish to focus on either Slavonic linguistics or East European Studies within their Auckland BA.

284.101SC *Introduction to Modern Poland (Semester II, 1999)* Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays at 10.00-11.00am.

NB: For suitably qualified students, this course is available extramurally in 1999.

This paper begins with a survey of Polish history based on the work of Norman Davies (*God's Playground*) and includes discussion of the emergence of Solidarity, the independent trade union (1980), the collapse of communism (1989) and subsequent moves towards democratic government and economic and political integration with the West.

The main segment treats Polish literature of the last two centuries in English translation, with extracts by major writers from Mickiewicz to Szymborska and

# THE POLISH HERITAGE OF OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND

with a special focus on Boleslaw Prus's *The Doll* and Czeslaw Milosz's *The Captive Mind*.

This paper is especially recommended to students who wish to acquaint themselves with the major emerging political and economic power of Eastern Europe.

Up to four scholarships (half-tuition waivers) will be available for 1999. Applications from enrolled students close on 6 August 1999.

For more information, contact Associate Prof, Lilly, ph. 373-7599, ext. 8651 or 8654, 28 Wynyard St.; e-mail [polish@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:polish@auckland.ac.nz)



## POLISH POET

### W PAMIETNIKU ZOFII BOBROWNY

Niechaj mie Zoska o wiersze nie prosi

Bo kiedy Zoska do ojczyzny wroci

To kazdy kwiatek powie wiersze Zosi

Kazda jej gwiazdka piosenke zanuci

Nim kwiat przekwitnie, nim gwiazdeczka zleci

Sluchaj - bo to sa najlepsi poeci.

Gwiazdy blekitne, kwiateczki czerwone

Beda ci cale poemata skladac

Ja bym to samo powiedzial, co one

Bo ja sie od nich nauczylem gadac

Bo tam, gdzie lkwy srebrne fale plyna

Bylem ja niegdy's, jak Zoska, dziecina.

Dzisiaj daleko pojechalem w gosci

I dalej mie los nieszczesliwy goni

Przywiez mi, Zosko, od tych gwiazd swiatlosci

Prszwiez mi, Zosko, z tamtych kwiatow woni

Bo mi zaprawde odmlodniec potrzeba.

Wroc mi wiec z kraju taka - jakby z nieba.

Juliusz Slowacki (1809 - 1849)

*We celebrate the 150th anniversary of Juliusz Slowacki's death which occurred on the 3rd of April 1849 - One of Poland's Greatest Poets. His body lies in the city of Krakow.*

## POLISH FILM

### OGNIEM I MIECZEM

The film premieres at, Hoyts 5, Manners Mall, Wellington - on the 1st of September, 7.pm.

Cost = \$30 adults, \$20 students.

### ABOUT THE BOOK

The novel 'Ogniem i mieczem' - With Fire and Sword - was first published in Poland in 1884 as first in a three part historic Polish saga known as The Trilogy. The author, Henryk Sienkiewicz, won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1905. The Trilogy, complete with the other two novels, 'Potop' (The Deluge) and 'Pan Wolodyjowski',

has ever since been the best known, most widely read and most important novel in the history of Polish literature.

'Ogniem i mieczem' has been translated into 26 languages; it was staged in 1904 at Sara Bernhardt's theatre and the first film was shot in 1961 in Italy.

### JERZY HOFFMAN, THE FILM DIRECTOR:

'I learned about Poland in the faraway Siberia, where my parents were sent by the Soviets in 1940. I first read two parts of The Trilogy in a copy my father sent me from the Soviet-German frontline. But not 'With Fire and Sword', which never made it through the Soviet censors.

Years later it was the same with the films: I first shot 'Pan Wolodyjowski' in 1968, then 'The Deluge' in 1974 - nominated to Oscar '74 - and it seemed 'With Fire and Sword' will never see the light of day.

I always thought there were three things indispensable in film-maker's profession: talent, skills and determination. And this last one is the most important of all.

Many people thought I am a maniac, when I kept repeating that 'With Fire and Sword' would certainly come into being...'. And it did. I fought for it for eleven years. And in 1999, after long last, I can see my dream coming true; I am bringing to life my beloved Sienkiewicz's heroes...

The idiom of cinema has changed since. It has to appeal not only to those who have read the book or know it by heart but also to those who never read it or never even heard about it at all. Perhaps they will get the book after seeing the film. That's why I only took

# *THE POLISH HERITAGE OF OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND*

out the stories of the main characters from the book.

I am talking about things that seem universal. I am telling a story of human passion - of love, hate, envy and lust for power - the passions which ever since Cain and Abel have controlled our deeds. To be true, every story, be it even in a historic guise, must tell about these problems - no matter where you are.

The film is comprehensible not only for Poles but also world wide, because passions know no frontiers.

I wanted to bring about the wild and heady climate of the seventeenth century borderland into this film. It is brutal at times, but only when it is dramatically justified; it is also lyrical, because it's a film about love.

To me 'With Fire and Sword' it's a Polish-Ukrainian 'Gone With The Wind', with the human fate thrown against the tragic background of civil war...

## ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

JERZY HOFFMAN was born in 1932 in Cracow, Poland in a family of physicians. At the age of eight he was, together with his parents, deported to Siberia in the far East of Russia. He came back to Poland after World War II. Hoffman studied film at the Moscow Film Institute.

Hoffman made his first film, 'The Hooligans', together with Jerzy Skorzewski in 1955. The film was awarded with the Polish Critics' Award. The team made 27 other films, winning prizes at Oberhausen, Venice, Mannheim, Moscow and Cracow. Their first feature film, 'Gangsterzy i filantropi' (Gangster and Philanthropists) won the third prize of the Ministry of Culture in

1962; the other two were 'Prawo i piesc' (The Law and the Fist, 1964) and 'Trzy kroki po ziemi' (Three steps on the earth, 1965).

Other films directed by Jerzy Hoffman:

1966 *Jarmark cudow* awarded in Venice

1967 *Ojciec* 3rd prize awarded by the Ministry of Culture - Golden screen for the best TV drama

1968 *Pan Wolodyjowski* awarded by the Ministry of Culture

1974 *Potop, 'The Deluge'* awarded by the Ministry of Culture - Grand Prix, Film Festival in Gdansk - nominated to Oscar '75 - awarded in Moscow for the best male part of Tadeusz Lomnicki

1976 *Tredowata*

1978 *Do krwi ostatniej* special award at the Gdansk Festival

1981 *Znachor*

1983 *Wedle wyrokow Twoich*

1992 *Piekna nieznajoma*

1999 *Ogniem i mieczem, 'With Fire and Sword'*

## THE MAKING OF 'WITH FIRE AND SWORD'

Following the box office success in 1968 of Hoffman's first film adaptation of The Trilogy, 'Pan Wolodyjowski' in Poland, the second one, 'The Deluge', shot in 1974, became an international success. Arthur Rubinstein cancelled his New York concert to see its first night in the US. Nominated to Oscar, 'The Deluge' lost to Fellini's 'Amarcord', which Hoffman commented: 'To lose to Fellini is a great honour'. American distributors were keen to buy the movie, but the then Polish authorities had their own plans. Before they found they were wrong it was too late for the

film to become a success in the States.

While the story told in The Trilogy covers 25 years, 31 years passed between the making of the first film, 'Pan Wolodyjowski', and 'With Fire and Sword'. The first funds were allocated to the project in 1987 by the Ministry of Culture. A special Film Studio was established, which selected locations and objects, purchased costume fabrics and military equipment. But with the changing of the government minister the works were terminated. In 1992, a foundation was set up to collect funds. When the media joined in with contests and competitions, the whole Poland debated who should take the part of Helena, Bohun, Skrzetuski and Zagloba.

Finally, on the 13th of October 1997 at 8 a.m. Jerzy Hoffman was ready to start the shoot. In 118 days over 70 miles of film were used to make a feature film and a four-hour tv drama cycle.

## THE STORY

*'1647 was a strange year, with many a sign in the sky and on the earth foreboding some disastrous and extraordinary events',*

Henryk Sienkiewicz, *With Fire and Sword*

The seventeen century Polish-Ukrainian borderland is torn by a Cossack uprising. A young Polish Colonel Skrzetuski on his way back from Russia meets beautiful Helena in a broken coach. He falls in love with her and in almost no time confesses his feeling to her to find out they are reciprocal. Unfortunately, as a result of her Aunt's plot, Helena had been promised to a Ukrainian soldier Bohun in return for his resignation from the right to family property. When Skrzetuski

# *THE POLISH HERITAGE OF OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND*

finds out about the plot, the Aunt agrees to give Helena to him. Bohun, who is also madly in love with Helena, goes mad and burns the property down, killing the Aunt's son.

Thanks to Skrzetuski's companion Zagloba, Helena takes refuge in the Castle of Bar. While Skrzetuski, under the command of Polish Prince Wisniowiecki, is fighting Cossacks down in Ukraine, Bohun's troops seize the Castle of Bar. Bohun kidnaps Helena and hides her away. From now on, for the two rivals the war between the two peoples, becomes a private affair...

Skrzetuski embarks upon a hunt for Bohun with the help of his servant Rzedzian and three friends: Zagloba, a fat, jovially bragging drinker, Colonel Wolodyjowski, a master of sabre, and Longinus, a don Quixotic type of a knight, and an owner of a very heavy sword. In the course of the hunt Bohun imprisons Zagloba, who is freed by Wolodyjowski. Bohun runs away but then comes against the two again and is seriously wounded in a duel with Wolodyjowski.

Rzedzian, who pretends to take care of him, cunningly learns from him Helena's whereabouts and the company goes on to free her from the hands of Bohun's men.

On the way back they are attacked by Tartars allied with Cossacs. While Zagloba and Wolodyjowski are keeping the attackers busy, Rzedzian takes Helena to the nearby Castle of Zbaraz.

When the Castle of Zbaraz is under the Tartar siege, the three knights perform many heroic deeds. Trying to bring help from the royal troops, Longinus

sneaks out of the besieged town and is killed in battle, however, not before he is able to keep his vows and cut three pagan heads in one go.

Skrzetuski is next to try and eventually, on his last legs, he reaches the king, who decides to come to their aid.

Skrzetuski meets Helena in the liberated castle. They announce their engagement and Skrzetuski gets imprisoned Bohun as a present from his friends. However, he lets Bohun free, who rides away into the depth of Ukrainian steppes.

## ABOUT UKRAINE

Ukraine is an extraordinary land. It draws in traveller, students of history, adventure seekers and artists. Both those, who are looking for rest as well as people eager to invest capital, knowledge or experience. They may not find what they were looking for but everyone knows, that with a bit of good luck every aim can be achieved.

The book by Sienkiewicz covers the most colourful and the most heroic period in the history of Cossacks, when they took to arms to show their national identity within the borders of the Polish Republic.

Their dramatic fight ended up, as we now know, with their complete enslavement under the Russian Empire.

Before this happened the Polish-Ukrainian battles proved to be a very important experience to both sides.

War is not a craft practised by weak people, but its romantic legend usually does not surface up before the war cries, the guns, the clang of sabres and the wail of the wounded have subsided.

Though this war was brutal and no knightly rules of conduct were observed, the author's appeal for Christian love between Poles and the Ukrainians will never be forgotten by either nations. And Hoffman makes sure that this can be also seen in his film.

Every nation sees its history in a different way, even the same events or the same historic characters.

This is not only their right but also their duty. It is important however not to detract from the truth, not to pass facts in silence or doctor them. And nobody can be absolved from this duty: neither a historian, nor an author nor the film maker.

Professor Wladyslaw A. Serczyk,  
history consultant.

*The previous two articles were provided by WIADOMOSCI POLSKIE (The Polish Association in NZ Inc.).*

Well I hope this newsletter finds you all fit and well and until next time -

Bye For Now

Paul Klemick (ED).

