

Wielka Rodzina Firkowskich



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English Version



It's the attendance!

Faded records cobwebbed in church archives for years... old, dusty photos in the attic, family memories kept as a most valuable treasure and passed on from generation to generation... Is this the definition of genealogy? Or maybe rather...

...Old cousins who haven't been seen for years, new friends from various regions of Poland, a little history, a moment of inspiration, memories... singing by guitar, dancing, having fun...

We had a golden opportunity (twice now) to meet together and experience two totally surreal days together this past September...

Sadly, many didn't want to participate in this magical event. It's very sad and depressing.

Time goes by. Days, months, years are going away... The Family Reunion is one of the possibilities to stop or back up time even if only for a very short time! The Reunion gives us the opportunity to meet with our relatives whom we haven't seen in years and it allows us to look back and remember our ancestors... It is not just an enjoyable time; it's also true life...

It isn't true; that if there is small number of people the

atmosphere is much better, integration is easier... No! I don't agree with such opinions!

In my opinion there is a difference between a Reunion and a family meeting. The main aim of a Reunion is meeting a lot of our relatives. ATTENDANCE is that thing which should make the difference from other family meetings! A Reunion – it has a unique atmosphere, which makes all the people become closer (even when they see each other for the first time).

I made great efforts so that everyone could find something interesting for him/herself during these two days. There was time for memories; time for talking and looking at old photos, there was time for playing and singing... It's hard to arrange a meeting, which would be liked by everybody. The unique atmosphere and all guests' heartiness allow everybody to feel good at this family meeting.

If we don't want to regret that we didn't do anything in the past, let's do it now! Family Reunions give us such possibility. We come and everything is ready. Only price could be a problem for some people! Put some coins each month into a piggy bank. And when you get the next invitation for the Reunion, don't hesitate any more,

just come!

Do something for your family and for yourself. If you were at the previous Reunions tell your relatives about it. Tell them what you liked and what you didn't. Show them photos & films. And take them with you to the next Reunion. If each person encourages even only one "new" person into coming, the next meeting will truly be a Reunion of the GREAT Firkowski Family.

Łukasz F., Dabrowa Gornicza

Index

It's the attendance.....	1
We survived another one.....	2
Thanks from Ken.....	3
Thanks.....	4
Reunion Survey.....	3
And we met together again.....	4
Meeting after 30 years.....	5
Seeing Family Again.....	5
YahooGroup.....	5
Sielpia Wielka & Area.....	6
Vacation Visitor.....	7
About the Mormons.....	7
Who was guilty?.....	8
Poem.....	9
Julian & Gregorian Calender.....	9
New Cousin.....	10
Coat of Arms.....	11
Mountains and people.....	12
We have joined our family again..	13
Word Search Puzzle.....	14
Photo Identified.....	15
Letters People wrote.....	15
We help the terminally ill.....	16
My 2nd trip to Poland.....	16
Unknown people.....	18
Contact Addresses.....	18

We survived another one



Happy Birthday for our Senior



Singing by the fire



Family Tree over 40 meters long



Final preparations and we start



Legend of the Firkowski's



Emotional Speeches



Artistic Contest for the Children



Is it a competitive Party?



What do we know about our Family?



1600zł ... three times. SOLD!



Preparing for the Soccer match



Dancing together until dawn



Delicious grilled sausage!



Diplomas are given!



Mass for our Family prosperity



Drying the Family Tree



Goodbye regrets....

Thanks from Ken



I would like to thank everyone very much for an exciting and unforgettable visit to Poland. Words cannot begin to describe the wonderful experiences I had. I have seen many cities, castles, cathedrals and beautiful architecture. I have had the chance to taste many new foods, and sample the great beer & vodka.

The best part of my visit was meeting my family. Meeting my Family was what made this vacation to Poland so beautiful. I look forward to visiting again.

Thanks

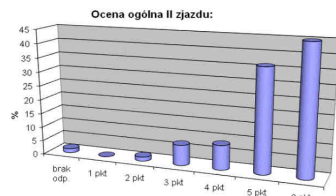
There almost wasn't anybody who wanted to help us with the newsletter and recording DVDs this year. So maybe it will be the last issue of our family newsletter. It's hard to do everything with only two people.

We would like to give a big thanks to Anna Sak from Torun for her unselfish help with translations. Only she devoted her time. Thanks to her, this newsletter was able to be completed.

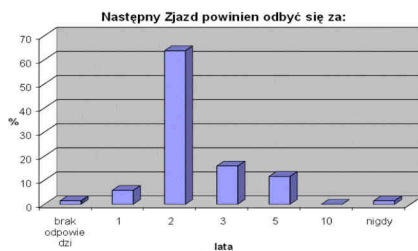
REUNION SURVEY

Thank you very much for filling out the surveys evaluating the 2nd Family Reunion. There were 71 surveys thrown in to the ballot box, but 2 were not filled out. We took into consideration that 69% of the surveys were filled out correctly. Because so many of the participants of the 2nd Family Reunion took part in the survey, the results of this survey are authoritative. I invite you to read the information.

Over 80% of people that filled out the surveys said the 2nd Family Reunion was very good, and they acknowledged that 1 to 2 were graded 5 & 6 respectively. Definitely the worst grade for this reunion was from people ages 21-30. Women graded higher than men.



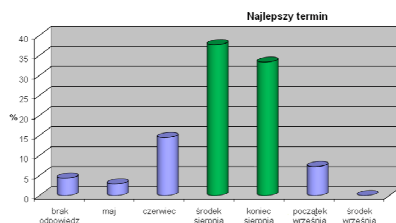
63% of people said that the 3rd Family Reunion should be held in 2 years, 16% in 3 years, but 11% in 5 years. Only 1.5% don't want another family meeting.



(This result does not mean the next family reunion will be in 2 years. it is only a suggestion to the organizers.)

Of all the people who answered the question about a proposed place for the Reunion 61% wrote that we should have it again in Sielpia Wielka. The remaining answers that were repeated at least twice were Spala, pomorze, the mountains, & Lodz.

The second half of August was marked as the best time for the next reunion (70% of the respondents). Over 14% of the people said that the most convenient time for the next reunion would be in June. 3% added their own answer – May.



66% of the people agree that the price of the reunion was perfect. 20% said that the price was too high in proportion to what was available. 7% said that the price was too low. The remaining people did not answer this question. To the next question "Will you come for the next Family Reunion?" - 81% of people stated a positive answer. About 4% of the people stated a negative answer. The remaining people are undecided.



The very interesting answers were those that compared the past 2 Reunions. Despite that in the survey there were no answers that both Reunions were enjoyed equally by people - 21% of the people added this answer. Of the remaining people, 23% said that the 1st Reunion was better, 13% said the 2nd was better. Over 40% were not at the 1st Family Reunion or did not answer this question.



Below I show the most interesting answers to the remaining questions. A few answers were repeated, others occurred only once. Many opinions & comments below appear to be very valuable. A few Opinions I don't agree with. I present them, because I don't want to be labeled as biased. I leave you to evaluate these answers.

At the Reunion I most enjoyed:

- The chance to meet family
- the games working together
- organizing the Reunion
- Saturday family knowledge contest
- Friday evening with guitar
- stories from the seniors
- the Family Tree
- drying the family tree.

At the reunion I did not enjoy:

- The weak tea during the meal
- small attendance
- the weather
- too short of a Saturday Party
- some isolated people
- little integration of particular branches
- Lukasz's attitude - closed, surrounding oneself with the same people all the time, bias of events, and beating up the record of attendance then fostering family relations
- The mass should have an individual sermon only for our family
- raising money
- behavior of the children - too noisy
- loud music, dominance of hip hop music
- sanitation

At the next Reunion, I would like to change:

- make the Reunion longer
- have the mass at another church or at the cemetery
- Sunday Breakfast at a later hour
- earlier contact to get a suitable organizing team
- no karaoke
- restricting the time of appearance to 5 minutes (other than memories of seniors)
- extra time for visiting, and tales about interesting places of this region.

by: Lukasz Firkowski
Translated by Ania Sak

And we met together again!



The time at the reunion went wonderfully and with a family atmosphere. The weather was good for us.

We joyfully welcomed people who we got to know 2 years ago and we met others for the first time at the 2nd Reunion. And again the family tree was a success despite the difficult work it took joining all the branches together. It seems impossible that we are one big family.

A big applause goes to the organizers of the Reunion, with Lukasz Firkowski at the top. It was a very good idea to print the songbooks (Gosia & Lukasz Ciuk). It made it easier to facilitate singing at the campfire to the accompaniment of guitars and soloists. The T – shirts with our embroidered logo “firka” (Piotr Firkowski), name badges with our names and family branches. How much work it was!

We enjoyed the campfire, music and partying until dawn. The next day was very sunny and it was possible to display the family tree to



its full extent.

Balloons decorated the stage and well-chosen music backed it up with compilations about family. Touching moments of memories,

stories and a little bit of occasional poetry, singing & contests. And of course, there was not the lack of traditional feasting on the abundantly stacked table tennis court.

And we enjoyed the evening with music at the campfire, the smell of the bigos & grilled sausages and lots of dancing.

At midnight newlyweds from



the Konskie Firkowski Family came to where we were partying. It was a big surprise to see these newlyweds. It was very sad to return back home... We hope that the next reunion will be soon and will be longer - at least a week. But where? On the ground where the roots of our "tree" is so strong of course, almost like a thousand year old oak “Bartek”, what it has so strong branches that they did not buckle up from gales and squalls – like many relatives of our family.

I think, of course, about the oldest participant of the reunion – Miroslaw Firkowski, an alias “Slawek” the soldier of the Home Army, who fell victim to cruel suffering and illnesses in 3 concentration camps mainly in Oswiecim (Auschwitz). He wrote about it in his book “Przez trzy kacety”. You should read this important book. This human went through hell. It seems impossible that a starved human could live

through horrible slaveries – it is a veritable miracle! How strong his psyche must be, genes that he could again took part in the 2nd Firkowski Family Reunion and it was very nice to see him as a smiling and happy human.

How many people we have in our family with very interesting histories. I want to note a few: Tadeusz Firkowski – fought in battles at the Tobruk and Monte Casino, Leokadia Firkowska, who wrote about other interesting people - druggists from Bodzentyn. Leokadia graced the 1st family reunion with her “Swietokrzyski legends”. There are many stories about the kielecko – radomski area



and customs. Unfortunately, Leokadia Firkowska is not among us....

Let’s surround ourselves with love and a respect for the Senior of Family- Maria Czechowska (Firkowska) (96 years old). She is the daughter of Franciszek & Aurelia and she is my darling aunt, who enjoys very good health & freshness of mind. She is eagerly interested in Family and causes of Poland. She can talk a very long time about home, family and events from the past. She writes very beautiful Polish letters and she likes to sing and is a surprisingly very clear soprano. She recites poetry – also from her school years. But above all she emanates warmth and goodness.

Wonderful personality! Plurimos annos!-My aunty! – She is the big sweetheart of our family.

Write about yourselves, ancestors, about your family, experiences & successes. Maybe one day it will become part of the Firkowski Family Saga.... Why not?

*Alicja Grochowska z d. Firkowska
Translation by Ania Sak*

Meeting after 30 years

In my youth, I was an ardent fan of cycling. I, together with my wife and daughters frequently went to watch the races of cyclists on Torun's streets. About 30 years ago, there was an important race through Torun's streets. During the race, I heard that one cyclist has the same surname as my own. Then I thought, "Is this person really related to me?" I wanted to talk with this athlete. The chance came up when he had some problems with his equipment, but for a sportsman, every second is very important for a score. The trainer was urging haste. I managed to speak only a few words to him, and we did not see one another ever again... until the II Firkowski Family Reunion. This cyclist is Julek Firkowski, with whom I could talk to at the reunion after many years. I will add, that this would not have been possible but for the reunion.

That is why I want to say thanks especially to Lukasz for organizing



this reunion. Thanks also because of many other reasons. One of them was the possibility to recognize many people and to meet with my cousin Eric and his sons, Tim and Ken. I send greetings to all Firkowski family.

Marian Firkowski from Torun

Translated by Ania Sak

Seeing Family Again

It is now 3 months since the 2nd Firkowski Family Reunion in Sielpia. I was just as excited to see everyone at the 2nd Reunion as I was at the First Reunion. It was great to meet all those people that I already had met during my first visit to Poland as well as meet all the people who came to the 2nd Family Reunion for the first time. When I was standing on stage to give my speech, I found it impossible to hold back my emotions as I looked out at all of our family sitting in the bleachers. It was an incredible sight to see the family together in one place. I want to thank everyone who came to the Reunion. It is the people who came to the Reunion that made it such a success.

I was amazed at the size of our Family tree, to see how it has grown over the past 2 years. We are still missing many family

lines. I am confident that with our continued research we will eventually locate all the people who are still not in the tree. It may take many more years of research, but one thing I have learned from our research is that nothing is impossible. What may seem like an incredible task can be accomplished with perseverance.

This year my brother Ken was with us during our visit. My father, brother and I have talked many times about our wonderful experiences in Poland. We have never stopped talking about our family and experiences since our first visit to Poland.

I look forward to seeing more of our family at the 3rd Firkowski Family Reunion.

Tim Firkowski

YahooGroup "FIRKOWSCY"

YahooGroup "Firkowscy" was created for communication via the Internet. In simple terms, the group is an email address; in which are hidden email addresses of people who wanted to take part in the discussion.

So, if you send an email to this address:

firkowscy@yahoogroups.com, everybody who belongs to this group gets this mail. Anybody in the group can answer it, and this answer will get to everyone from this group. All emails from this group contain the word [firkowscy] in its topic.

YahooGroup "Firkowscy" was created in order to:

- Simplify contact among our Family members.
- Share all our new genealogy Information about our Family
- Meet new members of our family And make new friends
- Talk about topics associated with our Family or others
- Organize meetings, special events or reunions

In order to access to this group you have to send an email (without topic and content) to this address:

firkowscy-subscribe@yahoogroups.com



We invite everybody!

Sielpia Wielka and Area

Where will the next reunion be? In Sielpia Wielka of course, because this land is very special to us. Within the region of kielecko-radomski, Konecka's land holds many interesting facts and astonishing charms of nature.

In the XIX century these areas constituted the Old Polish Industrial District. This district was rich in turf ore, forests rich in wood for timber, and this district had numerous rivers that were a great source of energy for factories.

There was an enormous steel plant in Sielpia in 1824. It could produce 3400 tons of steel every year. An enormous waterwheel 28 feet in diameter and 9 feet across was the energy source for the whole factory. This waterwheel was the largest in



Poland and one of the largest in Europe.

In order to move the proper amount of water for this waterwheel, a special channel was built that was several kilometers long.

During WWII, the invaders removed all the equipment and scrapped it. Only the waterwheel survived and today it is the sole surviving preserved waterwheel in the world.

What about Koneskie? – It had a late gothic parish church (1492 – 1520), palace and park complex (~1740) with palace wings, a



classical gloriette (a type of pavilion) and a Greek temple and an Egyptian orangery.

There are remnants of factory furnaces (XVIII – XIX) and also a museum in an old administration building of the Old Polish Industrial District in Skarzysko Kamienna (XIX).

Nearby there is also Swietokrzyski National Park with Lysica mountain (2007 ft high) and Bald Mountain (1955 ft high) with the



Monastery at St. Cross and with relics of St. Cross, a natural museum and Goloborza with an viewing terrace. This monastery had been established by Boleslaw Chrobry in the year 1006.

In neighboring Kielce, a special castle hill charms the baroque palace of cracow's bishops from 1637. Now it is a National Museum with an exquisite Italian garden. There is also an early baroque Kielce cathedral that was founded in 1171. There are many interesting things like the Statue of Mother Mary. It had been carved from one piece of stone in 1646.

On the outside of this cathedral is a small inconspicuous marble tablet from 1782 by a priest named Prymasa Michal Poniatowski. There is set of information regarding letters and numbers and units of measure. The most interesting thing about this is that Prymasa Poniatowski accomplished this 100 years earlier, before the International Office of Measures in Severs near Paris, France came into being.

A very interesting thing in

Kielce is its reservation with old rock formations.

Within a radius of 100 kilometers from Sielpia Wielka, it is filled with monuments of old architecture, religious sanctuaries & monuments of nature and martyrdom. In the nearby forests there were hiding places for revolutionary troops during the January revolt and during WWII.

Here the legendary Krakow Army Major Jan Piwnik was active. "Ponury" (Cezary Chlebowski- "Pozdrówcie Góry Swietokrzyskie"- this is a book title).



Not far from Sielpia Wielka is Wachock city – the town with an 800 year history. This town is famous for the monastery of Cysters. It is the most beautiful monument of Roman architecture in Poland.

We don't know why people took a liking to jokeing about this town. We have many jokes about the village administrator from Wachock , even though the town Mayor performs his duties. But the authorities have taken advantage of it and there is a regular festival of satire and humour.

Maybe at next reunion someone from the Firkowski family will tell us some jokes from Wachock. Many people from our family live in the Swietokrzyski area. Uncover some interesting information from the place where you live.

Alicja Grochowska (Firkowska)
the branch- Zarnow

Translated by Ania Sak

Vacation Visitor

This year's vacation had an interesting beginning for me. Jessica Borusky from Florida in the USA came to visit me for a few days. This is the granddaughter of my uncle Eric Firkowski. I was waiting very eagerly to meet my cousin. I had seen



her only on photos. When we met, I did not know how we would communicate. I can't speak English. My mom helped us, but Jessica & I were using our own special sign language. I visited many interesting places with Jessica like, Biskupin, Ciechocinek, Wenecja, Lubostron, Inowroclaw and some places near Torun. We visited the castle in Golub-Dobrzyn, where there was a medieval tournament with knights. She was awestruck by Torun. She was impressed by the many monuments we saw in Old Town: old houses, ruins of the castles, gothic churches, Town Hall, N. Copernicus's home, the Historic Polish village replica in the centre of Old Town and of course – Torun at night. Everyone must see it and everyone also must have a taste of gingerbread from specialty shops. Jessica said they tasted very good. Jessica had a chance to meet aunts, uncles and cousins.

Because Jessica is a vegetarian, she was not able to try all the Polish dishes, but in Plywaczewo by my

aunt Iwona Wessel, she tried some chicken. She admitted that it was great. Despite that she is 10 years older than me, it turned out that she is a very nice cousin. She said, that she wants to come back to Poland again.

Artur Sak from Torun

Thanks to them. We are one Big Family

More than once it happened - young men wearing suits always walking in pairs and wearing the characteristic name badges and outfitted with a backpack. I saw that these patrols of Mormon missionaries, (that is - members of the Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints. At this time they never did accost me, and they did not want to convert me. One day when I was standing in the street & I saw them and I knew that they would come talk to me. I decided to talk with them, so I could learn some more about them and what they do. That led to the question "Can we talk about the church?" I answered that I would be willing to listen to them and I began to inquire more about them. It turned out that they spoke a little Polish, despite that they are both from the USA. I also learned that they are students and that they stopped their education so that they could perform for some missions that they are on, for 1 - 2 years.

My conversation partners admitted that it is not easy to get interest in Religious discussions with Poles, because Polish people are not willing to exchange opinions about faith, especially with foreigners.

I was curious what my Mormons knew about the project of

recording parish records and also about the so-called Family History Centers, because, thanks to the gathering of these records, and being read by Tim & Lukasz, they succeeded in joining the Big Firkowski Family. They were a little surprised that I knew something about that, moreover after a while I gathered that they knew less than I did. Perhaps they simply could not explain to me why they do it. I only understood that the gathering of information about their ancestors was part of a religious rite, to these people who had passed on, according to their religion.

When they felt that they didn't know much about that, they gave me a leaflet about the Warsaw Family History Center and they encouraged me to visit this place.

I did not want to tire them out any longer. ... I thanked them with a smile and we said our goodbyes and I went on my way.



Lukasz Grochowski,
Grandson of Alojzy Firkowski

Translated by: Ania Sak

Who was guilty? But by no means war!

My husband did not know about the existence of his father's family - Jozef Firkowski.

During my 40 years as I got to know my Husband Antoni Firkowski I also got to know his whole family.

One time I asked my husband about his father's family. His father died 30.1.1945 in the German concentration camp "Buchenwald". He answered me that his father had siblings, but he doesn't know now what has happened to them.

When I was his wife, I asked my mother-in-law about the family of her

for the return of their father and husband, but he did not return because he died in the German Camp.

There was a store in this building and my husband asked the assistant about his childhood friend - Marian Chochowski. She knew this man and his family very well and she gave us his address.

Marian who lives with his wife Dana and mother after 50 years greeted us warmly. Marian's mother remembered my husband's mother and said that when she left Konskie to go to Olsztyn, Marian's mother wrote with

discovered that he has very close relatives, whom he did not know ever before.

We answered with a letter and we gave the dates of his late father and our closest family. We wrote to Wojciech Firkowski, who lives with his wife Janina in Torun. We got the address from Lukasz. We invited Wojtek to visit us in Olsztyn. He visited us during his vacation with his wife and dog. It was a very nice first time visit.

Wojciech knew about the existence of his Uncle Jozef, but he did not know that his Uncle had a wife and



late husband. She waved her hand and answered with sorrow - "There's nothing to talk about"

One day my mother-in-law had taken ill and she lay paralyzed for 10 years. Her 2 sons took care of her - my husband and his older brother Zbigniew. When he was helping his mother, he had extensive heart failure and then my husband took over these duties. At the same time I was caring for my mother. She was also very ill.

My mother-in-law died 17 Feb 1992. After the deaths of our mothers, we went with my husband on a sentimental trip.

First we visited Kepno, where I spent my childhood and where I got my high school diploma, and then we went to Opole, where I studied, then on to Konskie.

My husband was not in this lovable town in 50 years. We went on the street where there was a building where my husband lived with his mother and brother. There they waited

my mother-in-law for a few years. It was very nice to hear so many kind words about my mother-in-law.

When we met, the men noticed how they look today (the last time they saw each other, they were 7-10 years old) my husband asked about the Firkowski family. We learned who lives in Konskie, only Maria Firkowska, Maciej's widow. Maciej was the half brother of my father-in-law. Marian gave us her address. I insisted that we visit her, but my husband did not want to do that. He probably had his own motives, but he did not tell me about it.

My husband was very happy that he visited the town of his childhood and that we visited his friend. We returned back home to Olsztyn. Our vacation was finished. One day when I return home from work, I was very surprised, because I received a letter from Lukasz Firkowski who had been researching the Firkowski family. Thanks to Lukasz, my husband

2 sons.

Why didn't our parents tell us about the other children? It will remain a mystery, because my father-in-laws generation is no longer alive.

When my mother-in-law was living alone, I think she had no support from her husband's family, and she went to Olsztyn. There her 2 sisters and their families settled with their mother.

My husband's family lived modestly. She alone brought up her 2 sons and she did it very well. Her sons got the highest education.

When we visited the cemetery, we were at the graves of his grandparents among other things. The grandparents knew the best about the existence of their grandchildren from their son Jozef and for so many years they did not have any interest if the grandchildren were alive, or if they were not going hungry. It is very difficult to understand it, especially because I have a grandson Michalek who is 4. My husband and I love him very much.

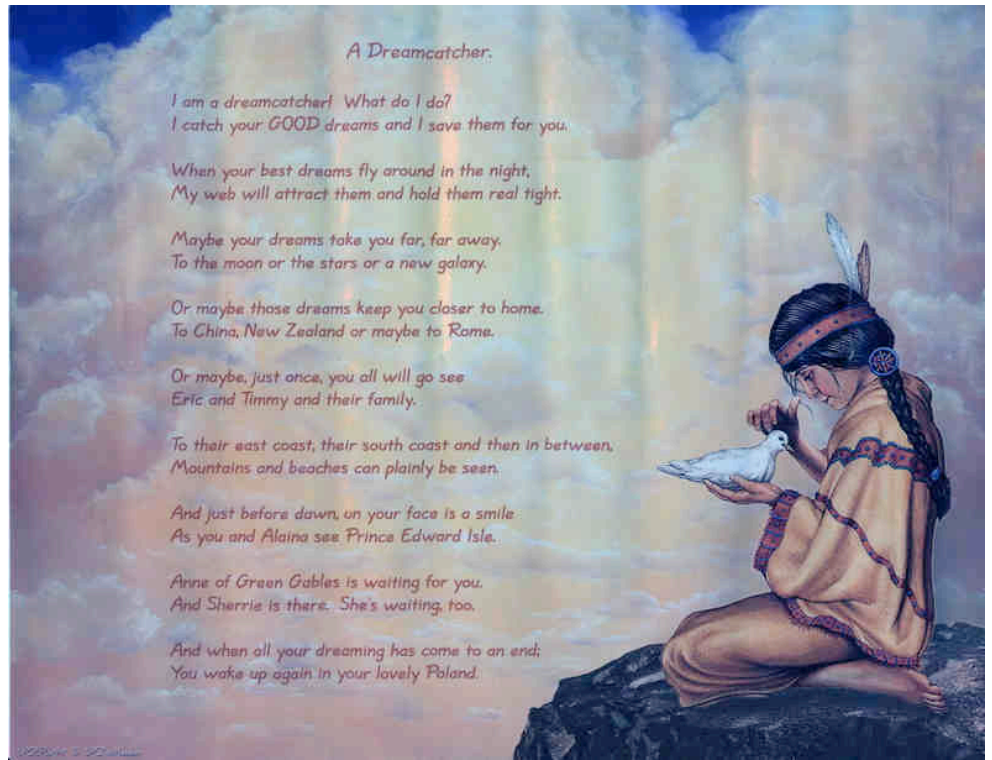
After Wojciech's visit with us, we visited his brother Andrzej who does not live far from us in Warsaw. Wojtek and his wife from Torun also came to this meeting along with their sisters Ania and Malina and families from Warsaw.

It was a wonderful family meeting and we learned that their father (my father-in-law) died in Warsaw in 1991, and my mother-in-law did in 1992. Nobody ever asked about her or her sons....Why?

At the first Family Reunion in Sielpia... my husband got to know his closest and distant relatives and he was very happy. But many questions remain unanswered. ...

Thanks once again to Lukasz, because only, thanks to him we got to know Wojtek & Andrzej and their wonderful families.

*Teresa Firkowska.
Olsztyn 3 Jan 2006*



author: Sherrie Ann Firkowski

Julian & Gregorian Calender

In many of the old parish books that we searched - there are dates written 2 different ways. Do you know, why?

In the Year 45 BC, Julius Cesar put forth a new calendar. It adopted a standard, that 1 year will number 365 days, but 1 of every 4 years, 1 year will have 1 more day (so – called leap year). Julius Cesar established that the 7th month of the year will be named after himself – it looks like it does in English “July”.

The successor of Julius Cesar – August also called 1 month (8th) after his own name, and established, that this month will have 31 days (he did not want to be inferior to his predecessor ☺). This way to this day both vacations months have 31 days each. This calendar is called – Julian calendar. The year is on $365 + 1/4 = 365,25$ of day.

In Nice, France a council in 325 established that the first day of spring would be the 21st of March. Unfortunately, the time circulation

of the Earth around the Sun differs from this number (it is 365.2422 days)

Hence in the course of years appeared a difference between the use of the calendar and the beginning of years’ seasons. In XVI century, spring already began on the 10th of March. Pope Gregory XIII, who in 1582 decreed a change to the calendar, did not tolerate this situation.

First- it skipped 10 days (after 4X was at once 15 X 1582). Second- it changed the way of establishing if a year is a normal year or a leap year.

Here is the following algorithm:

1. The year is normal, if it doesn't divide by 4.
2. The year is leap, if it divides by 4, unless....
3. ... It divides by 100, than year is normal, unless...
4. ... It divides by 400, than the year is a leap year. ☺

This algorithm assumes that length of a year it is $365 + 1/4 - 1/100 + 1/400 = 365,2425$ of day.

Using this calendar – know that the beginning of spring will move by 1 day after 3000 years. This calendar we just use we call – Gregorian calendar.

Not all the countries accepted this ruling of the Pope without resistance.

The residents of the British islands argued that it takes away 10 days of their life. ☺ The longest the Julian calendar was used was until 1917 in Russia (that is why the October anniversary of the Revolutionary War in Red Square was originally in November). To this day the Greek Orthodox Church is still using the old calendar and Christmas is on Jan 6th.



New Cousin

During her last vacation, my wife Ania was looking for genealogy information on her family and she found Tim and Lukasz's family web page.

To my surprise this page referred to my mothers family Barbara Sak (Firkowska). We were a part of family D branch that they were searching for.

We contacted Lukasz in order to add information about dates of our family. A short time later, Tim wrote to us. Our parents are first cousins. I always knew, that we had family in the States, but it had not occurred to me to look for them. Because of that, we keep in contact to this day, sending information about family, back and forth.

When we inquired when Tim is going to come for a trip to Poland, I together with my wife invited him and his family to Torun. We also received an invitation for 2nd Firkowski Family Reunion in Sielpia Wielka.

I did not feel like going there. However, after some coaxing from my wife and son, we made use of this invitation and we went by bus to the reunion with other people from Torun.



I was curious about meeting with Eric, Tim and Ken whom I had been talking with on the Internet.

We had a difficult time finding the camp where the Reunion was, and we went by this place many times in the bus. People said that I must call Lukasz. I called him & it turned out that we were only a few meters away. We were looking for this place for half an hour. We sent many messages to the organizer of this reunion (cousin Lukasz) to help us get to our

destination. Finally we got to the place what we had been passing repeatedly.

When we got off the bus and went to the spot where people from the family were already playing together, I saw Eric. He recognized us immediately. We were greeted very warmly. He welcomed each one of us like a best and most expected friend. Tim and Ken greeted us with noisy shouts. They recognized us before we spotted them in a group of partying people. And so this was beginning of my first, although for other people second family reunion. We along with 150 members of Firkowski family, spent 3 crazy days. I met many people that I knew only from photos from Internet.

I am not sorry that I went to the reunion. I rank the time we spent with family as very good. I will add that Eric, Tim and Ken visited Torun and spent with us a few days. We had more time to find out more about each other, talk and learn more about the history of



our family. Along with our visitors, we visited family of Basia Sak (my wonderful mom), Marian Firkowski (my mom's brother) and Maria's Dankowska (her sister). Tim had a



chance get to know his cousins from Suchatówka & Gniewkowo where he went with my Aunt Maria. Now there are not only surnames on genealogy tree, but now there are faces of people I have met. Together with Ania, we showed our cousins, Torun and nearby areas, Lichen, Golub-Dobrzyn..... and



we went for a trip to Gniew, Malbork & Gdansk. We arrived at the Baltic Sea late in the evening, but we wanted to touch the Baltic. Ken was especially eager to do it.

We went back home wet. We stopped in a nice restaurant for good strong coffee from a coffee maker. We



sat with Sea sand stuck to our legs.

We started every day with coffee from the coffee maker that my wife was learning to make under Tim's watchful eye. On the last day the coffee was perfect (5 days of study). Ken was walking with cup of coffee in his hand in Old Town and by doing so he stirred up token curiosity of passerby's.

What a pity that they were here for such a short time. It was difficult to catch up on so many years in a few days. And it is difficult to describe what I felt when I shook hands with Eric, Tim and Ken to say goodbye.

I only hope that we will meet again, not only 1 time.

*Adam Sak from Torun
Translated by: Ania Sak*

Ancestral coat of arms is not sign of snobbery.

An ancestral coat of arms is tangible proof of our family, it is a memory for our descendants.

The possession of ones own name and in these times - surname - this is an old right for every human as a free person. This surname is expressed as a graphic symbol in the form of letters in the written word; the practice was to differentiate people from each other. Now, when only a number marks a human, a nameless epitaph, he stops to exist as a free person.

The picture writing was the first kind of writing. This is primeval law for the individual that can use these visible graphic symbols. At the same time when this symbol began functioning in a social group and this group has accepted this symbol, this symbol got receptive credit and by the same token primeval, lawful character. These symbols became property of this person and they could not be used by other people. For example the first symbols could have been symbols written in the sand, characteristic symbols and finally coat of arms. This last group of graphic symbols is marked for privileged classes and these symbols lost their legal meaning at a time when monarchies ceased. For Poland, this in fact occurred, when we passed our constitution in 1924. Laws protecting the family crests of nobility for Polish areas had been lifted by the

constitution, because this constitution in article 96 did not recognize the titles of nobility (i.e. knighthood). Even though this crest was void of every legal value, the crest still did not lose its social meaning.

Because of that, it still has a connection with the surname; this crest is subject to protection of personal goods and chattels, just like it is with a trademark. The coat of arms you license in order to make a mechanism of identification, the existence of other coats of arms can interfere with the coat of

arms you are going to license and to use. If you don't license your crest and can not verify it and are using this crest, you run the risk of being taken to court for breach of private property and you lose the right to use this graphic symbol that is used by another family. In particular, we talk about existing coat of arms of noble heraldry and bourgeois crest from German areas where descendants live even today. That is why, by law, possession of the coat of arms is treated much like the possession of the surname, because it can be regarded as part of the identification of a person or family. By registering the owners' coat of arms in The First Public New Heraldic Coat of Arms Journal, we leave something



behind for future generations that desire to find their roots. This is "so to say" a genealogical record.

The law doesn't prohibit possession and use of a coat of arms as an exploratory family or ancestry symbol, but anyone who has possession by law in the past or present and has the proper documents, can prohibit any other person the use of his coat of arms, with a judgment from civil action.

The source: <http://www.novaheraldia.net/index-folder/nh.html>

Juliusz Firkowski has an interest in heraldry. He began reading and collecting information about coats of arms. He also created the Firkowski Family Coat of arms. What you see here is his suggestion for the Firkowski coat of arms. This symbol can be recorded and become our family sign. Your involvement & opinion is necessary on this issue. What do you think about Julek's project? We await your opinions (we encourage you to voice your opinion on the Yahoo Group "Firkowscy". On the Firkowski webpage is a survey regarding this project. We encourage you to vote.

Below are a few pieces of information about the elements that created the coat of arms.

<http://luz.home.staszic.waw.pl/index.php>

The shield: Only in the XIII century was it noted that the knight's shield is the correct place to put the coat of arms. The visible emblem informed the enemy whom he was dealing with and the object of the coat of arms was to protect the honor of the family like the shield protects the knight's life. One very important fact was that the flat surface of the shield was a great place to put a picture. The shield is the most essential element on the coat of arms in heraldry. The coat of arms can't exist without the shield (...)

The smaller icons are usually placed on areas that have been made for the heraldry sections. The smaller icons should be well situated and fit the area and it should never touch the edge. The honorable part of the coat of arms is the right side and the

smaller icon should be turned to the right side. Sometimes a few identical icons can be placed in the same area and they can be arranged in a pattern. It can be made in two ways: the shield includes the symbols in a definite configuration and any symbol can touch the edge and the shield with the emblems looks like cut fabric with a definite pattern – the edge of the shield cuts through fragments of the symbols very often. Anything can be the smaller icons, from an animal to the human figure, tools, weapons, plants, buildings to geometric icons. (...)

The helmet became an inherent piece of the coat of arms in the XIV century. The helmet leans on top of the edge of the shield – most often in front of the observer. The shape of the helmet has essential meaning – based on how it looks we can state its descent epoch. The rule is, that the helmet and the coat of arms are from the same epoch. The helmet should be from 1/2 to 2/3 the size of the shield.

The crown: A very essential element of the coat of arms is a crown. Its shape is strictly fixed in contrast to the shield and the helmet. The crown appeared in heraldry quite late, only in the XV century. The crown does not mean that the owner of the coat of arms is a king or that he descends from a royal family. The crown makes a fluid graphic transition from the helmet to the jewel. There are 2 kinds of crowns in heraldry that we should not confuse.

The helmet crown is put on the helmet but under the jewel and it is entitled to all nobility and it can be drawn on every coat of arms. The rank crown suggests an aristocratic title of bearer of a coat of arms. (...) The noble crown is used very rarely - with 5 batons or with 3 ivy leaves and 2 pearls.

The jewel: This is the most important element of the shield after the emblem and the colors. The jewel very often is identified with an emblem in colloquial understanding – the coat of arms is called a nobleman's jewel still. The jewels started being put on knight's helmets in the XIII century. They performed distinctive functions and also to deter opponents. (...) The content and color of the jewel corresponds to the emblem. It is exist also so – called tautological jewels – they are repetition of the jewel. The tautological jewels very often are found in Polish heraldry. They usually constitute repetition of the emblem on a background of peacock or ostrich feathers.

Tinctures: (otherwise known as- heraldic colors). These are colors that are found on coats of arms. There were 4 basic tinctures: red, blue, green and black. There were also 2 others used – gold and silver (that is yellow and white). Other colors are less seldom used. One of the basic rules of heraldry is not to spread color on color and metal on metal. (...)

*Article is a collection of information
Coat of Arms drawn by Julek Firkowski
Translated by Ania Sak*

Mountains can not visit mountains but people can visit people.

These two years went by very fast, since I knew that the First Firkowski Family Reunion was in Sielpia Wielka and a second reunion was being planned.

Since I was going to this family reunion, I decided to find our family relatives like it was in the time of my childhood, when our parents were alive, particularly our father, Antoni.

I found and visited many of my cousins. I added new dates to the genealogy tree of the Firkowski family. The crown of my family research work was meeting with my close cousin Eric and his sons Tim and Ken whom



all came to Poland this summer.

Together with my siblings, I planned a trip to meet our cousin whom I had never seen before. We contacted Eric on the phone before the reunion, but this is not the same as seeing him and talking with him in person. Although we had to travel about 300 kilometers to Sielpia, the time that we spent on the bus passed very quickly. We were looking through albums with old family photos and we were learning to sing songs that I composed for Eric.

I will not forget the first meeting with him and I could feel his heartbeat and will remember it forever. Even now, when I recall

this moment of our meeting, I feel his heartbeat again like it was yesterday. Those two days when we were together with our close and distant relatives at the reunion, we recalled very warmly- sang at the fire, danced to early morning and talked, talked and talked with family at the warm fire. Everything that is nice ended too fast and it was high time to return home. We came back from Sielpia Wielka very glad and happy.

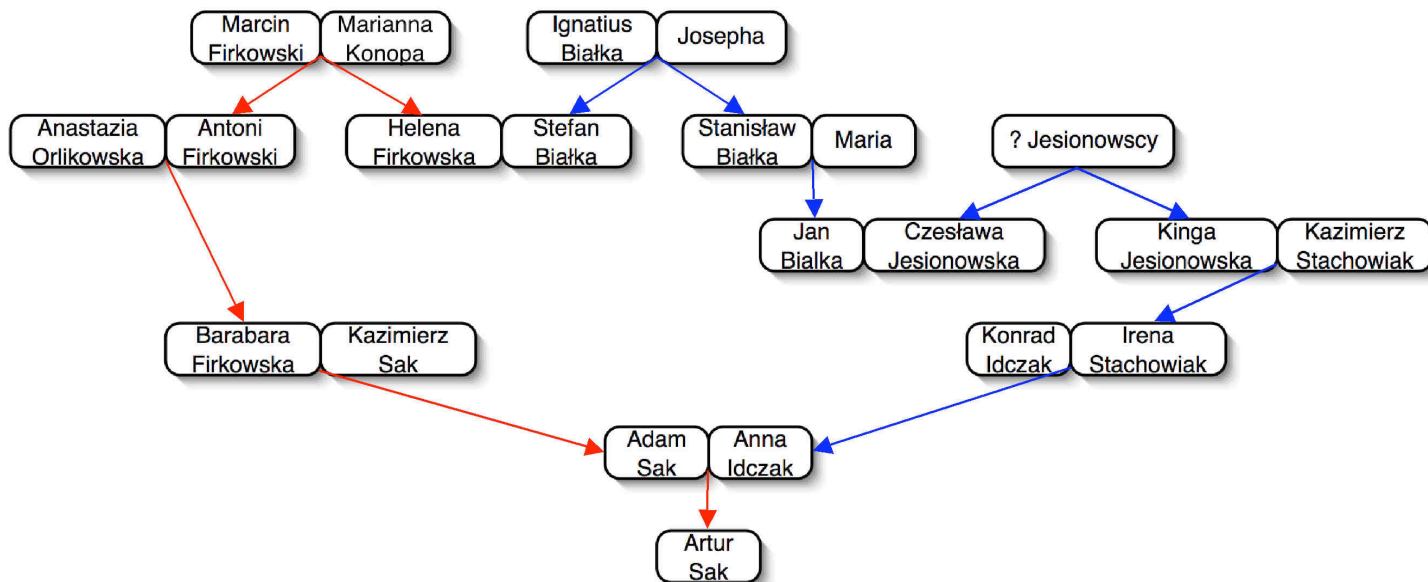
We shared our nice experiences with ours and Eric's close relatives who could not be at the reunion on account of great distances and health conditions. It was with great satisfaction to me that I could show to Eric, Tim and Ken the graves of our closest relatives and participate in a common meeting with Eric's oldest cousins, Stanislaw, Stella, Stefania and their families. Eric's cousins remember his father, Wladyslaw. They showed him photos of his parents and of himself from 50 or 60 years ago. What a pity, that the meeting time was so short.

This meeting after years was an enormous, wonderful experience for all us. We are looking forward to the 3rd Firkowski Family Reunion and meeting with so many nice Firkowski families. See you soon!

Maria Dankowska (Firkowska)
and family

Translated by Ania Sak

We have joined our family again



I was interested in genealogy since my youngest years. I always asked my grandparents what they know about our ancestors, both from my grandmother's side, Jesionowski family and of my grandfather's side, Stachowiak family. I accumulated old family photos.

In the later stage of my genealogy research, I started to write down information regarding the members of our family. As a consequence there was quite a fair genealogy tree of the Jesionowski and Stachowiak families.

The biggest contribution to this tree came from my grandmother. She remembers very well not only surnames of her grandparents, but also dates of births, marriages, and deaths.

Next, I began my genealogy research in the Internet. I was looking through accessible family pages. This is the way I found a Firkowski family webpage. It was a surprise for me, because this

page concerned my husband's mother's family, Barbara Sak (Firkowska). I was very happy. Thanks to the tree elaborated by Tim and Lukasz, I found connections uniting the family of my husband and my family. My grandmother mentioned to me earlier that these relations between our families exist, because both families come from the same localities like Inowroclaw, Gniewkowo, Suchatowka and other very close areas. I read the same surnames (Bialka, Konopa) of the same people belonging to Jesionowski family and Firkowski family – (branch D). I hope that my continued research will clarify many puzzles regarding our families.

I should add as a small interesting fact that Anastazja and Antoni Firkowski, grandparents of my husband, and the family of my grandmother, Jesionowski, lived dozens of years right next to one another, in neighboring houses in

Torun. Unfortunately, the house where the grandparents of my husband lived will be destroyed. During Tim's visit we took some photos of this building.



All the more reason why the memories of what our parents and we have is valuable. It is satisfying for me that we, my husband, and I were destined to join two families again.

Ania Sak

Word Search Puzzle

Below is a list of Cities that are birthplaces of people from the Firkowski Family. Find the hidden City names in this puzzle. The answers will be posted to our webpage later.

Good Luck and have fun.

N I Z D E B D H J G S O S N O W I E C G T L O Z M A M Ł T Q
 K I E L C E A I E L Y P O Ł C Z Y N Z D R Ó J P I N T I O Ż
 C A G N E S S U R M E R E P A P E T R Y K O Z Y Ń Z Ł H Y Ę
 Ż P K O Ń S K I E E X K G A R M L O H K L O T S S Y M L S A
 S I O W S Ń O Ś E Ż Ę S N S Ó A C I N D I W Ś Ś K Z O G R Z
 L O B L Ó T E S Y Ę C P I Z G A H D Ż M U B M L M C G O Ó C
 E T O X Ł T Y Y T M A U D K A L L R U K R W M O A S E L G I
 S R Y W Y W A Ń N R M Ł D O I M Ć V R O K B S P Z U Z U Ó N
 S K T L Ó H Q H T A A S U W N C Ż W U W L O A O O R R B W R
 U Ó O Ń O L P U C H L V H I E J V M D A Ł W W R W T T D E Ó
 R W N A Ń B A H I U J G A C L B Ż O A L E W Ó E I Z S O C G
 B T B N B A A W V E S I Ę E Ę G W K Ś E S W Z F E C U B I A
 O R E Z O R L Q O E V K A W J O B Ż L W U A R M C Z Ś R N W
 R Y A O Y N M K C K V R D N K T O N A O W Ł K I K S X Z E O
 K B C P K O Z I E N I C E W Q S Q Ć S P A C A S I O L Y I R
 O U H C D L W C V I E I E C T B Ł E K O Ł O Z Q Ń G A Ń Z B
 W N A A S O A F O Z N I K R H M E J A M K R Ć D C D Ż W A A
 O A R N T I C G D P N L O C V A K R Ć O I W V D E Y M A K D
 L L K A N H R K F G O Ż Ś T E G I B E R B O Q E J B E U D A
 I S K P O E M A S Ł A W N O G I Ś N B S H N L R O C Ż X N O
 P K W R E G I X P N E Ż A R N Ó W Ń Ż K T I A Ę R Q R A Ż S
 I I Z N D R L M Y A I C X U Y T W O R I V E R S G A I H I T
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 W A Ń W Z K A O M K X O Ś W I Ę C I M A H N Ż H W H S W Ś Ó
 Y S N B C B U I L I O Z K Ś O B Ń B C L M C I E K W A E W W
 K E O D I A K S N U S K C M Ż H M G K Ż Ś W R L A O Ś J I M
 Ł C L W L R E A L A B I S I A N C U A K H D Ó J B W Ń H D A
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 D E Z I M Q B B W Ń A D Ń N Ż A A A R N I K K N S A L R I O
 Ż P T N Ż D I N L A W F A Ś E R R Z Z A W W O A K A E O N W
 E L Y O N T A Y Y Ó Ł Z O R L S A D S Ó T U Ó S R Ń M W Y I
 C I N Ż I O Ł F W R F C K T Z A E K K U J S G Ł G Ż Ń O N E
 I C O R X R A L A Ł V I O A N I S R S Ś R K D K O V Y Y T C
 W E U E Ę Ł C R A A F W W R M O T K C O V K Y G Y K U S K K
 R C C I Ś O Z W Ó T S A I P W O C I I S E Ż N W A X I Ż K I
 A L U Z K W Ó K Z S U R P E I X E O Ę S N N I G U W M M L O
 K Z W D G O W A R C Z Ó W P B U D O R A T S A R F T H T H A

Będzin
 Berestechko
 Białaczów
 Borkowo
 Boynton Beach
 Brussels
 Bydgoszcz
 Cagne Sur Mer
 Chorzów
 Cieplice
 Curitiba
 Dąbrowa Górnicza
 Dzierżoniów
 Gdańsk

Gdynia
 Gniewkowo
 Golub Dobrzyń
 Gostyń
 Gowarczów
 Green Bay
 Grojec
 Harmęże
 Huddinge
 Inowrocław
 Jasion
 Jelenia Góra
 Juniolarye
 Karwice

Katowice
 Kazienice
 Kielce
 Końskie
 Kowalewa Pomorskie
 Kowalów
 Kozienice
 Krusza Zamkowa
 Lembork
 Lipie
 Łódź
 Lubań Śląski
 Lublin
 Luzk

Lwów
 Machary
 Miedzna Drewniana
 Mikołów
 Milicz
 Milwaukee
 Minsk
 Mińsk Mazowiecki
 Misiones
 Rawicz
 Nieklań
 Oconto Falls
 Olsztyn
 Opoczno

Orłowo
 Ostrava
 Ostrów Mazowiecki
 Ostrażany
 Oświęcim
 Paris
 Paszkowice
 Petrykowice
 Piastów
 Piotrków Kujawski
 Piotrków Trybunalski
 Połczyn Zdrój
 Poznań
 Pruszków
 Quievrechain
 Rabka
 Radom
 Radwan
 Rawicz
 Rogów
 Równe
 Ruda Śląska
 Simferopol
 Skarżysko-Kamienna
 Skarżysko
 Sławno
 Słupsk
 Sosnowiec
 Starachowice
 Starodub
 Stokholm
 Struyesskowo
 Strzegom
 Suchatówka
 Suwałki
 Swidnica
 Swidwin
 Swinoujście
 Tomaszów Mazowiecki
 Toruń
 Trusczyzna
 Two Rivers
 Warszawa
 Węglany
 Wejherowie
 Wrocław
 Zakrzów
 Zarnów



A Photo Identified

Do you remember the photos of unknown people from the first newsletter? There was a photo of a newly married couple. Today we know that they are Stefan Latkowski & Stanislaw Latkowska (Firkowska)

Yesterday...

Stanislaw Firkowski



... & today

**Stanislaw Latkowska
(Firkowska)**

We are sending along a DVD with about 3000 photos from the 2nd Firkowski Family Reunion with this newsletter. This photo DVD will be sent to everyone, including those that were not able to be at the 2nd Reunion. We hope that this will encourage others to come to the next Reunion.

We will be sending an additional 2 DVDs with about 4 hours of video to those people who were at the Reunion.

Letters People wrote

An Uncle I did not know

Dear Tim,

My name is Radek and I'm writing in behalf of my mother - Ewa Lewandowska, because she can't speak English.

Thank you for your Christmas wishes and your letter. I'm really happy due to the fact that you became involved in our genealogy; we were able to find each other. It's very exciting to make connection after years of not knowing what happened with the family. Some months ago I didn't even know that my mother - Helena Firkowska had a brother - Wladyslaw, who immigrated to the USA.

I would like to say that I'm your father's close, and as I know the youngest cousin.

I hope that we will be in touch and due to our acquaintance we will be able to know history of our family.

I would like to wish you a lot of happiness and let all your dreams come true. Please, give my regards to all your family in the USA.

I'm looking forward to meeting you.

Ewa Lewandowska

P.S. I'm sorry about all of my mistakes but unfortunately my English is not fluent enough.

Thanks for the Memories

Dear Maria!

When I read the newsletter for the first time, I did not estimate precisely the value of the articles. There are articles about me, because there was a date (1928); that was the beginning of the guardianship & love of 2 close people in my life. This was my uncle Antoni and my grandfather Marcin. Only Antoni & Marcin were the people, who would be helpful during the troubled times in my life. When I came down with a childhood illness in 1928, it was only them that did not leave me. They drove me to the hospital.

When I was healthy, they took me home. I remember, that year of 1928 was the beginning of the love of my uncle and grandfather, until my grandfather died & until Antoni went into the Army in 1937. Nobody else

appreciated me. There is interesting news in the articles: *Wspomnienia Marii Dankowskiej* & "Odnaleziona Rodzina" It has everything that happened in my youth, but I remember everything very well. The articles restored what I had forgotten.

Olek Mrozinski

This letter was written by Aleksander Mrozinski after he read the third Firkowski newsletter. This letter was written without changes. Aleksander Mrozinski is 80 years old and lives in Koszalinie, Poland. Everyone thanks you for the newsletters, Particularly, a special thanks from Jan Bartoszak.

Translated by Ania Sak

We Help the Terminally Ill

"It is not sufficient to be alive in order to exist in the hearts of other people, but it is enough to open your wings and say GOOD MORNING to those who rank as an Angel".

At the second Family Reunion, a charitable auction was held to auction the 40 meter Family Tree. People enjoyed this auction. Finally- the highest sum that won was 1.600 zl by Tim Firkowski.



The amount was paid to Zespół Domowej Opieki Paliatywnej przy pl. Konfederacji 55 w Warszawie.



"Hospice helps deal with death. It shows that death is not the end. Hospice allows us to take a look at death from the perspective of hope, and not tragedy. That

is why hospice is so optimistic, because it restores hope."

In the last newsletter it was announced that there would be a contest. This contest would be to guess how many people would come to the 2nd Family Reunion. Marek Hajdrowski from Radom won this contest, and he won a prize worth 200 zl.



Marek Hajdrowski gave this prize to a charitable group - Placówka Wielofunkcyjna "Słoneczny Dom" przy ul. Kolberga 19 w Radomiu.

My 2nd Visit to Poland

My 2nd visit to Poland began with a few problems. Due to some very bad weather all flights into Chicago were delayed. Ken and my father were able to just make it on time into Chicago, but my flight into Chicago was not able to arrive on time.

Arrangements were made for me to leave Chicago the next day. I finally arrived 1 day later than was planned, but I was VERY happy to finally have arrived. The face of my



wonderful friend Lukasz, and his father along with my father and brother greeted me.

After I arrived we spent a wonderful day with Lukasz and his parents at their home in Dabrowa Gornicza.

The following day we went to



Auschwitz, Oswiecim (were my father was born), Birkenau, & Harmeze (where my grandmothers family is from). Later that evening we were invited to the Ciuk home for a wonderful welcome party. It was wonderful to see them all again.

Wawel Castle in Krakow was the next place we visited, followed by a walk to Rynek in Krakow. I had been to these places my first visit, but I still was amazed by the wonderful architecture. After we

finished in Krakow we drove to Zakopane and took a walk through downtown Zakopane at night.

The next morning it was raining but we decided to go up to Kasprowy Wierch in the Tatra Mountains. Shortly after we arrived at the top it began to snow. We were not going to walk down the mountain in the snow and rain, so we took the cable car back down the mountain. Our afternoon was spent walking around downtown Zakopane.

After leaving Zakopane the next morning we drove to Czorsztyn Castle and looked at the castle there. Our next stop was Dunajec Castle followed by a raft ride down the Dunajec River. There were some beautiful views on the Dunajec



River.

The next day we left Sromowce and went to Wieliczka Salt Mine. Our Morning was spent about 400 feet underground in the Salt Mine where we saw many unbelievable sculptures and carvings.

Our next day began with a visit to Jasna Gora in Czestochowa. After touring Jasna Gora, we went to Sielpia Wielka to meet everyone for the 2nd Firkowski Family Reunion. I was excited to see everyone there on Friday. We had a wonderful party that evening. I think I finally went to bed at about 4:00 AM the next morning.

Saturday when I woke up the Firkowski Family Tree had been put up for display. It was an impressive 143 feet long. The Day was filled with speeches, meeting family and some interesting activities in the afternoon. A DJ filled the evening with lots of music, where we danced, sang and drank! What a wonderful time everyone had.

Sunday we all went to Church in Konskie for a Mass that was said in the Firkowski Family name. Everyone had to say goodbye to each other in the afternoon. We then drove to Warsaw accompanied by Lukasz Grochowski and his family. Our first stop in Warsaw was Folk Gospada, a restaurant I had been to 2 times before. We drove around Warsaw at night to enjoy the lights.



Next morning began with a walk through Stary Miasto & Nowe Miasto of Warsaw. Our journey took us to the Memorial of the

Uprising & Krasinski Palace. We were invited to the Moonsfera restaurant in the Polish Olympic



Committee Building which is owned by Piotr & Pawel Firkowski. Our afternoon was complete by a tour of Wilanow Palace and Park by Wieslaw Grochowski.

On Tuesday we drove to Torun to meet with Adam, Ania & Artur Sak. During the next 5 days, we were able to meet with our closest relatives. We met many of my fathers 1st cousins for the first time. While we stayed in Torun we visited many places, Gniew Castle, Malbork Castle, Gdansk, Gdynia at the Baltic Sea, Lichen, Golub Castle, and many of the cities and towns of my relatives and ancestors.



We left Torun on Sunday and went to Wroclaw to meet with Leslaw Firkowski and his wife, where we had a wonderful time. Wroclaw has wonderful architecture.

Following our visit in Wroclaw we drove to Ostrava in the Czech Republic to visit with my cousin for 2 days.

We returned to Poland and met with some of my Grandmothers relatives in Chrzanow. We only had

a part of a day to visit with them as my father was leaving the next day.



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OFFENDING COMMAND: image

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