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THE POLISH CO-OP.

Henry Stenkiewicz Was a Member of the Colony.

ONE OF THE BACHELOR GROUP

A Hearty Worker in the Utopian Enterprise—A Sad Experience for the Budding Genius.

LOS ANGELES, Cal.—A few of the American residents in southern California are particularly interested in the news that Henryk Stenkiewicz, the author of 'Quo Vadis' and 'With Fire and Sword,' is to come to the United States, and, perhaps, to cross the continent, and visit some of his old-time friends and neighbors on the ranches in Los Angeles and Orange Counties. The novelist lived in this country nearly two years—in 1876, 1877, and 1878. Many people remember him personally, and many more remember the Utopian cooperative agricultural colony that he and Mme. Helena Modjeska and Michael Kroschki labored to establish in the beautiful Anaheim valley, that stretches from the foot of the Sierras to the Pacific shores in southern California.

Everybody in southern California knows something about the Polish colony—its pathetically vain attempts at cooperative agriculture, its unhappy dealings with crafty real-estate agents and its perfect ignorance of farming in a country where irrigation is all essential. There were thirty-three in the colony—twenty-four young men and nine women, who came with their husbands. Henryk Stenkiewicz was among the bachelors, and one of the youngest. Every one in the colony had some means, and a few, like Count Bozenta and his wife, Mme. Helena Modjeska, had some \$17,000 or \$18,000 they had saved from professional labors in Europe. Every one in the colony was a genius of some sort. That is what brought them together. Several were painters, four were actors, two were sculptors, one an engraver, and a dozen were editors and literary people. Their idea was that here in the semi-tropics, along the shore of the mighty Pacific, and with the inspiration of the snow-capped Sierras, they might lead a complete, idyllic existence. They believed that what had been done in Greece and Italy, amid a climatic environment similar to that of southern California, might be duplicated in this land of fruits and flowers. The real-estate pamphlets which they had read from cover to cover in their homes in far-off Poland had assured them that in the fertile soil of southern California crops grew themselves, when the simple planting was done. They imagined they might live easily from the product of their broad alfalfa fields, their olive and orange groves, and that the colony's herds of cattle and flocks of sheep out among the foothills and mountains would annually yield sufficient revenue to maintain the whole colony in any event. Meanwhile each member of the colony might live close to his ideal. The poets might sing, untrammelled by sordid thoughts of gaining a livelihood; the romance writers might weave beautiful stories and never have an ugly worry about existence when unappreciative publishers declined their work; and the painters might paint and the sculptors work day after day, just as they liked.

Henryk Stenkiewicz was about twenty-four when he lived in the Polish colony at Anaheim, and had made something of a reputation as a short-story writer in the newspapers at Cracow, Poland. He devoted his time almost wholly to writing (in his native tongue, of course) while at Anaheim. Several of his "Charcoal Sketches" were written at that time. A number of the old-time ranchmen in the valley still remember him clearly. He was an expert angler, and he was often seen fishing in the wonderful trout streams in the canons of the San Gabriel Mountains. Several ranchmen who were employed about the Polish colony tell of how day after day they used to see Stenkiewicz seated at a table in the shade of the pepper trees fitfully writing and smoking cigarettes.

Mme. Helena Modjeska was the leader in the colony. She had wearied of the stage in Europe, and all her girlhood love for farming came back in the colony. Vladsoot, whose odes and lyrics have since become universally known in Poland and Russia, was in the colony, and Michael Kroschki, who is among the foremost Polish painters, and his wife and child were there also. It was as notable an assemblage of genial, artistic, philosophic, and brilliant men and women as ever lived in a single colony in America. Everybody—even the plain, practical old ranchmen, who had no idea of art and literature—

liked the Poles and watched the colony with interest.

The colony was organized in Cracow in the early summer of 1876, and the members spent the season in preparing for permanent removal to America. The community treasury held about \$40,000. Count Bozenta and Mme. Modjeska put in the savings of several years, and the younger, unmarried men, as Stenkiewicz, contributed all their petty savings. The colony rendezvoused at Berlin, and sailed from Bremen, reaching New York in the last days of the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia. Probably no more expectant, enthusiastic people ever landed at New York. All were beaming at having exchanged the harassing political conditions of Europe for Free America. They were full of plans for a garden of Eden in southern California, and were restless to begin life in their cooperative colony. They had a boxful of architectural plans for their houses, and a wagonload of newly bought tools on agriculture and horticulture.

After several weeks in New York and Philadelphia, the party went to Washington at the invitation of the Russian Minister. The colonists were introduced to President Grant, and having availed themselves of an offer of a great mass of government literature on the subject of farming and fruit-growing, they started for the Pacific Coast.

It was months before the Poles decided upon acreage property to buy for their colony. Meanwhile the real-estate men worked early and late to induce them to settle here and there. Every one in Los Angeles was interested to some extent in the choice of a colony site by the new-comers. But four among the Poles could speak fair English. Finally the colonists decided to buy a quarter-section—160 acres—in Santa Ana valley near Anaheim. Work began at once on the colony buildings, and by the spring of 1877 they were finished. Then the fields were laid out, irrigation ditches dug, and the ground made ready for planting fruit-trees. All this had eaten a big slice out of the combined capital of the expectant colonists, and there were schemes for expending thousands of dollars more before the anticipated wealth from the product of the property should begin to roll in.

The Poles, unable to talk with the small army of carpenters, orchard-planters, ploughmen, and irrigators about the property, stood by, smoked cigarettes, built air castles, and watched the progress of affairs with delighted interest. They realized, however, that they were paying some mighty high bids, and that the Americans asked the full value of everything they sold or the work they did. But the Poles were serene in the faith that the books and the printed articles they had read were so accurate in the details of the certain profits of American ranches, especially cooperative ones, that they never begrudged the checks they gave on their Los Angeles bank account.

There was ill luck for the colony from the first day until it hopelessly abandoned all. By the spring of 1878 none of the common capital remained, and the colonists had to undertake manual labor on the ranch. Notwithstanding all the books and magazine articles they had read to the contrary, they found cooperative ranch life beset with trouble and subject to daily losses. The idyllic existence that had been their dream for several years floated away among the Sierras. The men and their wives, who had been accustomed to studios and libraries, were disgusted with the work of following horse and cultivator among the orchard trees for hours, and of cutting alfalfa and of ploughing and harrowing soil for frequent irrigation of the young orchards.

Some amusing stories are told by people in Los Angeles of the philosophic, easy Bohemian way with which nearly all the Polish literateurs, artists, and musicians viewed the plight into which their fortunes and hopes had been cast. Ordinary American farmers would have been disheartened or alarmed. Not so the Poles. They rolled cigarettes in the shade of the trees, and assumed cheerfulness if they did not feel it. One person in Los Angeles narrates how one day in early 1878, when the last work-mule and cow on the place had died from some improper feeding by the theoretical colonists, and troubles of scores of varieties were coming thick and fast, she found a dozen of the young men having the happiest kind of a morning in their up-stairs assemblyroom in practicing the latest Wagner music for an orchestral concert that evening. At another time, when the dearly bought water right had almost dried up, and the year's crop of alfalfa was fast withering in the midsummer sun, the Poles gave no heed, and had an elaborate amateur dramatic performance, in which every one in the colony had to perform some part.

The colony disintegrated fast in the early summer of 1878. Money had been raised by mortgaging the property, and when the interest came due disaster followed disaster in rapid succession. The barley crop never came up, horses sickened and died from unknown troubles; sheep, had diseases that not one of the Poles knew of before; cows died of bloat while the artists and literateurs discussed art and their ideals; the alfalfa died from lack of attention, the young fruit trees withered, and the colony barn burned up one day while the colony symphony was revealing in Bach out in the shade of the oak trees. In June the colony nearly went to pieces. All but Mme. Modjeska and the Count Bozenta went good-naturedly back to Poland and Paris. Stenkiewicz went to Los Angeles and lived in cheap rooms in the old Pico house for four or five months. He wrote hard, and by the sale of his American sketches in Cracow and St. Petersburg, he got enough to return to his native home.

Mme. Modjeska and her family are the only ones who remained in America when the Polish colony collapsed. Count Bozenta is a citizen of Cal-

ifornia, and he and his famous wife have a beautiful faded home among the mountains at the foot of Santiago Peak in Orange County, where they spend several months in rest every summer.

Among the southern California people who knew the colony best is Darwin A. Edwards of Los Angeles. He lived on a ranch adjoining the Polish colony's lands twenty years ago. "Oh, yes, I knew Mr. Stenkiewicz well," said he the other day. "I was an amateur fisherman, and we became great friends because of our common fondness for angling in the mountain trout streams. Neither of us could communicate with the other except by monosyllables and signs and motions, but as we became acquainted we had a fondness for each other, and a heap of fun at our clumsy mode of communication. Young Stenkiewicz soon learned to speak so as to be understood in English, and I helped him learn hundreds of words.

"Was he a writer then? The most patient and painstaking I can imagine. I have seen him sitting at a wooden table (which he constructed himself) writing day after day. There were three pepper trees away out at the north end of the colony ranch, and there Stenkiewicz would sit and write. He had three or four books in French and Polish on the table, and a stack of blue paper. Occasionally he would roll a cigarette, and, tipping his camp chair back, would blow smoke out of his mouth and look up at the trees as if in a trance. Then we would furiously resume writing again.

"The last time I saw young Mr. Stenkiewicz was in Los Angeles. He was living in cheap rooms in the upper floor of the old Pico House, not far from Chinatown there. He looked seedy, and bore the marks of several months hard mental labor. He spoke pretty good English by that time, and he told me that he had been earning some money by writing for a Polish paper and by several stories. I have learned in the last year that four of his famous Hania stories were written in the old Pico House at that time. I believe the young man went to San Francisco in March or April, 1879, and from there went to New York, thence to Poland. He wrote several letters to Mme. Modjeska and Count Bozenta when he reached Cracow, but we never heard of him until he burst into worldly fame as the author of 'Quo Vadis.'

H. G. T.

ENSIGN MONAGHAN.

He Might Have Lived Ashore in Elegant Leisure.

SPokane, April 12.—James Monaghan, father of Ensign Monaghan, was one of the first settlers in eastern Washington. His home is in Spokane, but he is traveling in California. Ensign Monaghan was born at Chewelah, this state, in 1873. He was educated in the private schools of San Francisco and Portland and in Gonzaga college, a Jesuit institution of Spokane.

He entered the naval academy in 1891 and in 1895 graduated with high honors. He then took a two years' course on the Olympia and was commissioned ensign in 1897. In this city, where he has many relatives and a host of friends the shocking news was received with widespread sorrow.

His father has amassed large wealth in gold mines and had recently been urging his son to resign from the navy but he was unwilling to take this step so long as the United States was engaged in warfare.

AMONG THE GLACIERS.

How Gallant Lieutenant Gilmore Won His Pretty Bride.

SEATTLE (Wash.)—There was a tinge of romance in the courtship and marriage of Lieutenant Gilmore of the Yorktown, whose capture by the Filipinos is announced by Admiral Dewey. The handsome lady now his wife he met in Sitka, the ancient and picturesque capital of Alaska. She was a Miss Ball, daughter of O. M. Ball, then serving the Government in the capacity of Collector of Customs for the Territory. Those present on the occasion of the gallant young officer's introduction tell of his rapid infatuation. They made love amid the glaciers and within the shadows of the snow-capped mountains and in due season were married.

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