

SPEECH #1: YOUNG KOŚCIUSZKO

Author: Bożena Przybysz (KPSS coordinator)

Performance: Kevin and Fabian Marchewka

a. Me, Andrew Thaddeus Bonawentura Kościuszko - I was born on February 4, 1746 in Merezowszczyzna located in Polesie.

I am the youngest among three other siblings at our noble Family. My father was an officer in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth Army. My mother was always at home teaching us how to read and write.

When I was nine, I got enrolled at the Piarists' Collegium in Lubieszów.

I liked to learn history, philosophy, Latin, Polish, French and German. Geometry and surveying were my favorites to learn.

When my father died, I was only 12, and I needed to return home. But at age 19, I enrolled at the Corps of Cadets in Warsaw.

a. *Ja, Andrzej Tadeusz Bonawentura Kosciuszko, urodziłem się 4 lutego 1746 roku w Merezowczyźnie na Polesiu.*

Jestem najmłodszym z czworga rodzeństwa w naszej szlacheckiej rodzinie. Mój tato był pułkownikiem, a mama zawsze była w domu i uczyła nas czytania oraz pisania.

Gdy miałem 9 lat rozpocząłem naukę w Kolegium Pijarów w Lubieszowie.

Lubiłem historię, filozofię, łacinę, język polski, francuski i niemiecki. Moim ulubionym przedmiotem była geometria i miernictwo.

Kiedy zmarł mój tata, miałem tylko 12 lat i musiałem wrócić do domu. Ale gdy tylko skończyłem 19 lat wstąpiłem do Korpusu Kadetów w Warszawie.

b. I graduated from the Corps of Cadets in Warsaw as a captain and the school's instructor.

In 1769, while being only 23 years old, I decided to join the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in Paris. During the five years spent in France, I practiced my French, and studied secrets of the engineering architecture - learning to build fortifications and bridges.

Unfortunately, after the First Partition of Poland I had to leave my beloved country. I travelled to Drezno and later to Paris, where I learned about the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War.

In 1776 I came to Philadelphia to build fortifications by Delaware River as a Fort Billingsport in Paulsboro, New Jersey.

b. *Szkołę Kadetów w Warszawie ukończyłem jako nauczyciel akademicki w stopniu kapitana.*

W 1769 roku, gdy miałem 23 lata, zdecydowałem wstąpić do Królewskiej Akademii Sztuk Pięknych w Paryżu. Tam przez 5 lat spędzonych we Francji pogłębiłem swój język francuski, a także poznałem tajemnice architektury inżynierskiej i nauczyłem się jak budować fortece i mosty.

Niestety po I rozbiórce Polski musiałem opuścić mój ukochany kraj i wyjechałem do Drezna, a później do Paryża. Tam dowiedziałem się o wybuchu rewolucji w Ameryce.

Do Filadelfii przybyłem w 1776 roku aby budować fortyfikacje koło rzeki Delaware jako Fort Billingsport w Paulsboro w stanie New Jersey.

SPEECH #2: KOŚCIUSZKO'S FIGHT FOR AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Author and performer: Stan Graiewski (PAC- Wisconsin Division)

Thank you for inviting me to spend a day with you.

I am always at home with those who are proud of their heritage and who treasure liberty, freedom and equality.

You are truly dedicated about not allowing our patriotic past to fade away.

My life, my dreams, my contributions almost faded away when I asked Lord Sosnowski's permission to marry his daughter, Louisa.

I certainly did not expect nor appreciate his curt response: "Pigeons are not meant for sparrows and the daughters of magnates are not meant for the sons of the common gentry."

Louisa and I tried to run away. Lord Sosnowski's cavalry found us. I was beaten and left for dead. Louisa returned home where she married a prince: her father's choice.

My pride was hurt. I was beaten. I was penniless. I was afraid for my life. Friends helped me escape to Paris where I read a notice from the American colonies. They were advertising for engineers.

I decided to go where I was welcomed and where I could share my experience and dreams for liberty, freedom and equality.

Upon arriving in Philadelphia, I searched out Ben Franklin. Dr Franklin had placed the advertisement I read in Paris.

We initially had a difficult time communicating. I spoke broken English. He knew nothing about Polish. We quickly learned to communicate by speaking French.

Dr Franklin asked about my qualifications. I had studied Chivalry, Drafting and Engineering. I could not produce formal recommendations.

Dr Franklin devised a test that I passed. Through his recommendations, I was commissioned a Colonel in the Army of the United States. Generals Gates and Washington soon recognized me as the best engineer in the Continental Army.

I was assigned to Fort Ticonderoga where I warned officers to arm nearby Sugar Hill. Sugar Hill overlooked the fort. I was ignored. A major retreat followed. I saved the retreat by instructing soldiers to cut down trees to be used for barricading roads. We flooded roads. We dug traps. We stopped the British from moving cannons and supplies. It took them 22 days to travel 20 miles.

Further down the Hudson, Gate's men were setting up camp on the lowlands along the riverbank. This time my advice was followed. The army moved to higher ground on Bemis Heights where I drew up a map and planned a strategy for battle. The British were forced to charge up the hill. We had an advantage of looking down and shooting down on them. They could not outflank us on the East due to the Hudson River or to the West due to a thick impassable forest where our sharpshooters had them in their sights.

We protected the Hudson River from British invasion by building sharply pointed logs to be placed strategically to tear open bulkheads.

Saratoga was a great battle and great victory. We had three lines of defense. The front line retreated to the second. The reinforced second line retreated to the third line where we beat the British. They were worn out and decimated by attacking two lines. The victory at Saratoga proved we were a powerful nation. Our ideals were honorable. Due to this victory, French aligned themselves with the United States.

I designed West Point and its defenses. The British never attacked West Point. However, Superintendent, Benedict Arnold, attempted to sell my plans to the British.

I planted a garden at West Point. The garden is a pleasant feature today. The cadets built a monument in my memory. I look peacefully over the Hudson River. Come visit me at West Point.

During the Revolutionary War I developed a strong rapport with slaves and free blacks. I was an early abolitionist. I detested Washington, Jefferson and other Founding Fathers owning slaves. I appointed Jefferson as executor of my estate with detailed instructions to free slaves, to provide recently freed slaves with an education and to provide them with land where they could be productive

I defended rights of Native Americans and all disenfranchised people.

I carried the American Torch of Freedom across the Atlantic and helped ignite a revolution in Europe. I became an Honorary Citizen of France and Commander in Chief of the Polish Army.

I started a revolution in Polonia to free peasant serfs enslaved by feudalism and to gain more rights for Jews. The Jewish community called me their "messenger from God." They formed a Jewish cavalry to fight with me. This was the first Jewish cavalry unit in modern times.

My motto was "For Your Freedom and Ours." I welcomed Muslim Tatars in my army.

Jefferson described me "the purest son of liberty I have ever known."

A great American general claimed, "Old soldiers never die. They just fade away."

Thank you for not allowing this old soldier fade away.

Never let our heritage fade away.

Never let liberty, freedom and equality fade away.

I salute you.

SPEECH #3: AFTER THE AMERICAN WAR of INDEPENDENCE

Author: Donald Pienkos (PAC- Wsconsin Division)

Performer: Neil Dziadulewicz (Syrena Dancers)

By 1784 America was independent and my soldiering here was done. On returning to my homeland I took with me the knowledge of how seemingly ordinary patriotic citizens could throw off the bonds of oppression and organize their own democratic government. Poland and all of Europe now had a model to do the very same thing.

In Poland I met with the King to ask for a military commission. But I had no wealthy connections and my request was declined. Back on my small estate I watched the rise of Russian imperial power and Poland's seeming failure to deal with its growing crisis.

But in 1789 the Polish parliament expanded the army and commissioned many new officers. I was now appointed a major general.

While I had plenty of combat experience, the command of Poland's forces was given to the King's 26 year old and untried nephew.

My task now was to train our many raw army recruits. In 1791 the Parliament approved a new constitution - a true breakthrough for responsible self government that won universal praise as a "masterpiece of political wisdom" and "a glory to humanity."

But Russia's empress Catherine the Great thought otherwise and saw a revived Poland as a threat to her rule.

In 1792 a Russian army - three times greater than our forces - invaded Poland.

I did my best to defeat the invaders and won a series of battles against the enemy. But the King caved in, agreed to abolish our constitution, and accepted a second Russian and Prussian land grab of more than half of what was left of our country.

In disgust I left Poland, only to return in 1794 to try to save the country from its enemies, Russia, Prussia and Austria. In Krakow I was appointed supreme leader of the revolution to liberate Poland. There I pledged that a free Poland would be a Poland of all its people - nobles, townspeople, peasants, whatever their religious tradition.

At the battle of Raclawice in April 1794 our force - with many patriotic peasants in our ranks - defeated a far larger Russian army. And in the face of overwhelming Russian and Prussian forces, our soldiers held out until October when we met a terrible and crushing defeat. There I was severely wounded and carted off as a prisoner to St Petersburg.

Soon after, our three great enemies continued to grab what was left of my country and wiped Poland right off the map.

I was at last freed from imprisonment in 1796 by a new Russian Emperor and permitted to leave that country. I arrived in England and was welcomed as a great hero for freedom by thousands of cheering citizens.

In 1797 I sailed for the United States and again met the same enthusiastic welcome.

Settling in a little apartment in Philadelphia, I spoke with many outstanding Americans, including Vice President Thomas Jefferson, who became a dear friend and confidant and shared my belief in freedom, democracy, and social justice.

I also succeeded in persuading Congress to fulfill its promise to provide me with a substantial and much needed pension for my past services in the War of Independence.

Before returning to Europe in 1798 I made out a will where I called on Thomas Jefferson to serve as my executor in using my American money and property to free slaves and to provide them with the education to be good American citizens.

Oh how much better things would have been for America had my will and the wishes of so many other Americans been fulfilled!

Back in Europe I met with Napoleon, who had become the ruler of revolutionary France. But I soon realized that he was no friend of Poland and had no real interest in restoring my homeland to full independence.

Too many of my fellow Poles did believe in him. Thousands of them wound up dead and buried in his catastrophic and failed invasion of Russia in 1812.

In the years after my return to France I never ceased in my efforts to work for Poland's restoration.

But here I failed - no European power - not Russia, nor Prussia nor Austria nor France or England was willing to lift a finger in this cause.

I lived my last years in Switzerland and died on October 15, 1817. I was nearly 72 years old. Soon after, my remains were transferred to Krakow where they were placed in the Wawel Cathedral along with Poland's greatest Kings and personages. My heart was even placed in an urn in the royal palace in Warsaw.

There are many, many memorials and monuments to what I stood for - freedom, independence and social justice - for all people. Like the beautiful monument right here in Milwaukee. Thank you for this!

But perhaps the two best testimonials are the living ones. One is America's Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The other is the Poland of today - a democratic, free and independent Poland, a Poland for all Poles whatever their station in life, a Poland that is a trusted friend and ally of the United States.

Thank you all for today too!