Jerzy Jan "George" Lerski

John A. Drobnicki

CUNY York College

How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!
Follow this and additional works at: http://academicworks.cuny.edu/yc_pubs

Part of the History Commons

Recommended Citation
after which she and the Baron settled in Beverly Hills, CA. In the succeeding years she did little new work, choosing instead to remake some of her earlier creations in a new style. For example, the crisp and direct Amethyste (1946) became the pink and fuzzy Girl with Guitar (1963). After the Baron's death in 1962, she moved to Houston, Texas, to be with her daughter and her family. In her latter years she complained that the paints and other artists' materials were inferior to the "old days" and that the people in the 1970s lacked the special qualities and "breeding" that inspired her art. In 1978 she moved to Cuernavaca, Mexico, to live among an aging international set and some of the younger aristocrats.

-- Adam A. Zych


Lenard, Casimir "Cas" (b. Chicago, Illinois, March 10, 1918; d. Washington, D.C., December 7, 2007), Polonia activist. At the age of ten, Lenard was sent to Poland for eight years of study in the Jesuit school in Chrzanów. Upon his return to the U.S. he studied at Northwestern University, earning his bachelor's degree in Economics. With the outbreak of World War II in Europe in 1939 he entered the Illinois National Guard. In 1941 he was commissioned as a second lieutenant and from 1942 to 1945 he was in combat as a member of the famed 1st Infantry Division ("The Big Red One"), taking part in its campaigns in North Africa, Sicily, and the invasion of Normandy. He then served as a press officer in the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Forces in Europe. After his discharge in 1945 he married Casimira (Myra Lenard) and worked in his family'sfamed Chicago restaurant, "Lenard's Little Poland." Volunteering for military duty during the Korean War, Lenard served for five years in Germany (1952-57), then on the general staff of the army at the Pentagon after 1962. In 1967 he assumed a command position in Vietnam. From 1968 to 1970, Colonel Lenard worked as a military intelligence analyst at the U.S. Army Institute of Land Combat in Langley, Virginia. In 1970 he retired from military duty after thirty years of distinguished service in three wars. That same year he was appointed the first executive director of the Polish American Congress, a post he held until 1974. In subsequent years he was active in Washington, D.C., in various service and lobbying capacities. One involved his championing a constitutional amendment to protect the American flag from desecration. He was also active in supporting the work of his wife, Myra, who in 1982 was appointed director of the Polish American Congress office in Washington, D.C. He continued to serve in the Washington office of the PAC after his wife's death on May 1, 2000. Lenard was decorated on a host of occasions for his military service and for his devotion to Poland's freedom.—Donald E. Pienkos


Lenard, Casimir S. "Myra" (b. Poland, May 23, 1924; d. McLean, Virginia, May 1, 2000), Polonia activist. A successful business person, in 1982 Lenard accepted the invitation of Aloyzus Mazewski, president of the Polish American Congress, to head the PAC's office in Washington, D.C. Her appointment came at a critical time following the suppression of the Solidarity movement in Poland and that country's fall into a deep economic crisis. Over the next eighteen years, Lenard proved to be an extraordinarily dynamic and resourceful lobbyist. Her successes included organizing a series of PAC-sponsored massive shipments of medical supplies, clothing, and foodstuffs to Poland during the 1980s. In this work she cooperated closely with Eugene Rosypal in the Chicago office of the PAC. Working with Jan Nowak-Jezioranski and PAC President Aloyzus Mazewski, Lenard worked tirelessly for passage of the National Endowment for Democracy Act in 1984. This legislation provided U.S. support for the embattled Solidarity movement in Poland. After the collapse of the Polish communist regime in 1989, she worked for the creation of the Polish American Enterprise Fund to support the country's economic recovery. Her efforts and those of her husband, Casimir Lenard, PAC President Edward Moskal, and PAC Executive Director Les Kuczynski were crucial in winning U.S. Senate approval for Poland's admission into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1999. For her achievements, Lenard was honored many times by the Polish government and by many organizations in the U.S.—Donald E. Pienkos


Lenski, Lois Lenore (b. Springfield, Ohio, October 14, 1893; d. Tarpon Springs, Florida, September 11, 1974). Author, illustrator. After graduating from high school in 1911, Lenski moved with her family to Columbus, Ohio, where her father was a faculty member at Capital University. She attended Ohio State University, receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in education in 1915 before pursuing her studies in the visual and fine arts at the Arts Students League in New York.

There she met mural painter Arthur Covey, whom she married in 1921. Lenski traveled to London in the 1920s where she attended the Westminster School of Art and worked as an illustrator for publisher John Lane. After illustrating for publishers both in Britain and America for the greater part of a decade, she published her first children's books, Skipping Village (1927) and A Little Girl of 1900 (1928) based on her childhood experiences in Ohio. One year later she gave birth to a son named Stephen whose toddler years inspired her "Mr. Small" series. Lenski has been labeled one of the most prolific writers of children's books of the twentieth century, publishing such popular favorites as Grandmother Tippytoe (1931), The Little Auto (1934), Sugarplum House (1935), Phee Fairchild: Her Book (1936), and Indian Captive: The Story of Mary Jemison (1941). In 1946, Lenks won the prestigious Newbery Medal for her book Strawberry Girl.

One year later she received the Child Study Association Award for Judy's Journey, a story of the hardships of migrant work. During her lifetime Lenski authored more than ninety children's books, many of which have been translated into more than twelve languages including Afrikaans, Chinese, and Sinhalese.

She donated the majority of her manuscripts, research notes, correspondences, and children's books that she herself collected throughout the course of her life to libraries across the United States, and in particular to the Jackson Library at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.—Kristyna Cap


Lenski, Jerzy Jan "George" (b. Łódź, Poland, January 20, 1917; d. San Francisco, California, September 16, 1992), Historian, diplomat. Active in political and educational groups during his youth, he was severely beaten in 1938 by a militant group of right-wing extremists because of his philo-Semite activities. Lenski studied both law and economics, and was commissioned a second lieutenant in an anti-aircraft artillery unit after completing reserve officers' school. His unit saw action against the German Luftwaffe in 1939. When the Soviet Union invaded Eastern
Lesinski, John, Jr. (b. Detroit, Michigan, December 28, 1914; d. Dearborn, Michigan, October 21, 2005), Congressman. Lesinski moved to Dearborn at the age of eleven and attended SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary and Fordham High School. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy at the age of eighteen and served from 1933 to 1937. He was recalled to active duty in 1941 and served until 1945, being awarded the Purple Heart and the Navy and Marine Corps Medal. From 1939 to 1943, he also served as vice president of the Hamtramck Lumber Company, which had been founded by his father, Congressman John Lesinski, Sr. In 1950, Lesinski was elected to the Sixteenth Congressional District seat previously held by his father, who had died earlier that year. He would be re-elected six times, serving in the United States House of Representatives from 1951 to 1965. In 1965, as a result of redistricting, parts of Lesinski's Sixteenth Congressional District in suburban Detroit were combined with parts of the Fifteenth District seat held by fellow Polish American John Dingell to create a new Sixteenth District. This created a closely-watched Democratic primary battle between Lesinski and Dingell in September 1965. Chief among the issues in the race were the two candidates' differing stands on civil rights. Whereas Dingell was a supporter of the Johnson Administration's civil rights agenda, Lesinski had moved from an early support for civil rights legislation to open opposition to it. Indeed, Lesinski was the only Northern Democratic congressman to vote against the Civil Rights Act of 1964, saying that the “path is being laid for white backlash” theory that white voters would punish politicians who were perceived as too supportive of civil rights legislation. In fact, Lesinski was expected by many to win, particularly given the fact that the new Sixteenth District included about ninety percent of his former, overwhelmingly white district. Perhaps for this reason, Dingell sought to downplay the race issue during the campaign. Lesinski, however, made increasingly obvious references to race, with one full-page advertisement in the Dearborn Press (though purportedly placed there by a supporter) proclaiming that “John Lesinski is opposed to switch blades and mass demonstrations.” In the end, the “white backlash” did not materialize and Lesinski was defeated with only forty-five percent of the vote. While African-Americans seemed to vote almost exclusively for Dingell, race did not seem decisive to most white voters. Lesinski's re-election efforts were particularly hampered by the fact that the state Democratic Party had censured him for his Civil Rights Act vote, and all but one of the new district's Democratic clubs endorsed Dingell, as did the Wayne County AFL-CIO, the United Auto Workers, and the local Teamsters. After his defeat, Lesinski would later serve from 1968 to 1973 as a member of the Wayne County board of commissioners.

—Jonathan Swartz