

Kościuszko w Austin w Teksasie. Fotoreportaż.



Wystawa poświęcona Tadeuszowi Kościuszce w Austin, fot. Angelika Firlej.

Joanna Sokołowska-Gwizdka

W związku z przypadającą w październiku 2017 r. 200. rocznicą śmierci Tadeusza Kościuszki, w niedzielę 22 października w Austin miała miejsce wystawa przedstawiająca tę związaną z historią Stanów Zjednoczonych ikoną walki o wolność. Wystawie towarzyszyła prelekcja i dyskusja.

Sejm RP ogłosił bieżący rok kalendarzowy **Rokiem Kościuszki**. Jest on obchodzony także na arenie międzynarodowej za sprawą patronatu UNESCO, uchwalonego przez Konferencję Generalną.

Tadeusz Kościuszko był nie tylko Naczelnikiem Państwa i przywódcą kosynierów w bitwie pod Racławicami. Pozostaje on też wzorem patrioty i symbolem wolności. Cieszy się szczególną sławą w tradycji amerykańskiej, gdyż uosabia uniwersalne wartości walki o wolność, demokrację i godność człowieka.

Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych we współpracy z Muzeum Historycznym Miasta Krakowa oraz Stowarzyszeniem Komitetu Kopca Tadeusza Kościuszki przygotowało

wystawę w języku angielskim. Są to 24 plansze o rozmiarach 120×80 cm, skrótkowo i obrazowo przedstawiające różne etapy z życia Kościuszki, przesłanie, które swoją postawą reprezentował oraz miejsca na świecie, które go upamiętniają. Jest to wystawa wędrująca, wypożyczana przez konsulatory, aby pomóc w zrozumieniu historii i przypomnieć tę wybitną postać.

Austin Polish Society zadbało o to, aby i w Teksasie można się było zapoznać z Tadeuszem Kościuszką. Wystawa została pokazana w ramach comiesięcznych spotkań klubu historycznego przy Austin Polish Society. Przybyli licznie członkowie i sympatycy polskiej organizacji, Polacy oraz ich znajomi i przyjaciele Amerykanie.

Helena Wiśniewska-Tindall przygotowała prelekcję w języku angielskim, przybliżając postać i czasy Kościuszki. O polskim bohaterze opowiedział też jej mąż, Amerykanin, starannie przygotowany i zorientowany w temacie. Ja uzupełniłam opowieść o kilka ciekawostek, opowiedziałam też o powstaniu Fundacji Kościuszkowskiej w Nowym Jorku.

Spotkanie się niezwykle udało, a rozmowom o polskiej historii nie było końca. Takie inicjatywy mogłyby mieć miejsce częściej.

W notatce zostały wykorzystane materiały Konsulatu Generalnego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Los Angeles.



Wystawie towarzyszyła prelekcja w językach angielskim i polskim oraz ożywiona dyskusja. Od lewej Helena Wiśniewska- Tindall, Kris Matyszewski, Krystyna Masłowska-Kahl, Andrzej Kahl, Joanna Sokołowska-Gwizdka oraz członkowie i sympatycy Austin Polish Society, fot. Angelika Firlej.



Polsko-amerykańskim rozmowom nie było końca. W niebieskiej bluzce - Angelika Firlej, prezes Austin Polish Society, fot. Joanna Sokołowska-Gwizdka.

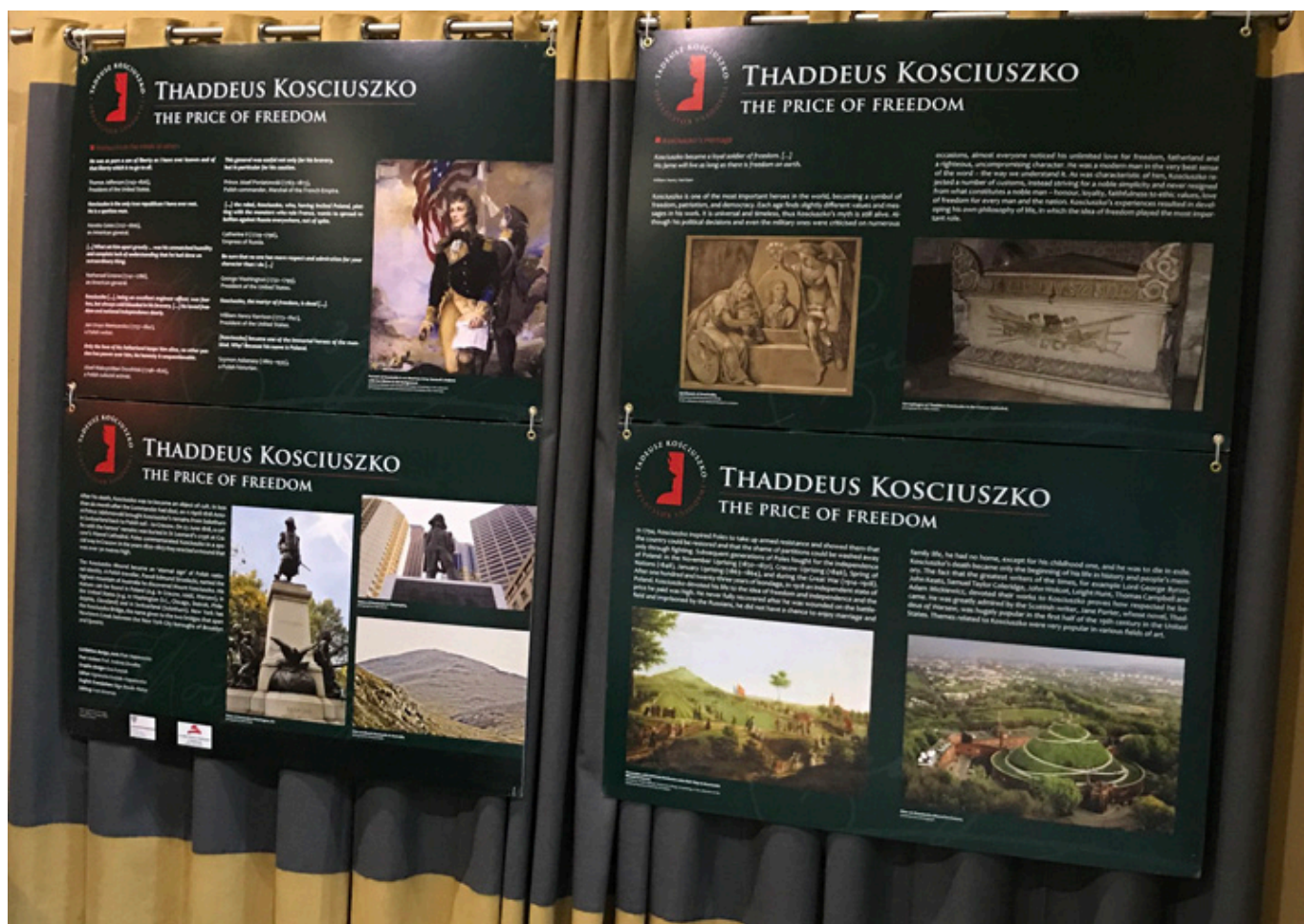


Kris Matyszewski, współzałożyciel klubu historycznego przy Austin Polish Society, fot. Joanna Sokołowska-Gwizdka.



Andrzej Kahl, emerytowany lekarz, pasjonat biologii, podróżnik utrwalający na fotografiach mikroświat egzotycznych dżungli, fot. Joanna Sokołowska-Gwizdka.

A portrait of a young woman with a large, curly wig, wearing a white dress with a high collar. She is looking slightly to the right. The portrait is set within an oval frame.



fot. Angelika Firlej



THADDEUS KOŚCIUSZKO

THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

Twice Kosciuszko tried to win support for the Polish case from the two most powerful hegemony of his age: the French military and political leader, Napoleon Bonaparte, and the Russian Emperor, Alexander I. They, however, wanted to use him only for their own interests. Although Kosciuszko may not have been the greatest politician, he always wanted and tried to remain independent within the scope of ideology or politics. When, on 9 November 1799, General Napoleon Bonaparte executed a coup d'état called the "18 Brumaire", Kosciuszko was deeply shocked by the news of this event because the republic was destroyed. Kosciuszko reproached the coup with bitter words,

believing Napoleon was a tyrant who had buried the republic. This was one of the reasons why Kosciuszko did not support the idea of the Duchy of Warsaw, a poor substitute for a state which was created on the will of the French Emperor. Thereafter, Kosciuszko, who was so persistent in defending Polish interests and demanding independence for the entire Commonwealth, found himself outside the circle of pro-French activists. In the early 19th century, this meant exclusion from all the major political events in Europe.



THADDEUS KOŚCIUSZKO

THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

Physical effort and time spent outdoors hardened him physically and, despite his light build, he was resistant to exhaustion and toil. He was a passionate gardener and horseman. He also showed artistic talent and manual skills from a young age. He liked to draw and paint and to craft small decorative objects with the use of a lathe. He also read a lot during his emigration. He never enjoyed socialising, although as a public figure he had to participate in social life to some extent. He liked to play chess, whist and billiards. He did not pay much attention to food. He avoided strong liquors, and preferred good Hungarian wine for more formal celebrations. His favourite stimulant was coffee.

A great dream he never saw come true was to get married and start a family. He adapted to new places and conditions relatively easily, his requirements being always modest. Kosciuszko was renowned for his charity activities; in the Swiss town of Solothurn, he was called a "benefactor of the poor".





THADDEUS KOSCIUSZKO THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

Kościuszko resented the imperial policies of Catherine II expressed in the partitioning of Poland. Yet, after 1816, he started to have hopes for reconstruction of the Polish state. Eventually, the position taken by the Emperor Alexander I and the provisions of the Congress of Vienna disappointed Kościuszko severely.

Kościuszko died in 1817 in exile, as the spiritual leader of a nation without a country. His political will was confined in a leaflet entitled *Wojna w Polnie* in 1816. It described the idea of a new national uprising without any external support and promoted a persistent guerrilla war.

Thaddeus Kościuszko was a unique type of statesman. Driven by common will, integrity and independence of the Fatherland, and freedom of citizens, he took a straight path to reach his bold goals and avoided complex political games. This is perhaps the road to greatness, although not necessarily a road to success.



Portrait of Thaddeus Kościuszko by Józef Simmler, 1816



Portrait of Thaddeus Kościuszko by Józef Simmler, 1816



Physical effort and... and, despite his light... he was a passionate... his talent and manual... and his craft... after read a lot during... although as a public... extent, he liked to play... attention to find. He... Hungarian wine for me... last was coffee.

A great dream he never... a family. He wanted to... his requirements being... for his charity activities, in... a "benefactor of the poor".



THADDEUS KOSCIUSZKO THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

Although Kościuszko spent almost half his life abroad, he remained a true Pole. The first ever Commander-in-Chief inspired Poles to fight for restoration of the country after partitions. On 24 March 1794, he undertook the great challenge: to free Poland from enemy forces, re-establish and secure its borders, regain the independence of the Polish state, and safeguard universal freedom. The essence of the armed uprising was expressed in Kościuszko's public oath on Kraków's Main Square.

A new chapter in Kościuszko's life began; he became not only a military man but also a leader of his nation. During the seven months of the insurrection, he managed the country's both internal and external affairs. He preferred compromise to radical Jacobin methods and tried to win the support of all social classes, peasants in particular. Their problems were to be resolved by granting them personal freedom proclaimed at Polaniec on 7 May 1794.



Portrait of Thaddeus Kościuszko by Józef Simmler, 1816



Several days after the battle... Kościuszko became... in the war of independence... to be one of the greatest... armed forces. As the Commander... he was able to organize a relatively... late 18th century. Kościuszko, at... on numerous occasions; he was... in his bravery". Above all, Kościuszko... and military code of honour. His... short and ended suddenly in 1794... the Polish state was liquidated. On... he became a national hero during...



THADDEUS KOSCIUSZKO

THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

The proclamation of *Polska* ensured the peasants right to stay on their land, limited the scope of feudal service and aimed at equating all citizens of Poland. To gain support of minorities, Kosciuszko emphasized he was not biased against any of them. His ideological legacy is expressed in the words "for our freedom and yours". After the insurrection failed, he spent two years in a Russian prison. Although Kosciuszko lost

as the Commander-in-Chief, ironically he won he was considered a hero, a savior, and a martyr for freedom. His name and cause became renowned worldwide. For the rest of his life, he tried to make the revival of the Polish state possible, but he never witnessed the actual restoration of Poland in the early 19th century.







THADDEUS KOSCIUSZKO

THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

He proved the life of Thaddeus Kosciuszko

Thaddeus Kosciuszko
Good and brave, but unhappy

Wojciech Gerson / Wikimedia Commons

Appearance

Kosciuszko's image recurred numerous times in national iconography, but also in foreign works of art. According to accounts, he was a slim, fit man, not particularly tall, of fine and slender stature and with irregular facial features and a slightly snub nose. Youthful face, quite fair, thick, and wavy hair and expressive, most likely blue eyes, were to his advantage.

As Commander-in-Chief of the 1794 uprising, Kosciuszko often wore a common gray wooden frock coat with "no indication of the highest rank". During his emigration to France, he preferred a navy blue frock coat, a black tie, boots and a round hat. Formal black frock coat made him feel uncomfortable. He packed his outfits for functionality and comfort of wearing. He shed peasant clothes. He stopped paying attention to his appearance eventually; his frock was faded, patched and mended, with a rose or violets pinned for decoration.






THADDEUS KOSCIUSZKO

THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

Although Kosciuszko spent almost a true Pole. The first ever Commander-in-Chief of the country after the restoration of the country after the 1794 uprising, he managed the military man but also a leader of his nation. He preferred compromise and tried to win the support of all sides. Their problems were to be resolved by the proclamation of Poland's independence.



fot. Joanna Sokołowska-Gwizdka