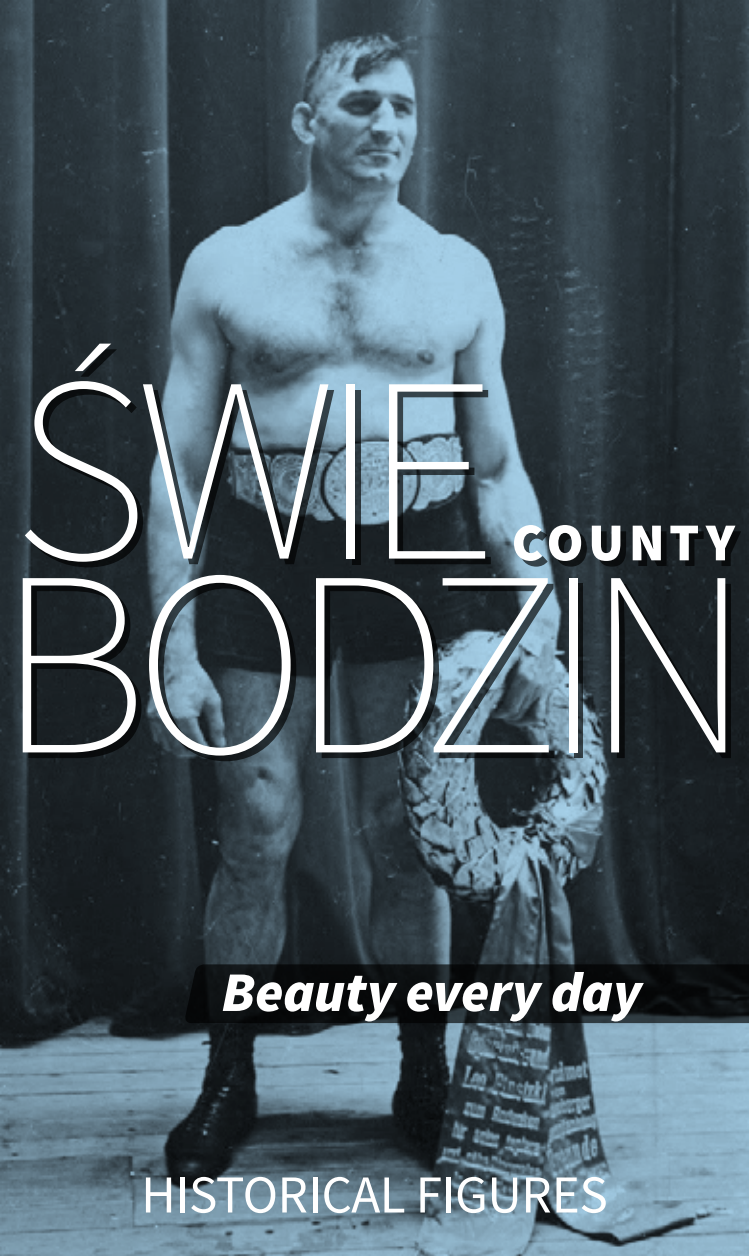




ŚWIEBODZIN COUNTY

Beauty every day

HISTORICAL FIGURES

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Foreword

The history of the Świebodzin region has been written by Poles and Germans, scholars and forced resettlers from Poland's Eastern Borderlands, teachers and sportsmen, doctors of Renaissance-ranging interests, as well as household names of the Polish music scene. Let us take a closer look at a dozen or so individuals connected with the history of the Świebodzin Land.



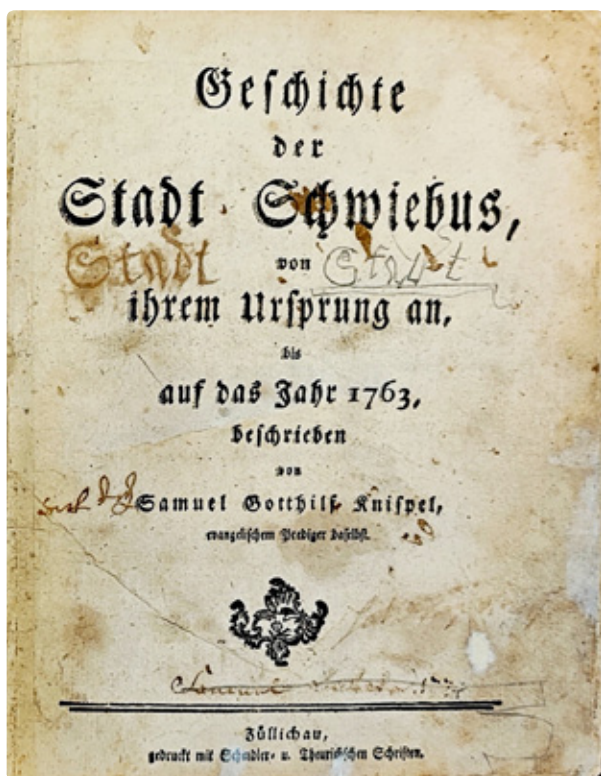
Town Hall, seat of the Regional Museum in Świebodzin



**SAMUEL G. KNISPEL – PASTOR AND HISTORIAN
(1721–1800)**

THE FIRST TOWN CHRONICLE

Pastor of the Evangelical congregation in Świebodzin and author of the town's first-ever chronicle, *The History of the Town of Świebodzin from Its Beginnings to the Year 1763* (1765), in which he described the history of Świebodzin and the region from its legendary origins up to the 1760s, paying particular attention to events he witnessed at first hand (the period of the Seven Years' War). He engaged in dialogue with the Catholic minority in the town, striving to reconcile both faiths in turbulent times. We owe to him a detailed account of the town's character in the second half of the 18th century, including, among other things, a register of Świebodzin municipal officials, estates surrounding the town, and the town statutes of 1678.





**HENRYK FALKOWSKI – SPORTSMAN AND
LOCAL ACTIVIST (1906–1962)**

THE LOUDEST SPORT IN TOWN



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He was born in Vilnius; in the mid-1920s the Falkowski family moved to Gdynia. A passionate motorcycle racing enthusiast, he competed successfully in numerous national rallies during the interwar period. After the outbreak of war he returned by motorbike from Gdynia to Vilnius, and in July 1945, in a transport of resettlers from the Eastern Borderlands, he settled in Świebodzin. He founded the local Motorcycle Club and, from May 1946,

organised motorcycle races through the streets of the town and along the roads of the district. All the leading riders in the country took part in them. Crowds of Świebodzin and district residents cheered “Falkus” on in every race, though he did not always win. He was also head of the district transport department, ran a mechanical workshop, and held qualifications as a sworn translator of Russian. He died tragically in a motorcycle accident.



**FR SYLWESTER ZAWADZKI – KPRIEST,
BUILDER OF THE CHRIST THE KING
MONUMENT(1932–2014)**

THE PRIEST-BUILDER

He was born in Dębica Wielka in Mazovia. In 1958 he was ordained to the priesthood in Gorzów. Initially he exercised his pastoral ministry in numerous parishes across western Poland (including Chojna, Białogard, Szczecin, and Radnica). In 1981 he was assigned to Świebodzin, where he took charge of the new Parish of Our Lady Queen of Poland in Świebodzin. He built a parish house and thoroughly renovated the church. In 1994 he began the construction of a



**GUSTAW ZERNDT – TEACHER AND HISTORIAN
(1854–1929)**

THE LOCAL MUSEUM

A local teacher at what was then the girls' school, and the organiser of the town's first museum. It was originally housed in the former hospital as the "Museum of Antiquities", before being moved in 1925 to the municipal hall in what is today Okrężna Street. He was also the author of numerous publications on the region, both tourist guides and collections of local legends and tales. Zerndt's most important work was the three-volume *History of the Town and District of Świebodzin*, which chronicles the town's history

from the earliest times to 1888. In the mid-1930s a street adjoining the Świebodzin market square was named after him (now Głowackiego Street), and in 1995 a commemorative plaque was placed on the façade of his family home on Wałowa Street.

Collections of the Regional Museum in Świebodzin



new church in Świebodzin — the present-day Sanctuary of Divine Mercy, which was consecrated in 1998 and elevated to the rank of a sanctuary in 2008. By then intensive work was already under way on the Figure of Christ the King of the Universe, which he built over the course of nine years (2001–2010). In 2006 he received the title of Honorary Citizen of the Świebodzin Municipality.

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EBERHARDT HILSCHER – WRITER
(1927–2005)

ŚWIEBODZIN OF TWO ERAS

The son of Max Hilscher, the last director of the pre-war museum, who became a kind of bridge between two epochs in the town's history. He attended the Świebodzin boys' school and later secondary school. In 1944 he was conscripted into the Wehrmacht and posted to occupied Denmark. After a stay in an American prisoner-of-war camp, in the new post-war reality he began studies at the Humboldt University of Berlin, where he read German philology. He was an outstanding essayist, literary critic, and an authority on the works of Thomas Mann and Gerhart Hauptmann. He published in literary periodicals in Poland and Germany, often recalling his youthful years. He visited his native Świebodzin regularly, forging friendships with Poles who had been building a new reality in the town since the post-war years. He opposed revisionism and instead engaged in Polish–German dialogue in a spirit of understanding and friendship. In 2000 he was awarded the title of Honorary Citizen of the Świebodzin Municipality. He rests in the Świebodzin cemetery. A commemorative plaque stands in front of his family home on Łużycka Street.



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**JAN BACZAŃSKI – PHYSICIAN AND POLITICIAN
(1906–1970)**



HEALTHCARE FROM THE BORDERLANDS TO THE BORDERLANDS

Born into the family of a Vilnius photographer, a graduate of the Faculty of Medicine at Stefan Batory University. He obtained his medical diploma in 1933. During the war he served as a soldier in the Home Army. In the course of the post-war population transfers he was appointed by the Soviet authorities as medical officer for Polish transport convoys. In July 1945 he arrived in Świebodzin. He was one of the pioneers of post-war healthcare in the Świebodzin district. As the need arose, he acted as internist, obstetrician, gynaecologist, dentist, and ophthalmologist. He turned down an offer of employment in Zielona Góra; his medical knowledge and clinical intuition served the residents of Świebodzin for many years. As chairman of the local structures of the Polish People's Party (PSL) he was arrested on false charges ahead of the 1947 elections. He withdrew from politics permanently and worked at the hospital, the outpatient clinic, and in his own private medical practice, serving the people of Świebodzin and the surrounding area. He is remembered by posterity as a born raconteur of great charisma.



Collections of the Regional Museum in Świebodzin



**GENOWEFA ABŁĄŻEJ – PHYSICIAN AND
CATHOLIC ACTIVIST (1918–1988)**

A WOMAN FOR SPECIAL TASKS

She was born in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan; in 1919 the family returned to independent Poland and settled in Nowogródek in the Vilnius region. She was a person deeply attached to the teachings of the Catholic Church. After the Red Army entered the Eastern Borderlands, she and her family were deported to Kazakhstan, where she endured inhuman conditions until the end of the Second World War. After 1945 she completed the medical studies she had begun before the war, in Poznań, and worked at the hospital in Szamotuły. Following a conflict with the then authorities of the Polish People's Republic over the matter of abortion, thanks to the Church's assistance she left to work at a missionary hospital in Uganda, Africa. After returning to the country she found new employment at the Rehabilitation and Orthopaedic Sanatorium in Świebódzin (now the Lubusz Centre for Orthopaedics) as an orthopaedic surgeon. She was also active in the Catholic Family Counselling Centre at the Parish of St Michael the Archangel in Świebódzin. Before her death she received the papal Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice, and posthumously she was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta.



Collections of the Regional Museum in Świebódzin



**FELICJAN ANDRZEJCZAK – SOLOIST, MUSICIAN
(1948–2024)**

„JOLKA, JOLKA PAMIĘTASZ...”

He was born in Pięczkowo in the Środa district; he and his family settled in Świebodzin in 1970. He performed with local bands (C-4011) and quickly made his mark as a soloist on the Polish music scene. Following appearances at the National Festival of Polish Song in Opole in the early 1980s, he began collaborating with Budka Suflera, resulting in timeless hits: *Jolka, Jolka, pamiętasz...*, *Czas ołowiu*, and *Noc komety*. After parting ways with the band he continued his solo career (hits including *Ekscentryczny dance*, *Nie zmarnuj szans*, *Jak jeździć donikąd*). In 2020 he was awarded the title of Honorary Citizen of the Świebodzin Municipality; posthumously he was decorated with the Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta.



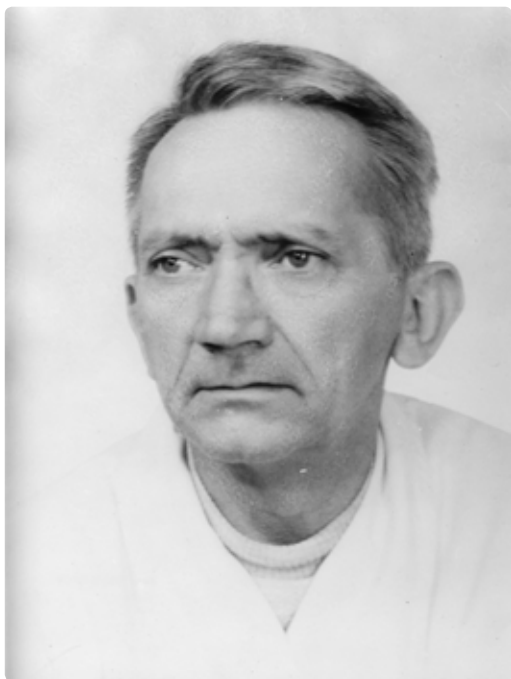
Wikipedia



LECH WIERUSZ – PHYSICIAN AND SOCIAL ACTIVIST (1917–1987)

A RENAISSANCE MAN

He was born in Dolsk near Śrem in Greater Poland. In 1945 he was awarded the title of Doctor of Medicine, and in 1949 the degree of Doctor of Medical Sciences. In 1951 he was assigned to work at the Therapeutic and Educational Institute for Disabled Children in Świebodzin (now the Lubusz Centre for Orthopaedics), where he worked until his retirement in 1982. He transformed a provincial hospital into a fully-fledged closed-care medical institution of worldwide renown. He became a co-founder of the Polish school of orthopaedics, whose innovative methods amazed the scientific world. He was the most recognisable figure of post-war Świebodzin, a co-founder of the “Medyk” Health Service Club, which blazed cultural trails in Świebodzin. He was the founder of the Society of Friends of the Świebodzin Land, which contributed decisively to the creation of the present-day Regional Museum. He was repeatedly named Lubusz Citizen of the Year and also won a local poll for the most popular Świebodzin resident of the forty years after 1945.



Collections of the Regional Museum in Świebodzin



**LEON PINECKI – SPORTSMAN, ŁAGÓW
(1892–1949)**

THE GIANT OF GREATER POLAND

He was born in Stoluń in Greater Poland. He is said to have fought his first wrestling bout at the local inn, defeating a strongman from a travelling circus troupe. He was later conscripted into the army and was wounded three times at the Battle of Verdun. In 1920 he began his professional sporting career. He competed in most wrestling competitions at national, European, and world level (five-time European champion and three-time world champion). He also took part in numerous bouts in the USA. Standing 203 cm tall and weighing 130 kg, he was known as the “King of the Double Nelson”, the “Polish Tower”, and the “Giant of Greater Poland”. In the 1930s he was forced to change his surname to Leo Pinetzki and to abandon competing under the Polish flag. In 1930 he purchased a holiday centre and hotel, “Am See”, in Łagów (now the “Defka” centre). During the Nazi era he was persecuted for his Polish origins; arrested, he was held in police custody in Świebodzin and Sulęcín, and was ultimately transported to a penal camp near Potsdam. After the end of the Second World War he returned to Łagów, where this time he was accused of collaboration with Fascist Germany. In 1948 he moved to Sulęcín, where he died unexpectedly on 26 July 1949.



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FR MICHAŁ KUBACKI – PRIEST, LUBRZA
(1898 – 1978)

RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS



sprawiedliwi.org.pl

He was born in Biechowo near Września. In 1931 he was ordained to the priesthood in Łódź. Between 1933 and 1945 he served as a curate at the Parish of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Praga, Warsaw. He took part in rescuing Jewish children from the Warsaw Ghetto during the Second World War by issuing them Catholic baptismal certificates. After the war he was assigned to the parish in Lubrza, where he exercised his priestly ministry until his

death, and is remembered by the local community as a kindly parish priest who was open to all human affairs and problems. He was posthumously honoured with the title of Righteous Among the Nations in 1997.



JERZY KLEMPPEL – SPORTSMAN
(1953–2004)

A SPORTING SHARPSHOOTER

Born in Międzyzylesie (Skąpe municipality), an outstanding Polish handball player. He began his sporting career at Gwardia Opole, later joining Śląsk Wrocław, with whom he won seven consecutive Polish league titles (1972–1978). For the Polish national team alone he scored some 1,170 goals, placing him on the podium of Polish handball players. Abroad he played in the colours of Frisch Auf Göppingen, where he was the top scorer in the Handball Bundesliga three times in a row (1986–1988). After finishing his playing career he served as coach of the national team and of Śląsk Wrocław.



GERHARD DOMAGK – SCIENTIST AND MICROBIOLOGIST (1895–1964)

A NOBEL LAUREATE FROM ŁAGÓW

He was born in Łagów; during the First World War he fought on both the Eastern and Western Fronts. In 1921 he passed the state medical examination. In 1927 he became head of the Institute of Experimental Pathology and Bacteriology in Wuppertal-Elberfeld. In 1935 he announced the revolutionary discovery of the use of sulphonamides to combat bacterial infections. In 1939 he was awarded the Nobel Prize, which he was only able to collect after the war, in 1947. After the war he conducted research into the treatment of tuberculosis and infectious diseases.

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**MICHAŁ ROŻEK – ARTIST AND SOLDIER
(1885–1944)**

SCULPTURE AND THE FATHERLAND

He was born in Kosieczyn (now in the Zbąszynek municipality). The family later moved to Zbąszyń and then to Wolsztyn. Thanks to the support of the Karol Marcinkowski Greater Poland Academic Aid Society for young people of limited means, he undertook sculpture studies in Berlin and Munich. After his studies he settled in Poznań. He fought in the Greater Poland Uprising in a cavalry squadron. In the interwar period he settled once again in Wolsztyn. As a sculptor he became renowned for his sacred tondi (circular reliefs) — *Madonna and Child* and *Saint Anthony with the Child*. He also produced numerous portrait sculptures on commission. He was likewise a talented painter (works include *The Death of Leszek the White at Gąsawa* and *Jealousy*). Among his best-known sculptures are the Monument to Bolesław the Brave in front of the cathedral in Gniezno and the Sower Monument in Luboń. He was arrested by the Germans in 1941 in Poznań and, for refusing to paint a portrait of Hitler, was sent to the Auschwitz camp, where he was beaten to death. A primary school in Kosieczyn bears his name.



Wikipedia



**EMILIA SZCZANIECKA – INDEPENDENCE
ACTIVIST, 19TH CENTURY, SZCZANIEC**

INDEPENDENCE THROUGH WORK

Born in Brody in Greater Poland, a Polish patriot descended from one branch of the Szczaniecki family of the Ossoria coat of arms, whose ancestral seat was Szczaniec. During the November Uprising she organised medical and material aid for the insurgents. The Prussian authorities sentenced her to imprisonment and a fine; she was later pardoned, however. She acted similarly during the Poznań Uprising of 1848 and, after the outbreak of the January Uprising in 1863, as a nurse, Sister of Mercy, and philanthropist. She also founded an Institution for Educational Assistance for Impoverished Girls and the first Women's Association in Greater Poland. Her funeral was a great patriotic demonstration; the procession of mourners bidding farewell to Emilia stretched twelve kilometres in length. She is the patron of the primary school in Szczaniec.



Wikipedia



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Świebódzin, 2026

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