



Since 1608, when the first Polish settlers arrived at Jamestown, Virginia, Polish people have been an important part of the American dream of freedom and prosperity without oppression.

Michael Blichasz, the President of the Polish American Cultural Center in Philadelphia, organized the first Polish American Heritage Month in 1981. Since that time it was celebrated each year in August during various events and gatherings in Pennsylvania that were mainly focused on travels and culture. The Polish American Congress together with the Polish American Cultural Center put efforts to lobby state and national politicians in order to proclaim August as Polish heritage month. In 1984 the Resolution 577 passed and August was officially recognized Polish American Heritage Month. All Americans were urged to join celebrations honoring Polish heritage in United States. In 1986 the month was changed to October so that schools were able to participate in the events during the school year. October also hold significance as this is the month the first Polish settlers came to Jamestown, Virginia.

Things you need to know about Polish Americans:

1. In 1608, the first Polish immigrants arrived in Jamestown, Virginia
2. Polish people are known as craftsmen in glassmaking and woodworking industries
3. In 1897 a group of Polish immigrants in Scranton, PA formed the Polish

National Catholic Church. Today, the PNCC has 126 parishes and more than 60,000 members

4. Albert Abraham Michelson was the first American to receive the Nobel Prize in sciences; Curtis Sliwa founded the Guardian Angels; Ruth Handler co-founded the Mattel toy company and created the Barbie doll and; Leo Gerstenzang invented the Q-tip.
5. General Casimir Pulaski is regarded as the father of American cavalry for his role in training the Continental Army. In 1929, Congress passed a resolution designating October 11 as General Pulaski Memorial Day.
6. The traditional Polish Christmas Eve dinner consists of 12 meatless courses (one for each apostle), must have an even number of diners with 1 empty chair to ensure good health. Christmas carols are sung in polish.
7. The polish did not invent the polka but have adopted the polkas at weddings.
8. Polack is considered an ethnic slur and the Poles hate this term.



Sources:

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