

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 Raclawicami. 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, skrótowo 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 konsulaty, 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.



THADDEUS KOSCIUSZKO

THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

Thaddeus Kosciuszko as a military man

Thy lotted people and extinguish'd thy name,
Thy sigh for freedom, thy long-flowing tear,
That sound that crashes in the tyrant's ear -
Kosciuszko

The Age of Heroes, Lord George Byron

Young Kosciuszko, born amidst the greatest crisis of the Polish state, received solid general education at the School of Chivalry in Warsaw (1765-1769). Military engineering became his specialty and brought him greatest success. Despite several years-long studies on the subject in Paris, was not commissioned, neither in the Polish, nor in the Lithuanian army. He decided to search for employment and happiness in the USA. When he arrived in America in August 1776, the war against the English was being waged on all fronts with varying degrees of success. The Americans trusted Kosciuszko's ability to prepare Philadelphia for a British offensive and assigned him with developing a fortification plan for the city. His "American dream" came true on 18 October 1776 with a nomination for a USA army engineer and colonel.



Portrait of Thaddeus Kosciuszko by Jacek Malczewski, 1905, National Museum, Warsaw

Declaration of Independence, 1776, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.



THADDEUS KOSCIUSZKO

THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

Romantic life

Brought up by a traditional family, Kosciuszko - must have been a sentimental lover. His first great unfulfilled love, Ludwika Sosnowska, was the daughter to a rich and powerful Senator. The beautiful-eyed girl was well educated, refined and sensitive. She returned his feelings, but Ludwika's parents foiled their marriage plans due to Kosciuszko's low social and financial status. Unhappy love drove him to emigrate, yet, he kept searching for a woman with similar temper and personality. His merits in the war of 1793 made Kosciuszko brought respect for popularity and admiration. Kosciuszko's special respect for women was expressed in one of his first proclamations as Commander-in-Chief of the insurrection.



Portrait of Thaddeus Kosciuszko by Jacek Malczewski, 1905, National Museum, Warsaw

Portrait of Ludwika Sosnowska by Jacek Malczewski, 1905, National Museum, Warsaw



THADDEUS KOSCIUSZKO

THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

Kosciuszko as a Philosopher

"Thaddeus Kosciuszko, enter in the name of God all the Polish the blood that you shed for your country to oppress any person, but in defence of the integrity of the border of Poland, against the independence of the nation, and to strengthen general liberties, to help us God and man and Peace of his law."

Thaddeus Kosciuszko, in the USA

Kosciuszko proved his broad intellectual horizons, diversity of passions, and cognitive interest to his education. A stay in France during the Great Revolution and participation in the American War of Independence shaped his ideas. Kosciuszko became a culture of the world. He repudiated gradually the doctrine of natural rights developed in the Age of Reason, such as the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness included in the "Declaration of Independence" article. The burning American democracy the same his model of government. In an age of European monarchies, he was a devoted enemy of other nations and a great admirer of republican principles. General George Gates said: "Kosciuszko is the only true republican I ever met here." On 18 August 1776, as a freedom fighter, he was awarded honorary citizenship of the revolutionary France.



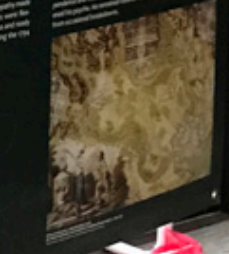
THADDEUS KOSCIUSZKO

THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

Personality

Kosciuszko was a broad-minded but often a body man. He was generous in spirit, kind, easy to hurt, sentimental and dignified. He was a man of high moral standards, ready to fight with soldiers. His relations to women were very friendly, respectful and pragmatic. He was a lover of health, swimming and horse riding, such as his first journey to South America in summer of 1794.

During 1794, he single-mindedly devoted his life to the cause of Polish independence. He was a man of high moral standards, ready to fight with soldiers. His relations to women were very friendly, respectful and pragmatic. He was a lover of health, swimming and horse riding, such as his first journey to South America in summer of 1794.



Portrait of Thaddeus Kosciuszko by Jacek Malczewski, 1905, National Museum, Warsaw

Map of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 1772, National Museum, Warsaw



fot. Angelika Firlej



THADDEUS KOSCIUSZKO

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 KOSCIUSZKO

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 liquor, 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".



TADUŻEŃ KOŚCIUSZKO
THADDEUS KOSCIUSZKO
THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

Kosciuszko 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 Kosciuszko severely.

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

Thaddeus Kosciuszko 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 his bold goals and avoided complex political games. This is perhaps the road to greatness, although not necessarily a road to success.

TADUŻEŃ KOŚCIUSZKO
THADDEUS KOSCIUSZKO
THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

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

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



TADUŻEŃ KOŚCIUSZKO
THADDEUS KOSCIUSZKO
THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

Although Kosciuszko 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 a 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 Kosciuszko's public oath on Cracow's Main Square.

A new chapter in Kosciuszko'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 Jacobean methods and tried to win the support of all social classes, peasants in particular. Their problems seem to be resolved by granting them personal freedom proclaimed at Połaniec on 7 May 1794.

TADUŻEŃ KOŚCIUSZKO
THADDEUS KOSCIUSZKO
THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

Several days after the battle... paraded; it took him almost... Kosciuszko became fast... in the war of independence... and to be one of the greatest... armed forces. As the Command... was able to organize a relative... the war also the most active... late 18th century. Kosciuszko, al... on numerous occasions, he was... in his bravery". Above all, Kosci... and military code of honour. His... and ended suddenly in 1794... the Polish state was abolished. O... he became a national hero during...

TADDEUSZ KOŚCIUSZKO
THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

The Proclamation of Piotrków ensured the peasants' right to stay on their land, limited the scope of feudal service and aimed at equaling all citizens of Poland. To gain support of nobles, 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.





TADDEUSZ KOŚCIUSZKO
THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

Twice Kosciuszko was full of hope, and their own always in their hearts. He called the cause of freedom.



TADDEUSZ KOŚCIUSZKO
THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

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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 woolen 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 jacked his outfits for functionality and comfort of wearing. He liked 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.

TADDEUSZ KOŚCIUSZKO
THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

Although Kosciuszko spent almost a year in a Russian prison, he was considered a true Pole. The first ever Commander-in-Chief of the country after the restoration of the country after the partitions. He preferred compromise and tried to win the support of all sides. Their problems were to be resolved through negotiations and freedom proclaimed at Piotrków on 4th May 1791.



fot. Joanna Sokołowska-Gwizdka