
Guide to the Jan Leszcza Papers, 1949-1992

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Department of Special Collections

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Guide to the Jan Leszcza Papers, 1949-1992

Collection number: M0672

Department of Special Collections and University Archives
Stanford University Libraries
Stanford, California

Contact Information

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Date Completed:

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Encoded by:

Steven Mandeville-Gamble

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Leszcza, Jan. Papers,

Date (inclusive): 1949-1992

Collection number: M0672

Creator: Leszcza, Jan.

Extent: 1 linear ft.

Repository: Stanford University. Libraries. Dept. of Special Collections and University Archives.

Abstract: The collection includes correspondence, literary manuscripts, clippings, and photographs

Language: English.

Access Restrictions

None.

Publication Rights

Property rights reside with the repository. Literary rights reside with the creators of the documents or their heirs. To obtain permission to publish or reproduce, please contact the Public Services Librarian of the Dept. of Special Collections.

Acquisition Information

Purchased, 1994.

Preferred Citation

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Biography

Jan LESZCZA (native name Wiktor LONDZIN) was born May 20, 1918, in the small city of Zabrze near Cieszyn in the Silesia region of Poland. Shortly before World War II, he graduated from the Humanities Lyceum in Bielsko and soon after was drafted into the military. In the aftermath of the September 1939 defeat, he was imprisoned as a P.O.W. and spent the rest of the war in Nazi concentration camps, first in Dachau, then in GUsen. After the liberation by the American army in 1945, he pursued journalistic studies at the UNRRA university in Munich, Germany.

In 1951, Jan Leszcza immigrated to the United States and for a few years lived in Chicago. He received schooling in construction/drafting and then landed a job in industry. In 1959, he changed his place of residency one more time to

California where he settled in Los Altos near San Francisco and continued working in his adopted profession.

During all this time, despite hardships in foreign surroundings, Jan Leszcza remained a true patriot and intellectual, faithful to his ideals and fascinated with belle lettres. He continuously sought contacts with other "men of a pen", organized literary circles and conducted extensive correspondence.

His debut came late, in 1947, with a volume of poetry, "Czas oblakany" (Time Gone Mad) published in Munich by the Founding Committee of the Polish Writers in Germany. The volume was received with little benevolence by the critics which disappointed the poet and cooled off his enthusiasm. The next volume of his poetry, "Konie drewniane" (Wooden Horses") appeared in print twenty years later in London in 1967. This time, however, it was accompanied by the prize for the best bibliophile print work awarded to Sigma, the Bednarczyk Publishing House.

During the 60's, Jan Leszcza began collaboration with the established literary journal "Tematy". The result of this symbiosis was the collection of poems titled "Szkicownik" (Notebook). published in New York in 1969. The most mature of his works to date appeared in 1980, in London, printed again by Sigma, under the title "Trzy sciany" ("Three Walls") and was the last abridged volume published during his life.

Speaking of Leszcza's literary achievements, it is necessary to mention that a great volume of his work has not appeared in book format. Much of his work has never see daylight. His literary legacy is significant and awaits future research.

In addition to the archives at Stanford University Ubraries, more of Jan Leszcza's archives can be found with Mr. Jan Kowalk in San Jose.

Jan Leszcza, who died March 5, 1992, was one of the most distinguished poets of Polish post-war immigration to the United States. His work has not been satisfactorily explored and awaits fair and objective evaluation.

Collection Scope and Content Summary

The collection includes correspondence, literary manuscripts, clippings, and photographs.

Access Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Grochowiak, Stanislaw.

Korczak, Janusz.

Kuncewicz, Piotr.

Londzin, Wiktor.

Mayewski, Paul.

Union of Polish Writers Abroad.

Polish literature--20th century.

Poets, Polish.

Box 1, Folder 1	Masters thesis on Jan Leszcza (hereafter JL).
Box 1, Folder 2	Miscellaneous
Box 1, Folder 3	Xeroxes of articles written by Piotr Kuncewicz
Box 1, Folder 4	"Paul Mayewski, Polish writer, editor of "Tematy".
Box 1, Folder 5	Wierzynski (manuscripts)
Box 1, Folder 6	History paper written in German by JL.
Box 1, Folder 7	Letters from "Christi", 12-15-91
Box 1, Folder 7	Letters from Union of Polish Writers Abroad,9-10-86
Box 1, Folder 7	NASA photos from Voyager Project; astrological chart.
Box 1, Folder 8	Manuscripts.
Box 2, Folder 9	Clippings
Box 2, Folder 10	Personal
	Scope and Content Note
	stationary, 2 photographs, one negative, home budget.
Box 2, Folder 11	Translations from German (empty folder).
Box 2, Folder 12	Poetry, mainly by JL but also Stanislaw Grochowiak (born 1-24-34).
Box 2, Folder 13	Translations of other poets from English into Polish by JL; JL's work in Polish and English (unfinished? - drafts); draft of letter to aunt 6-16-68; newspaper clippings.
Box 2, Folder 14	Janusz Korczak's poetry (translated by JL???)

Box 2, Folder 15

Translations and original work of JL.

Box 2

Unnumbered File: Poems, fragments of poems, rough drafts, and translations, all by JL as well as notes of others' poems by JL.

Box 2

Unnumbered envelope: by and about Pawel Mayewski.

Box 2, Volume 13

Three books of other authors with underlinings and margin notes by JL.