

Mary E. Nelson
530 Folklore of Homelands and Diasporas: The Slavic and East European World
CREECA Summer Workshop
June 25-29, 2001

WYCINANKI
(vih-chee-non'-kee)
Polish Paper Cutting

Goals: Learn to create a heritage Wycinanki, and to develop appreciation and respect for the unique contribution of the Polish people who've practiced this folk art.

Objectives:

- Understand the rudimentary history and culture of Polish people who created Wycinanki
- Know the basic techniques and terms of Polish paper cutting
- Using principles of design, create a personal paper cutting from your "folk life" and cultural background

Materials: Pencils, sketch paper, transfer paper, small Fiskars scissors, Elmer's Glue, needles or toothpicks, black and colored fadeless paper, newsprint, irons, light matt board, masking tape, X-acto knives

Terms: folk art, ethnic, heritage, Wycinanki, gwiazda, leluje, kodry, symmetry, balance, emphasis

Places: Warsaw, Kurpie, and Lowicz, Poland

Week 1

- Introduce Wycinanki unit with visual examples, slides, overview of unit, goals, rubric (With piroges from the Stevens Point pastry shop?)
- If possible, bring in one or two area people of Polish descent, or from Poland to:
1-talk about their teen years/heritage, 2-show/demonstrate paper cutting
- Brainstorm Marshfield teen "folk groups", then your personal folk groups and heritage
Emphasize appreciation of everyday life! Info from family?
What can you "tell" about yourself through paper cutting?
What will you do to create a personal Wycinanki?
What principles of design must be considered and used? Review these.
- Begin thumbnail sketches you might incorporate
- Look at each type of Polish paper cutting along with discussion of one page handout (front-history of Polish heritage from Krupie & Lowicz area with small origination map, back-background of the large Polish settlement here in central Wisconsin)

Week 2

- Decide which of two paper cutting types will work best for personal design:
leluje (single color, single fold-symmetrical) or
kodra (horizontal -"story" pieced, using color)
- Create one small traditional Wycinanki following demonstrations of each step, learning terms as you create (using a choice of several traditional Polish designs)
- Finalize your personal Wycinanki design and transfer to cutting paper

Week 3

- Complete originally designed paper cutting and mount this
- Play CD/tape of traditional Polish folk music/instruments and one of contemporary American Polish music while creating paper cuts (both brought in by students-if possible)
- Journal unit success: visitor(s), personal heritage "research", personal project (grading rubric),