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**Erazm Jerzmanowski: gazowy baron i jego rola w amerykańskim przemyśle  
gazowniczym**

**Erazm Jerzmanowski. Gas baron and his role in the American gas industry**

SUMMARY

In Polish literature and the literature of the Polish community abroad Erazm Jerzmanowski is often presented as “the man who illuminated America”. Although this definition is slightly overstated in the interpretation of his role, the influence of his inventive ideas on the technology of lighting-gas production is worth noting. He introduced two significant improvements in this field and giving them his name ensured a permanent place for him in the history of gas industry. He successfully put into practice his inventive ideas.

The fact that he managed to bring to perfection a faulty and expensive technology of lighting-gas production in the circumstances of high competition, making it the basis of monopoly and earning high profits from it for many years, is evidence of his unusual sense of inventiveness and spirit of entrepreneurship. This way he gained a fortune for charity. He became actively involved in supporting Polish national organizations not only in America but also in Europe. Because this aspect of the career of the “gas baron”, as he was sometimes named in the American press of those days, has been relatively well recognized and described in Polish historiography, I concentrated on technical and business aspects of Jerzmanowski’s career.

The analysis of the character of his innovations in gas production and evaluation of their real significance, as well as recognition of the scope of his business undertakings, was made through studies of basic sources as patents, press releases and technical literature of those times, and is an original addendum to the state of knowledge about that prominent Polish inventor.

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