

SEARCHERS



A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS AND SUBSCRIBERS OF THE

POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF WESTERN NEW YORK
Dedicated to Polish American Family Research

"Preserving Our Past" since 1988

No. 10 March 1994

ALL IS NOT LOST

Dear Member:

Please excuse the lateness of this newsletter. After our December meeting, a situation developed that was to take priority. Our newly elected Board of Directors took action to examine and evaluate the future direction of your Society.

An internal investigation revealed that the following list was not completed, over a two-year period:

- Our October Seminar failed because of incompetence.
- Our Membership Roster was never updated.
- Our Surname Roster-Index was never updated.
- Our Library material/equipment was never cataloged.
- Our Correspondence was never answered.
- Our communication to other Societies' was diverted.
- We should have known something was amiss when our

Society members were promised information that never came about. Promises were never kept. Members were in a situation that was on the verge of discouragement.

With a new administration in force for 1994, we feel that a new direction has begun. Members suggestions will be accepted and completed.

A "NEW BEGINNING" is here and we extend a helping and informative hand to those who felt cheated, neglected, or cast aside. We hope that your interest in Genealogy will continue and expand.

New programs and ideas are already in force. You will notice that in this issue, committees are formed and waiting for your participation and attendance. You will also see that old enjoyable programs have returned,

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- Martin Nowak
- Ed Prabucki
- Nancy Polanski
- Bill Radlinski

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Buffalo, New York 14207

* * * * *

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 10formation of Committees for 1994
April 14Speaker; Henry Pogodzinski Lecture: The Poles in the Civil War
May 12Speaker: Andy Golebiowski Lecture: History of the Polish Eastside
June 9Show and Tell (Members display their accumulated materials)
July 146th Annual Family Picnic in the Park
August 11 Meeting date depends on Villa Maria school schedule
September 8 (Possible speaker) (Plans not formulated)
October 13Last minute preparation for our Annual Seminar at Villa Maria
November 10Nomination of Officers for 1995
December 8Election of Officers and Annual Christmas Party

* * * * *

SHOW & TELL

Several members have expressed an interest in exhibiting the articles they have accumulated while doing research. These contain books, photos, area histories, histories of Ellis Island, histories of the Statue of Liberty, photos of ancestral ships, recorded facts of association with well-known people.

COMMITTEES PICKED

PICNIC

Rita Prabucki
Francine Wilczak
Brian Stanish
Ted Myers
Robert Sobaszek
Lynn Mycek-Rzepecki
Janice Bartoszek
Antoinette Kasprzak
Helen Skarbek
Stephanie Gaiek

+ + + + +

LIBRARY

Laurie Bialoglowicz
Dorothy Cook
Dick Zielinski

+ + + + +

NEWSLETTER

Ted Smardz
Mike Drabik
Janice Bartoszek
Ed Prabucki
Dick Zielinski
Francine Wilczak
Amy Smardz

+ + + + +

NOMINATION

Ed Potera
Bob Sobaszek
Ed Prabucki

+ + + + +

FUND RAISERS

Helen Skarbek

VILLA FEST

Dr. Bob Pantera
Florence Witul
Ed Bialoglowicz
Laurie Bialoglowicz
Rita Prabucki
Ed Prabucki
Francine Wilczak
Antoinette Kasprzak
Lynn Mycek-Rzepecki

+ + + + +

SURNAME & ROSTER

Brian Stanish
Leo Majchrzak
Martin Nowak
Janice Bartoszek
Ted Smardz

+ + + + +

SEMINAR

Dick Zielinski
Mike Drabik
Ted Smardz
Janice Bartoszek
Lynn Mycek-Rzepecki
Dr. Bob Pantera

+ + + + +

ELECTION

Leo Majchrzak
Ed Prabucki

+ + + + +

CHRISTMAS

Brian Stanish
Francine Wilczak
Bob Sobaszek
Dorothy Cook
Frieda Petko
Janice Bartoszek
Dorothy Krantz
Stephanie Gaiek
Helen Skarbek
Antoinette Kasprzak

+ + + + +

ADVERTISING

Mike Drabik
Ted Smardz
Lynn Mycek-Rzepecki
Florence Witul
Dorothy Krantz

+ + + + +

TOURS

Ted Smardz
Lynn Mycek-Rzepecki
Frank Wilczak
Janice Bartoszek
Dorothy Krantz

+ + + + +

SCHOLARSHIP

Dorothy Cook
Janice Bartoszek
Dick Zielinski
Lynn Mycek-Rzepecki

+ + + + +

Helen Skarbek Janice Bartoszek

GET WELL

Ted Wolski
husband of member
Jenny Wolski

BIRTHDAYS

April

10 - Amy Smardz
22 - Lynn Mycek-Rzepecki
28 - Rita Prabucki
30 - Ted Smardz

May

23 - Antoinette Kasprzak

June

14 - Ed Prabucki
27 - Bob Sobaszek

HAPPY
50TH

Thomas and Louise Manning

GET WELL

Helen Skarbek

THANK YOU

Joan Rapsavage

Donated the book "Nazwiska Polaków" by Kazimierz Rymut. This is the most requested research material manuscript our members seek.

AWARDS

January Attendance won by
Al Kinbaum

February Attendance won by
Bob Sobaszek

Both members won our 3 ring binder:
"My Roots are in Poland"

"It pays to attend our meetings."

THEY CLOSED MY CHURCH

by Martin Nowak

Holy Mother of the Rosary Cathedral of the Polish National Catholic Church had stood on Sobieski Street in Buffalo, New York for almost a hundred years. In October, 1993, it was closed down.

This is the church where the funeral masses for all of my grandparents and great-grandparents were held; where my parents and grandparents were married; where my parents, myself and my siblings were baptized. My brother and I served as altarboys for eight years, assisting at hundreds of masses and dozens of weddings and funerals. I remember enjoying youth activities and church events at the parish hall.

Although I drifted away from the church as an adult, like so many people, I always considered Holy Mother of the Rosary to be "my church".

Unlike the eastside Roman Catholic parishes that also closed in 1993, Holy Mother of the Rosary will not be merged or consolidated into another PNCC parish. By their own vote, parishioners will move into a brand new cathedral complex in Lancaster. The parish, the clergy reminds us, is the parishioners and not the building. But that does not make the closing of the old church any less sad.

This church was supposed to be there forever. No matter what triumphs and tragedies in my life, the church was supposed to be there, a magnificent edifice, a beautiful, quiet place, essentially unchanged throughout the decades, a rock of ages. Now it's gone.

Who do we blame for the closing of our eastside parishes?

Do we blame ourselves, for moving out of the old neighborhoods in search of the American dream of a newer, more spacious home?

Do we blame the church hierarchy for leaving for economic reasons, leaving the remaining neighborhood parishioners with no place to worship, causing more people to leave the old neighborhoods?

Do we blame the city for letting the neighborhoods deteriorate?

Do we blame African-Americans, who are quickly supplanting Polish-Americans in the old neighborhoods, because they seem to introduce a different type of subculture?

Or do we buy the argument that crime in a neighborhood is the result of those who reside there?

Tough questions.

Those churches are a part of our history. Our roots go through them. We wanted them to survive but they didn't. In the end, it's just all so sad.

They closed my church.

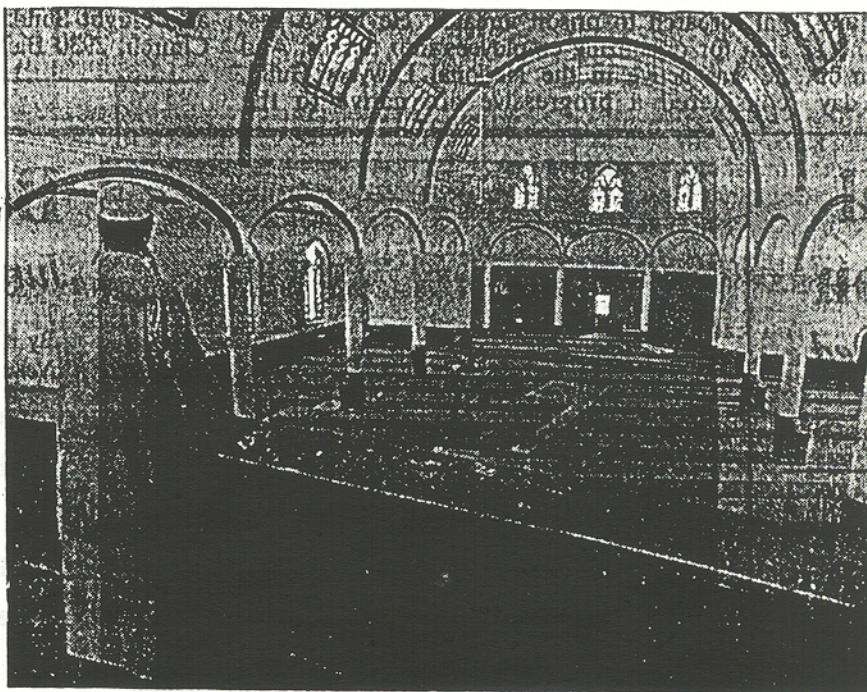
PNCC UPDATE

While in the process of printing this issue, the February 23rd article was found to be newsworthy not only because it mentions the Polish National Church, but also its historical content.

Genealogy not only contains names and dates but when one understands the background and area, a much larger picture appears.

It is tidbits of information like this that makes a "hobby" as ours more enjoyable and fun.

This is also our first attempt at reproducing a photo from a newspaper.



DENNIS C. ENSER/Bufalo News
Future mosque: Imam Ibrahim Memon shows off the interior of the former cathedral on Sobieski Street.

The ironic twist to Muslim mosque on Sobieski

I read with interest that an Islamic group is converting the former Polish National Cathedral into a Muslim mosque and educational center and hoping to turn a depressed area into a thriving community.

An interesting historical note is that the mosque will be located on Sobieski Street. Sobieski is named after the Polish King John III Sobieski, who in 1683 stopped the Muslim Turks at the battle of Vien-

na. The battle marked the end of Ottoman Turk expansion into Europe, and Sobieski was hailed as "The Savior of Vienna and Western European Civilization."

It is historically ironic but auspicious that the mosque is locating here.

ROBERT F. GORNY
History Teacher
Emerson High School
Buffalo

WHAT DO YOU SEE ?

The picture on the opposite page is from the Ted Smardz collection. Are you positive that you are seeing what you think you are seeing? By following the directions, I am sure you will be amazed at the outcome.

1. Look at the photo close up. (Normal reading distance.)
2. Now open the pages so that they will stand on your kitchen table.
3. Go a distance of about 15 to 20 feet away and take another look.
4. NOW WHAT DO YOU SEE???
5. Did'nt I tell you???



"All is Vanity"

S. Allan Gilbert

1993 COAL MINE TOUR

by Edward Prabucki

In our travels we seek to trace the footsteps of our forefathers seeking any signs of our true relatives, saddened over the tragic, sudden and youthful deaths of some that lurks long after their passing in the shadows of time.

On June 11th, 1993, we became enlightened more of America's grandeur as our trip thru Pennsylvania and New York covered all aspects of life from the historic first decade of America's Independence, in the 18th Century, to the demeaning life in the Coal Mines in the early 20th Century. All this was sandwiched with some entertainment at a Hotel Sheraton, with a dinner and stage show.

Our group embarked at 7:00 a.m. from 707 Cayuga Rd. and traveling thru the impressive scenic areas of New York, a trip well established for its effervescent display of history, but much more, its educational value. Rich Meyer, our Bluebird bus drivers' first stop was at the Spots Diner in Binghamton, New York, at noon, and there we enjoyed a sumptuous meal. Moving up Route 11-12, we had observed co-op vegetable gardens being cultivated, fertilized, weeded and pampered by individuals for the benefit of the community, a community kindness very seldom if at all seen by our group. Rolling thru the Pocono Mountains, we finally arrived at the Guest Hotel in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, at 4:00 p.m. to receive the red carpet treatment, a tantilizing moment we thought, it being the first for yours truly.

As at our 1992 Ellis Island Tour, we didn't catch our second wind, and we were escorted to a dinner and stage show at the local Hotel Sheraton. "Lily Langtry" was the star of the show but I considered the high point, the very clever and very dextrous Sterling Blaze and Max Claver who displayed magical illusions, I never had the pleasure to see. Our first day came to a pleasant end.

The following morning, our group were cheerfully treated to a typical breakfast of bacon and eggs in the Guest Hotel dinning room. Relaxed for a few minutes, and at 8:30 a.m. thru a congested three-lane expressway, we arrived at St. Peter's Church at 5th Street and Girard. Located here is Father Neumann's Shrine. A Fr. Jackson addressed us with a presentation of Father Neumann's short life that was shrouded by a devotion to humanity and engulfed by the miracle powers of this Saintly Priest. This followed with a guided tour of the grounds by Eugene McGarver, offering us more details of the miracle powers attributed to Fr. Neumann.

Next on our itinerary was the residence of Gen'l. Thaddeus Kosciuszko at the corner of 3rd and Pine Streets in Philadelphia and a guided tour by an articulate Ann Hermans, who left no stone unturned on the life of this well known Polish General. This man who gave so much for liberty, but much more for Poland during the abortive Insurrection in 1795, to free his countrymen from foreign domination.

In pursuit of more knowledge, Ann Hermans charmed us with a walking tour of the historic past, in downtown Philadelphia with the elaborate Federal Bank during the Alexander Hamilton era, the Elfreth Alley, an area of Block homes, that are presently priced at \$250,000.00. We resumed our trip to the home of Betsy Ross, a very fertile lady, that raised a dozen children by three husbands, (the first two died in wars, I believe). This patriotic lady is said to have designed and sewn the original flag of the then young United States.

As noon approached, we were directed to the Bourse Building, a shopping and dining area. After a brief meal, our walking tour continued to the Liberty Bell, displayed on 6th Street, along with an informative talk about this historic bell. The bell was cast in England and utilized during the American Revolution and up to 1836 when it was rendered inoperative by an extensive crack. During this tour, fellow member Eugenia Polaniec, observed and noted that the architects of that era, laid out the avenues and streets in a symmetrical way.

The high point of the walking tour, and many of our members will agree was the visit to the Polish Cultural Center at 308 Walnut St., as it offered us a prodigious display of the History of Poland, its cultures, its illustrious leaders over many centuries. Poland was proud and fortunate to have had renown citizens that sought no personal gains much less prestige such as Madame Curie; Frederick Chopin; Gen'l. Jozef Pilsudski; Ignace Moscicki; King Jan Sobieski; Lech Walesa and the beloved Pope John Paul II.

Our agenda continued us toward the Philadelphia Art Center and a guided tour by Stasia Marone. There we were conducted thru many rooms adorned with tapestries that defied all descriptions of beauty and splendor. Finally, we capped our informative day with a succulent meal at Elana's Restaurant at 414 2nd St. On stage, a Christian West, a professional actor, played out the life of Charles Poole of the Revolutionary War era. A day well planned but much more spent, we reserved that evening to ourselves and became very reconciled to relax and enjoy some T-V.

The following morning, more claims were made to our waking hours. After a short breakfast, we were escorted to nearby Valley Forge, Pa.

This American camp was crudely constructed and became the winter home to 12,000 farm recruits to be trained by Gen'l. Washington's drill staff, for volunteer duty. However, I found this to be very noteworthy, that it was at Valley Forge that Gen'l. Kazimierz Pulaski, with hundreds of Polish soldiers, encamped there. Where any of our ancestors in those Polish units? A list of names of these Poles were not kept. Is it fair to say that some of us could have ancestors encamped there?

Although our schedule made for allowances to arrive at Doylestown, Pa. on time for our Sunday Mass at 10:00a.m., unfortunately a wrong turn, a wrong road and we reached Our Lady of Czestochowa ten minutes late. There, as in other areas of interest, a guided tour resulted in an undercurrent of our strong faith to resurface and we were reluctant to leave that hallowed ground. In my walk of that area, I observed the initials Q.M.H.R. chiseled in concrete in one of the concrete blocks near the entrance to the church. To those not enlightened to these initials, it was the church of my family, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, now permanently closed due to the lack of parishioners on the Upper East Side of Buffalo.

Our historic trip continued with a stop at the Lackawanna Coal Mines in Scranton, Pa. We became aware of the shortcomings of the mine owners. Prior to this, my opinion of the owners and operators, once infallible, now became very fallible. Our guide, Joe Horvath, in his slow deliberate way, made us cognizant, in the darkness of the Anthracite Coal beds, 1350 feet below the surface, This industry had hired 10 to 16 year olds, to work 12 hour days, using dynamite to loosen the coal deposits, risking their lives from cave-ins, methane gas, paid 5¢ a ton that they averaged removing 20 tons a day. If the father of a family was killed in the mines, there was no compensation to the surviving members. However, if the family had a son, the coal mine operators, from the goodness of their hearts, gave preference to that family and allowed the son to replace the deceased father. If these were the benefits of that profession, I rather not hear of the disadvantages of it. Incidentally, many of the miners were of Polish and Irish extraction.

After leaving this shameful, devitalizing, incomprehensible and unstimulating area, our group was rewarded with a more pleasant scenerio with a dinner at O'Brien's Restaurant in Waverly, New York. We sat with loquacious Laurel Keough, Dorothy Krantz, and Alice and Ray Prabucki. In a typical, informative and detailed dialogue, we reminisced over our families past and hopefully for better tomorrows for our descendants.

Upon the end of this memorable trip, I must say, the educational value into the historic past of my Polish ancestors, will be unforgettable.

THE GENEALOGY PUZZLE

by Nancy Polanski

It's like a wonderful, huge jigsaw puzzle.

Sometimes the pieces fit together and sometimes they don't.

Many of the pieces are just out of reach.

Some pieces are scattered and you have to look under things or in another room for them.

Some were destroyed, or lost forever, causing a nagging "hole" in the picture.

Sometimes you'll find two or three pieces that fit together separately, but you can't find where they connect to the main puzzle.

Sometimes a piece looks like it should fit, you turn it every which way and try to squeeze it into place, but it just won't fit and then you're disappointed.

But you keep it close-by on the side because it's the right size and color and maybe one or two more pieces need to fall into place before it will finally fit.

If your lucky, you may find someone else who likes to do jigsaw puzzles and wants to work on yours with you. Then it goes much faster.

And if your really lucky, someone may have been working on it and left a lot of pieces stuck together in the box.

It may take a long time before you start to see some progress, but eventually you stand back and look at the picture you're creating and you feel proud of your accomplishment.

* * * * *

NOTICE

WHO ? YOU
WHAT ? A DAY TRIP
WHERE ? WESTERN NEW YORK
WHEN ? AUGUST 1994
WHY ? MYSTERY TRIP
WELCOME : SIGN UP NOW



ON TOUR

COMMITTEE:

Ted Smardz Lynn Mycek-Rzepecki Frank Wilczak Janice Bartoszek
Dorothy Krantz

HISTORY OF POLISH PARISH IN SALAMANCA, N.Y. IS PUBLISHED

A history of the Holy Cross Roman Catholic Parish, Salamanca, N.Y. was recently published by William A. Radlinski and Dean G. Rojek, former Salamancans now living in Herndon, Va. and Athens, Ga. respectively. Two years in preparation, the book covers the events leading up to the formation of the "Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church Society of Salamanca, New York" on June 28, 1892 by Polish immigrants and documents major developments in the history of the parish from its beginning to the present time.

The Bishop of Buffalo, Most Rev. Edward D. Head, said this about the people chronicled in the book after reviewing a draft:

"The fruits of the labor of these early parishioners is seen not only in the bricks and mortar of the parish church but also in the countless number of their children, grandchildren, and, now, great-grandchildren who take pride in having worshiped in Holy Cross Church or attended Holy Cross School."

Salamanca Historian Joan Formica said the following in her Foreword :

"The Polish people who founded the parish also played an important role in establishing Salamanca. They had a work ethic and moral principles that were critical to the healthy growth of our city..."

Included in the history are biographies of each of the 14 pastors of Holy Cross, accounts of the parochial school and parish societies, a record of the two Catholic cemeteries in the city and the story of the Holy Cross Athletic Club.

The history was written and published by Radlinski and Rojek as a contribution to the parish and the community. It was printed by the University of Georgia and is available free but a \$3.00 cost for mailing is required. Requests for copies should be sent to Dr. Dean G. Rojek, Dept. of Sociology, University of Georgia, Athens, Ga. 30602-1611.

[News release issued January 1994. For more information contact William A. Radlinski, 2712 Calkins Road, Herndon, Va. 22071-2030 or call (703) 860-4977.]

* * * * *

THANK YOU BILL

Our Society Library has not only expanded but enriched with the recent donation by member Bill Radlinski.

This is a well researched publication that will be helpful to genealogist doing research in parishes with Polish ancestries in Western New York.

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