



SEARCHERS



DEDICATED TO POLISH AMERICAN FAMILY RESEARCH.

"Preserving Our Past" Since 1988

No. 13, Summer 1995

A Trip To The Buffalo Historical Museum

By Edward Prabucki

History is a very powerful and revealing research instrument, but family history is much more powerful and revealing to the needs of researchers, thus I did not need any convincing to do some historical research of my own on the elaborate and new display in the halls of Buffalo's Historical Museum.

There were enlarged photos, memorabilia, many facts and figures so infallible, so informative of life at the turn of this century, that I poured over all photos and enjoyed all particulars, not one empty of meaning, and needless to say became lost in my thoughts. I had then decided to discard the future, escape from the present and travel through the past. Utilizing my imagination, I thought of what passed in our ancestors' minds as they arrived in a country so foreign to their beliefs. There is no doubt though, that these ancestors of ours, upon arriving in the U.S., felt compelled to construct new neighborhoods similar to those of their Polish youth. Afterwards I realized there were other abstractions to compel me to look through other areas of this museum.

At another photo of the arrival of immigrants in the early 1900's, I stood there immovable and rigid, turning back time and seeing my grandparents of humble beginnings leaving Europe to avoid the rivalries, intrigue and unemployment, but most of all the wars that they had the foresight to see. Temporarily, upon their arrival, they lived in a clairvoyance of optimism, aware that human life was respected in the United States far above of what was practiced in

Europe. Thus, their inconceivable desire to accept the unknowns, deaf to the pleas of those they left behind and so determined to build a new future, has inspired me to be engaged most deeply in their personal history.

It was difficult for them to leave the land of their birth, their holy ground in Poland, but to be ruled by impudent if not oppressive leaders was not to their liking, as I later became aware that they were under the leadership of foreign governments. Fortunately in the decade my grandparents arrived here, there was a cascade of industrial employment and many business opportunities, so lacking in Europe. That undoubtedly pleased them, though they were unaware and cared less that they were, the fuel for the growth of America.

As I continued to move deliberately through these halls, I was certain not everything to them was peaches and cream, as they had not thought of the consequences of the many adversities they faced, of the pitfalls of unwanted optimism, that I became aware of and to learn of it in my later life. As I went on to pour over other photos, revelations became nostalgic, neighborhoods began to talk and the hardships they faced were more emotional. Diseases and shortcomings are part of everyday life, and I saw my ancestors up to their necks preparing for personal and daily survival. Unfortunately they were much less knowledgeable on medical procedures in adversities. Doctors were not considered let alone available



Josephine Petyk upon arrival in New York from Lupkowice Poland in 1908.

Continued On Page 3

Due to the large amount of mail received, please take note when writing us for assistance:

The PGSWNY will answer ONLY correspondence that includes a self addressed, stamped reply envelope. All correspondence should be directed to:
POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF WESTERN NEW YORK, 299 Barnard Street, Buffalo, New York 14206.

If you wish to contact one of our committee's, please write the committee name on the front of the envelope.

Thank you.

For submission to the Searchers, deadlines are as follows:

Summer Edition- April 15 for June mailing;

Winter Edition- October 15 for December mailing

For submission to the Bulletin: Deadlines are February 15 for March mailing and August 15 for September mailing.

Membership Dues... A reminder from the Treasurer:

Dues are \$12.00 a year. This entitles you to 2 editions of the Searchers and 2 Bulletin updates. New members receive an information pkg. to help them get started. Annual membership dues are to be received in January. Thereafter, your expiration date will be listed on the upper right hand corner of the mailing label. Please refer to this date when paying dues the following year. Please notify us of any change of address.

Officers:

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Mike Drabik

Replies for member & non-member inquiries/
Advertising to media for special events

Bookstore

Frieda Petko

All purchases must be made at meetings,
accepting ideas for items to be sold

Laurel Keough

Helen Skarbek

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Brian Stanish

Intercommittee use only

Guest Speakers

Joan Serafini

Submission of names for guest speakers

Surname Index

Leo Majchrzak

To submit new membership listing in our index,
update of current membership surname index

Jim Glowney

New Membership

Brian Stanish

Applications/New membership packets to
help get started

Attendance/Roster

Leo Majchrzak

Master lists/labels, address changes

Jim Glowney

Library

Laurie Bialoglowicz

Donations to library and general info on holdings,
welcome ideas for books and reference materials
needed for purchase in our library

Dorthy Cook

Richard Zielinski

Travel/Tours

Dorthy Krantz

Trip info, reservations and deposits, welcome ideas for
travel and local tours.

Lynn Rzepecki

Picnic

Rita Prabucki

Sign up list/organization of our annual picnic

Ted Myers

Searchers/Bulletin Update

Mike Drabik

Deadline for Searchers: April 15 & October 15

Lynn Rzepecki

Deadline for Bulletin: February 15 & August 15

Laurie Bialoglowicz

Also accepting member and non-member surnames for
publication; Letters to the Editor

William Radlinski

Archives

Richard Zielinski

PGSWNY - photos, letters, etc. to be saved in the name
of the society

Christmas

Helen Skarbek

Sign up list/organization of annual Christmas party

Villa Lawn Fete

Florence Witul

Sign up list/organization of our participation in this
annual event

NYSCOGO

Delegate, Jim Lyons

PGSWNY Rep. to the New York State Council of
Genealogical Organizations

Awards

Edward Prabucki

Submit names for annual awards to membership for
outstanding participation. Deadline for submission
September 01.

Ted Smardz

Registrar Tapes

Laurel Keough

Accepting Tops register tapes for society

Fund Raising

Edward Bialoglowicz

Monetary donations, gifts to and events for extra
funding of the society

Oct. Workshop

Mike Drabik

Sign up list/organization of committees of this annual
event. All committees are encouraged to volunteer to
participate. Initial meetings to take place in March.

MEETING REMINDER:

The PGSWNY meets the 2nd Thursday of each month in the Villa Maria College cafeteria, 240 Pine Ridge Rd., Cheektowaga, at 7:00 p.m.

Board of Directors Note:

Due to the fact that our last SEARCHERS had already been printed, we were unable to respond, in that edition, to a copy letter sent to the board of directors of the PGSWNY. The letter was in protest to allegations made by one member in regard to another, that were inadvertently printed in an earlier issue of the SEARCHERS. A personal letter of apology and explanation was sent by the Board on January 9th of this year.

The POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF WNY was founded to promote and popularize the study and research of Polish family history and to bring together those individuals who have this common interest. We'd like to state that the Society is open to everyone and that we've taken steps to ensure that the above situation will never again occur.

We especially regret this disagreement since both individuals were leaders, gave a great deal of their time to the organization and made numerous positive contributions to this Society.

ZGODA.

MEMBERSHIP NOTICE

**DUE TO THE RISING COSTS OF
POSTAGE AND PRODUCTION OF OUR
NEWSLETTERS, IT WAS AGREED
UPON BY SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP AT
THE MARCH 1995 GENERAL MEETING
THAT THERE WILL BE AN INCREASE
IN DUES.**

**THIS INCREASE WILL TAKE PLACE
STARTING IN JANUARY 1996.
U.S.A. MEMBERSHIP WILL BE \$15.00
AND CANADA / OVERSEAS WILL BE
\$18.00 ANNUALLY.**

Museum

Continued from page 1

to everyone. Due to these shortcomings, when my grandparents' 13 year old son, Jan, received a bloody nose in a playground accident, home remedies to stop bleeding did not help for two days, and on the third day he died. (Knowledge of old medical procedures was not sufficient and necessity for new ones, the mother of all things, should have been utilized there, but tragedy is just that, a shameful tragedy.) Continued survival depended on absorbing this tragedy, and many more to come, so my grandparents continued to endure the unendurable.

Leaving behind this angelic sadness of theirs, I moved through the halls and fixed my sights on photos from the decade of 1910, the joys and the lamentations of my parents and their relatives. My Uncle, Franciszek, arrived in 1913, to seek the unknown but hopefully a more promising future and avoid Europe's volatile problems. Only with hindsight, I see he faced new ones. WWI arrived, he became emotionally involved and decided to enlist in the Polish Blue Army out of the United States, trained in Canada, fought in France, but lost forevermore to the winds of that war.

However, life went on in that decade, as wedding receptions were held in living rooms void of furniture which was stacked up in wood sheds. The funerals also originated from the living rooms. In the photos of the 1930's, I see myself entering every home in the neighborhood with a funeral wreath on its porch, for as a youth, a life of lamentation never absorbed me as I assumed death was part of life.

As I observed the photos of WWII in another hall, I decided to turn back pages the of my mind and relive the fading years of my grandparents. They were very productive and devoted ones. However during the War my grandfather became critically ill, surgery did not help, house payments were lacking, and finally the bank foreclosed on their property. My parents asked themselves, what type of humans, let alone intelligent ones, would force that on them. Needless to say, my grandparents new beginnings of the 1900's vanished forevermore.

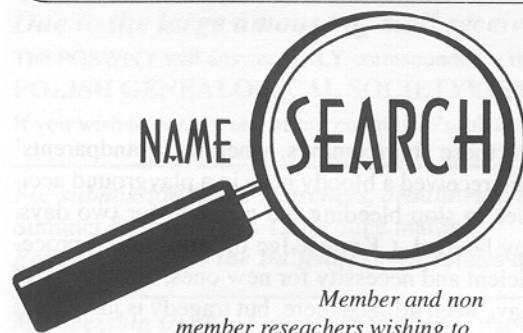
That solemn day of many solemn days, my grandmother dispersed her furniture, to live with her son and yet she never lost her adoration for life. I visited her often and she continued to bake my favorite apple pie. My stomach's desire for this pie made me aware of the passage of time and my excuse to see her. Surely in this I placed a special quality to life, for even the humble, lonely and the unpretentious respond to life's challenges as my grandmother did.

Life to my grandparents, as well as my parents, was very meaningful to them. They attended a daily morning mass at Transfiguration up to the their final days on earth. Upon leaving the last hall in the Buffalo Historical Building, I left the past and returned to the present. I became aware that in my ancestors' dedication, their love of life, and their resolution to be proud citizens of their adopted country, had now become the cornerstone of my life.

OCTOBER IS "POLISH HERITAGE MONTH"

NAME

SEARCH



Member and non member researchers wishing to submit surnames for this page are asked to send submissions to the Searchers Committee.

To submit listings for publication, please send your name and address, the surnames your researching and location if known.

Please keep limit to- six surnames of research. Non members please include \$3.00

Fred and Irene Ciszek
6041 Coholan St., Niagara Falls, Ont., Canada, L2J 1K7

| Researching Surnames | Location |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Konig | Prussia |
| Ciszek | Galicja Swilcza |
| Pyrzcz | Galicja Swilcza |
| Kubicz | Galicja Swilcza |
| Bogdanowicz | Prussia Wroclaw |
| Gawlik | Russian Poland |

Dorothy Cook
15 Cecil St., Buffalo, N.Y. 14216

| Researching Surnames | Location |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Bursztyn | Galicja Ropczyce |
| Burstyn | Galicja Ropczyce |
| Tokarska | Galicja Ropczyce |
| Wieczorek | Prussia Szcztyniki |
| Drzewiecka | |
| Skiba | Prussia Szcztyniki |
| Skibinski | Prussia Szcztyniki |

Albert Wdzieczny Davis
1016 Fern Ave., Glendora, N.J. 08029

| Researching Surnames | Location |
|----------------------|----------|
| Wdzieczny | Poznan |
| Golebiewski | |
| Golembiewski | |
| Malinowski | Jarocin |

Jean Deregowski Miller
30 Fitch St., Churchville, N.Y. 14428

| Researching Surnames | Location |
|----------------------|--------------|
| Deregowski | Gross Bislaw |
| Wrobel | |
| Fila | Tarnobrzeg |
| Sneig | Tarnobrzeg |
| Czerepak | Tarnobrzeg |

Catherine C. Olson
135 Taylor Run Rd., Monongahela, PA., 15063

| Researching | Birth |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| Olszewski, Stanislaw | 1882 |
| Matuzab, Constance | 1894 |
| Olszewski, Frank | 1884 |
| Makovich, Helena | 1895 |
| Sklarskowski, Veronica | Elmira, N.Y. |
| Olszewski-Kosarski, Theodora | |

MAILBOX

Dear Editor,

The last publication was great, and what a close-to-me article on Batavia, since that is where my Dad, Walter Postula was born in 1905. Batavia had a business, the "Batavia and New York Woodworking Company" that made the woodworks for the many hotels and buildings in the New York City area. I would like to know if someone has information on where the employment records might be located after the company went bankrupt.

Also, during a trip to WNY this past summer, I was able to locate the marriage record of my Grandfather, Jakub Postula at St. Barbara's in Lackawanna. Where else can I look ???

ROBERT POSTULA
14197 BANGOR DRIVE
STERLING HEIGHTS, MICHIGAN 48313-5407

Thank-You a nice "SEARCHERS" this past time!

ANNA BRUSKI ZEHNER
LOCKPORT, NEW YORK

We are delighted with the new "SEARCHERS" and congratulate the Society for its publication. We are unable to take in Ellis Island this time. When you have the Washington, D.C. trip planned, please advise us. Hope to see all of you soon.

FRED AND IRENE CISZEK
NIA. FALLS, ONTARIO

For the last three years I have been gathering info on the men in Haller's Blue Army. I am particularly interested in the first twelve men who volunteered from NEST 208 in Derby, CT, leaving Bridgeport for Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario on October 15, 1917. Looking for information on the service of 2 men, Jan Kaleta and Jan Mycek of Derby, CT, Their service in Canada, France and Poland. Any information would help in finishing this story of which people today don't know existed.

RICHARD KALETA
3333 SCENIC TERRACE
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38128

Addresses of Interest

PGSWNY provides the following information "as received" without guarantees.

To search Social Security records of deceased relatives, for a fee, contact:

Office of Public Inquiry, 6401 Security Blvd., Baltimore, MD 21235

To check employment records of Railroad men after 1936, contact:

Railroad Retirement Board, 844 Rush St., Chicago, IL 60611

To mail donations of published genealogy to Library of Congress, contact:

Exchange and Gift Division, Washington, DC 20540_4260 (Phone: 202-707-9485) or
Local History & Genealogy Collection Div., Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20540-5554 (Phone: 202-707-5537)

New Polish Genealogical Societies:

Polish Genealogical Society of New Zealand

16 Nugent St., New Plymouth 4601, New Zealand

Polish Genealogical Society of Australia

P.O. Box 2530, Bunaberg, Queensland 4670, Australia

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POTPOURRI

WORKSHOPS & SEMINARS

P.G.S.W.N.Y.

Our annual workshop will take place October 14th, 1995 at Villa Maria College. Please see insert flyer inside this edition of the *Searchers* for more information.

Eastman House and R.I.T., August 19-24

Series of lectures and workshops will be held at the George Eastman House International Museum of Photography on "Preserving Photographs in a Digital World". For more details, phone 1-800-724-2536.

FEFHS

Federation of Eastern European Family History Societies is holding a convention August 4-5, 1995, at the Holiday Inn, Middlebury Heights, Cleveland, Ohio. Topics include: Resources in Germany, Eastern Europe, Polish, Czechoslovakian, and Slovak Genealogy. Contact Ed Brandt, 13-27th Ave., S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55414-3101.

Lithuanian American Genealogical Society

The First joint conference cosponsored by the Polish Genealogical Society of America and the Lithuanian American Genealogy Society will cohost a fall conference on October 27 and 28, 1995, at the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture, 6500 South Pulaski Road, Chicago, Illinois 60629. Such topics as the Cultures of Poland and Lithuania, History of the Commonwealth from 1569 to 1795, Life and Times of the Era, Map Changes, plus other topics of interest, will be featured. For details, write or call Dr. Paul Valasek, 2643 West 51st Street, Chicago, IL 60632. Phone 312-776-5551 or Mr. Robert Balzekas, 4012 South Archer Avenue, Chicago, IL 60632. Phone 312-847-1515.

NYSCOGO

The fall conference of NYSCOGO will be held in Dunkirk, NY. October 13th-15th. For further information, please contact our delegate, Jim Lyons at (716-366-6460).

EVENTS

Villa Maria Lawn Fete July 14th-16th

Please remember to help out at this year's Villa Maria Event. The Felician Sisters let us use their facility "gratis". This is our way to say "thank you"! If you would like to sign up to work our booth, please contact Florence Witul.

PGSWNY Picnic

Will be held on July 20, starting at 5 p.m., at the Cheektowaga Town Park, Shelter No. 6. All members and their immediate families are invited to attend. For more information, please contact Rita Prabucki or Ted Myers.

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The Buffalo and Erie County Public Library

The genealogy and local history collection consists of approximately 30,500 volumes in the related subject fields of local history (25,000 volumes) and genealogy (5,500 volumes). The genealogical collection is composed largely of American family history and biography; publications of genealogical and patriotic societies; English parish records and visitations; books on royalty, the peerage, baronetage, and knighthood; and muster and pension rolls. There is an extensive series of newspaper genealogy columns covering a 50-year period; also books on the origin and meaning of geographical and personal names.

In the related area of local history, each of the 50 states and nearby Canadian provinces is represented by a selection of town and county histories, maps, atlases, gazetteers, guide books, and publications and journals of historical societies, together with state archives, censuses and, vital records in some instances. The collection of New England area local histories is especially strong, as is the Niagara Frontier portion, which is augmented by the *Buffalo File*, a card index to facts and information concerning the local community and the *Local History File*, which indexes the local newspapers through 1982. The *Western New York Index* continues the indexing from 1893 on.

Because of the value and heavy use of the genealogy and local history collections, the materials must be used within the library and are not available for loan or interloan.

Many of the materials are available in the open stacks of the Special Collections Department; the additional items may be requested from the closed stacks via the Special Collections Service Desk, using call slips. A guide is arranged by type of material and provides call numbers for the individual works cited.

100 YEARS of FAITH & SERVICE

by Michael Drabik

The Polish immigrant has traditionally been known for his values, as stated in the old maxim, "Bog, Honor i Ojczyzna"—"God, Honor and Country". From such meager beginnings, this immigrant group built an enormous and most impressive parochial system, which also included schools, hospitals, orphanages, and seminaries, across the country. It was this same group that fought so vigorously for equal representation in the hierarchy of the American Catholic Church "rownouprawienie".

By the 1890's, there were about 175 Roman Catholic parishes founded for and by Poles in the United States. The decade of the 90's proved to be a very trying period for the growing Polish community throughout the country. One by one, episodes of church-related friction began occurring, usually stemming from personality clashes and/or the policy of trusteeism. This policy was completely foreign to all new immigrants. In the old country, most parish churches were built by wealthy sponsors or noble families for the use of the local inhabitants. In America, the poor immigrants built their own churches, only to find that, if they wanted the bishop to assign them a priest, the property had to be turned over to the Diocesan Ordinary. This was something strange and difficult to understand. In Buffalo, as early as 1884, there was a growing concern to form another parish to serve the rapidly expanding Polish community headed by Ks. Jan Pitass of St. Stanislaus. The authoritative Pitass was uncompromising on the idea of the breaking up of his parish over which he ruled supreme. Only after direct Vatican approval was sought, was a daughter parish, St. Adalbert's, allowed to be created from the Pitass empire.

The early years of St. Adalbert's were certainly difficult, not only financially but also spiritually. Pitass had just completed building his new stone church with the support of his people, and now those who chose to join the new parish were required to, again, build a church. Pastors were appointed, but none served more than two to three years, mainly due to the Pitass pressure and his influence with the Ordinary.

At the beginning of 1895, Bishop Ryan appointed a young, newly ordained priest as pastor to St. Adalbert's, Ks. Tomasz Flaczek, a relative of Pitass's. Flaczek was widely unacceptable to the new parish community and, in defense, a protest began. It became so heated that the new pastor was forced to seek refuge at St. Stanislaus. The police were called on several occasions to restore order. This action resulted in the Bishop closing the church, since it was his property. The second pastor of the parish, Ks. Marcin Mozejewski, in accordance to church policy, deeded the property to the Bishop Ordinary.

Outraged and confused by what had happened, a group of parishioners organized their own parish a block away and sought the spiritual guidance of the Rev. Franciszek Kolaszewski of Cleveland, who understood their plight. It was decided that they invite their former pastor and founder, Ks. Antoni Klawitter, to lead their new parish community. This break with the Roman Catholic Church caused much strife in Polonia. In some cases, families were divided by this religious break. Neighbors became enemies, and the "independents" were scorned and hailed with rocks or buckets of water by their fellow Christian brothers and sisters.

In August 1885, Ks. Klawitter arrived to take charge of the new Holy Mother of the Rosary parish. His arrival was met with much fanfare, as was described in the August 31 issue of the "Buffalo Commercial Advertiser". Due to the disagreements Klawitter had with his new flock, his stay was less than a year. News of an "independent" priest in Freeland, Pa., reached the parish, and Ks. Stefan Kaminski was invited to administer to the Buffalo parish.

Under the leadership of the stout and powerful Kaminski, the parish expanded twice, and his services and assistance were sought by other communities experiencing similar situations. To combat the constant criticism against him and his church, he began his own publication, "Warta". Monuments to his leadership remain in the magnificent red Medina sandstone cathedral on Sobieski Street and the cemetery in Cheektowaga, N.Y. At a meeting of independent parishes stretching to Massachusetts, which was held in Buffalo, Kaminski was elected bishop. He was later consecrated by Archbishop Vilatte in 1898. That same year, by papal decree, Kaminski was excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church. This decree was read in every Catholic church of the Diocese of Buffalo. After 15 long and tiring years of leadership at the Holy Mother of the Rosary parish, Kaminski died in 1915 and was buried in the cemetery he opened in 1896.

With the demise of Bishop Kaminski, the parish began to lose the enthusiasm it once had. His successor, Ks. Ludwik Zakrzewski, through incompetence and neglect of duties, caused a rift in the congregation. Within a year, the parish defaulted on the mortgage and private note holders were calling for payment. In August of 1913, in a foreclosure sale, the beautiful cathedral was sold for \$80,000 to an agent for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Buffalo. On August 28, with a court order, the diocese attempted to take possession of the property. With a proceeding pending, the diocese was unable to take control until September 17, at which time a Roman Catholic mass was celebrated in the independents' cathedral.

The congregation, deprived of their house of worship, found accommodations at a German society's meeting hall on Genesee Street for the next 22 months. The faithful members sought out help in their dilemma. They invited the Rev. Walenty Gawrychowski of Rochester, N. Y., to administer their parish community. At a congregational meeting held in January 1914, they voted to join the Polish National Catholic Church movement of Scranton, Pa, headed by Ks. Franciszek Hodur. Locally, Bishop Walker, of the Episcopal Diocese of Western New York, hearing of the injustice to the Polish people, came to their aid. With the assistance of Attorney Henry Adsit Bull and others, they came up with a plan to guarantee funds needed to regain control of the cathedral property. Mr. Bull, a known attorney, represented the independents in the continued court actions, and on April of 1915, the case was heard by the New York State Court of Appeals. In July of that year, the court made public its unanimous decision to return the property to the congregation and also found the Diocese of Buffalo responsible for rent payment for occupying the facility for almost two years. In 1916, Ks. Franciszek Hodur, spiritual leader of the movement, came to Buffalo to meet his new flock and to preside over a penitential service.

- To be continued -

BOOK REVIEW

Book Review
by Martin S. Nowak

The Mountain of Names: A History of the Family

By Alex Shoumatoff

SIMON AND SCHUSTER, NEW YORK 1985

Far from being just a history of the family, Alex Shoumatoff also explores the history, origins and purposes of genealogy, and does so in a pleasantly readable manner.

The author observes that our current fascination with genealogy is not unusual, as it seems that there are periodic waves of such interest. The last one in the United States was in the nineteenth century. Interest tends to peak in times of great social mobility, either from one class to another, or one place to another, and in the grandchildren of immigrants.

Mr. Shoumatoff begins his book with the history of and variations among families in societies throughout the world. Genealogy began in society as a means of justifying and perpetuating status and wealth. Its origins go back about 10,000 years, when man began to acquire wealth and power, as an agricultural society started to replace that of hunter-gatherers.

The privileged classes of Egypt became interested in their ancestry before the year 2,000 B.C., and ancestor worship began in China long before the time of Christ, where the earliest surviving genealogical record dates from 770 B.C.

In the author's view, the age of modern record keeping began in 1538, when Henry VIII's Vicar General ordered clergymen in Britain to keep records of baptisms, weddings and burials in their parishes. By the end of the century most European countries had adopted the practice.

The Europeans who can claim the farthest descent are the Bagatrids, a royal family of Caucasian Georgians, who can reliably trace their ancestry back to Mithridates VI of Egypt (ca. 120 B.C.). In Western Europe, the farthest descent is that of the O'Neills of Ulster, Ireland, traceable from 74 A.D.

The author has filled this book with facts, including such gems as:

- Three-quarters of American college students cannot name all four of their grandparents
- The Chinese, who number well over a billion, have only about 500 different surnames
- In 1819 it was reported that a ruler in Punjab, India could trace his lineage back 450 generations, a period that would exceed 10,000 years
- Prince Charles of Britain is related to King Edward III (ca.1300) through 1,995 different lines.
- At least 69 billion people have lived since the appearance of man on Earth, but if you go back only to 800 A.D., you will have, in theory, a total of about 260 trillion ancestors on your family tree.

This last fact seems to not make sense until you consider the frequency of intermarriage between cousins. The closer and smaller a group, the greater the frequency of intermarriage. Close tribal groups or clans often require marriage within the group, thereby insuring close-cousin marriages, and such groups were common in the past.

Each time cousins marry, duplication occurs in their family trees and the farther back one goes, the greater the rate of duplication. Everyone's family tree eventually begins to narrow, till it reaches the proverbial Adam and Eve. Thus, a complete family tree would be in the shape of a diamond. It is estimated that if the family trees of all humans were merged into one gigantic tree we would go back about 50 generations. Making us all, at the very least, 50th cousins to one another. The last chapter of this book takes us on a visit to the Mormons' mountain cave in Utah. About seven billion names are believed to have been recorded by man. Of these, the Mormons have collected and stored there, about one and a half billion.

Mr. Shoumatoff's work is easily understandable, entertaining and highly interesting to anyone searching for his or her roots. If you're taking a break from your research, this book is well worth a slight detour.

It is available at the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library

Literary Lites

Dear Members:

The following articles were written to officially inaugurate this particular page of the *Searchers*. We feel there are hidden literary talents among our members. Any original short story, poem, anecdote (intriguing, comical, or even a bit tragic) in reference to general or Polish genealogy, Poland, Buffalo's Polonia or a Polish or part Polish ancestor will be accepted for this page. Perhaps some members can recall an unexpected encounter with a stranger that proved to be a bonanza for them in their family history research. Did you have an ancestor who started a small business, operated a market stall, was an early W.N.Y. doctor, dentist, pharmacist, midwife, herbal healer, or steel worker? Did an older relative pass on to you an unusual, or frightening, experience he/she had as a "greenhorn"? Their stories, like those of Zabriskie, Kosciuszko, and Sanduski, are a significant part of Polish American History. We'd enjoy hearing them. Please submit articles to the *Searchers* committee, either by mail or at one of our meetings. If you've never written anything before, but always had that urge, give it a try. You may be pleasantly surprised, and we'll love you for it!

MY MEMORIES

By Frieda Petko

My mother, Maryanna Michalec felt, at age fourteen, that by remaining in the little village of Alexandrow, Poland, life would pass her by. Therefore, she constantly pleaded with her father to take her to Germany or America where opportunities for employment were more favorable.

One day, Pawel Michalec (my grandfather and Maryanna's father), was discussing this situation with a Jewish neighbor who thought it was an excellent idea to emigrate and encouraged him to do so. He told him, "Pawel, go. Take your daughter and leave Poland. There are many more opportunities in America, and who knows, you may even like it there."

When my grandfather told his neighbor that he had no money for the trip, this generous villager said to him, "Pawel, I'll loan you the money. You can pay me back whenever you are able."

So, with his neighbor's zlotys in his pocket and his wife's blessing (my grandmother was staying in Poland with the younger children), Pawel and daughter Maryanna boarded the steamer for America.

Prior to their leaving, they still had to overcome one more obstacle. The only person they knew in the United States was Pawel's brother. For some reason, at that time, this relationship was not considered close enough for the uncle to be Maryanna's sponsor, so the brothers assumed each other's identities. Pawel had to pretend to the authorities that he was Maryanna's uncle, and the uncle in America, had to pass as her father.

Pawel's first job in America was in an iron smelting

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

SEARCHING FOR JULIA

By George Bryjak

Some of my earliest and most vivid childhood memories are of my father periodically walking out of the bedroom with a small, tattered photo in his hand. "This is my mother," he would say with the look of pain that can only be experienced by someone who never really had known a parent.

The photo revealed a very attractive woman in her late teens or early 20's wearing a high-collared, ruffled blouse and staring straight ahead with the serious expression that was the hallmark of so many pictures of the era. My grandmother, or babicka (pronounced "ba-beech-ka"), was born in 1876 in Slovakia and died 29 years later in the small coal-mining community of Bitumen, PA. She left a husband, a three-year-old daughter, and a two-year-old son—my father.

Unable to work in the mines while caring for two young children, Jozef Bryjak, her husband, who was from a small village near Zakopane, Poland, decided to put his children in a Catholic orphanage in not-too-distant Buffalo. He died in 1941, five years before I was born.

Like so many other people, I often wondered about my grandparents—where they were from originally and what had prompted them to undertake the long, arduous journey to America while the majority of their friends and relatives had elected to remain in their homeland.

But starting my personal "roots" project never really got off the ground, superseded by the problems and the pleasures of everyday life. Then, in the summer of 1992, when a vacation house-swapping arrangement with friends in France fell through, a magazine advertisement for a backpacking trip to Poland and Czechoslovakia caught my eye.

The hiking in the Tatra Mountains on both sides of the border proved to be magnificent, but what really excited me was being in the land of my ancestors. Although I did not have the opportunity to gather information about my grandparents at that time, I eagerly pursued the task upon returning to California.

Since the only knowledge I had about my grandmother was her name, dates of

birth and arrival in the United States (census material), as well as the date of her marriage and the names of her parents (marriage certificate). Short of hiring a professional genealogist, I did not know what to do next.

As luck would have it, through the Family History Center of the Mormon Church in San Diego, I contacted a local man who had the phone directories for all of Slovakia. For a nominal fee, he sent me a list of every Novota (all 40 of them) in these books. I had a letter of inquiry with all the pertinent information translated into Slovak and sent a copy to every name on the list.

Over a month went by without a single response, and I was getting discouraged. Then, responses all seemed to come at once and, with the help of a Polish-speaking friend and a Slovak/English dictionary, I was able to translate all the letters.

What amazed me was the time and trouble people took who were not related to me. They searched church and government records, recounted family histories, and drew elaborate family trees that often dated back to the late 1700's. Two respondents appeared to be possible links to my grandmother.

A woman from the city of Zilina proved to be a charming and most gracious hostess who not only prepared traditional Slovak meals during our stay at her home (she thought it ridiculous that we would even consider paying for a hotel room), but also let us use her car for a 100-plus mile journey to the village she mistakenly believed was my grandmother's birthplace.

An elderly couple who owned a small farm 30 minutes from the capital city of Bratislava also opened their home to us. Welcomed with open arms as though I were a long-lost relative (which, it turned out, I was not), we were treated to delicious wine they had made themselves. Late that evening, we headed back to Bratislava loaded down with fruits, vegetables and a big bottle of home brew.

Inasmuch as my ability to speak Slovak is at a rudimentary conversational level, communication was at times difficult. How-

ever, with patience on the part of all concerned, a Slovak/English phrase book, and a glass or two of slivovica (a plum brandy with a vodka-like kick), we managed to understand each other.

One of the things I have come away with from these encounters is a firm resolve to learn both the Slovak and Polish languages (difficult as they may be for native English speakers) as well as I can. I owe this much to my grandparents, who had struggled to learn a new language when they arrived in this country.

I once heard the poet and writer, Maya Angelou, say that we all owe a tremendous debt to our ancestors who journeyed to America, whether legally or illegally, as free people or as slaves. This debt is best paid by striving to reach our potential in every aspect of our lives.

I am beginning to think that a portion of this obligation also entails learning about the land, the culture (including some ability to speak the language), and the people of those first-generation Americans in each of our families.

Although the experiences derived from searching for babicka have been most rewarding, I was left with two disconcerting thoughts. The passage of time in a region of the world that has undergone as much political turmoil as has Slovakia makes it improbable that I ever will uncover definite proof regarding the birthplace of my grandmother or surviving members of her family.

And more importantly, at 90 years of age, with his memory all but wiped clean by Alzheimer's disease, my father never will be able to hear that I saw the same beautiful Tatra Mountains that his mother probably gazed at as a child and that, although I did not find our family, I tried. I just waited too long.

***MR. BRYJAK IS A PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO. HE RECENTLY RETURNED FROM A SABBATICAL IN ZAKOPANE, POLAND WHERE HE LECTURED AT A TEACHERS COLLEGE. GEORGE IS A PRODUCT OF BUFFALO'S KAZIMIERZOWO NEIGHBORHOOD. SADLY, JUST THIS YEAR HIS FATHER JOSEPH PASSED AWAY.

POTPOURRI

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Polish Festival

Cheektowaga Town Park on Harlem Road, August 18-20, 1995. Look for our booth! If you wish to volunteer, please contact Mike Drabik. *We could use your help!!!*

Echo Society of Niagara Falls

Polish Day '95, Sunday, August 6, 1995, sponsored by the Echo Society of Niagara Falls, N.Y., Lackey Plaza, Niagara Falls. 12 noon to 10 p.m. Craft Exhibits, Food, Entertainment.

MEETINGS OF INTEREST

PGSWNY - Villa Maria College Cafeteria, 7 p.m. Mark your calendars for the following dates: August 10, September 14.

Town of Tonawanda-Kenmore Historical Society - October 10, 1995. 7:30 p.m., 100 Knoche Road, Tonawanda, N.Y., Sophie Knab will have a slide show and lecture on "History of the Polish Community in W.N.Y."

BOOKS

Reading increases our knowledge. No one book will give you all the information you need. Some books that will help you appreciate your immigrant relatives' experiences:

God and Country by Victor Greene

The Huddled Masses by Kraut

The Immigrants and Their Church by D. Liptak

CONGRATULATIONS

Go out to Mike Drabik, the winner of our raffle, held at the May 1995 meeting. Thank you to the B&D Flag Company of Pembroke, N.Y., for their donation of the Polish flag.

Hmmm...

Villa Maria College is now smoke free, but that's not the only habit missing! It looks like some Felician Sisters have kicked the habit, as in attire.

GOOD DEAL

Foreign video tape conversions, NTSC, DAL, SECAM, 8 mm, photo and slides to video, duplications. Contact:

Advanced Video Technologies

5500 Main Street

Williamsville, N. Y. 14221

(Phone 716-631-0515)

IN MEMORIAM

Joseph Mruk passed away on January 21, 1995. Mr. Mruk became Buffalo's first Polish mayor in 1949. He was also the first Polish American in New York State to be elected to Congress in 1942.

Matt Urban died on March 4, 1995. Mr. Urban, who was born and raised in Buffalo, was one of the nation's most decorated WWII heroes.

Franciszek Gajowniczek, age 94, died at his home in Brzeg, Po-

CONTINUED NEXT COLUMN

IN MEMORIAM CONTINUED

land. He was the former concentration camp inmate at Auschwitz whose life was saved by the Rev. Maximilian Kolbe. Several years ago, Mr. Gajowniczek was in Buffalo for the dedication of the Kolbe Mausoleum at St. Stanislaus Cemetery in Cheektowaga, N. Y.

WANTED

NEEDS HELP:

Member Kathi White, 15 Erik Street in Merrimack, N.H. 03054, asks help in locating family members. She is looking for siblings of her grandfather. They were members of the Holy Mother of the Rosary Cathedral on Sobieski Street.

Jakub Kaczmarek, Born July 1902

Cecylia Kaczmarek, Born November 1903

Eleanor Kaczmarek, Born October 1908

Wladyslaw Kaczmarek, Born April 1911

If you know of this family or their descendants, please drop Kathi a line.

HELP NEEDED:

Documentary Heritage Program seeks your help in lobbying for repeal of the "Sunset". The DHP, a library resources council from WNY and Rochester. Their fate may be decided by the N.Y.S. legislature during this year's budget deliberations. Funding for DHP does not come from tax dollars but from the Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund. (Local governments impose a charge on users of government documents.) The fund is temporary and created as a "Sunset" provision, which expires at the end of this year, unless the state extends it for another five-year period. Please call, write, fax, or visit your representatives and ask them to continue the DHP services to our organization. Senate Bill is No. S1701, Assembly Bill is A2781.

INFORMATION

Anyone with roots in the Kaszubi area of Poland, or researching the surname Kaszubowski, is invited to contact Keith Kaszubowski at (716)648-7099 or 648-2044. Keith has been working on this project involving the Kuszubian people and where they settled in the U.S. and Canada.

DONATIONS

PSGWN is always accepting donations of books, reference materials, church albums, maps, etc. Please contact the Library Committee or drop off donations at our regular meetings.

TRAVEL

If in Poland, look for these tours:

CASTLES OF THE KNIGHTS OF THE CROSS, Aug. 1-14, 1995. Visit castles at Torun, Chelmno, Malbork, Nidzica and others. Cost: \$579.00. **CASTLES IN MALOPOLSKA, LITTLE POLAND**, Sept. 4-17, 1995. Visit castles at Czarsk, Pulawy, Janowiec, Sandomierz, and more. Cost: \$584.00. **BIALOWIEZA NATIONAL PARK SA-**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

POLISH BITS & PIECES

by W. A. Radlinski

KOSCIUSZKO'S WILL

Widely published copies of the "will" that General Thaddeus Kosciuszko made in the form of a letter in 1798 to his friend, and then Vice President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson. That "will", we recently learned, was an edited version of Kosciuszko's letter rewritten by Jefferson before he released it to correct the General's poor English. While the original letter is replete with misspellings and bad grammar, it is far more interesting and gives one a much better insight into the character of the man and his deep feeling about slavery. The unedited version was published in the February 1995 edition of the Polish-American Journal in an article by Alice Zagan, as follows:

I beg Mr. Jefferson that in case I should die without will or testament he should bye out of my money so many Negroes and free them, that the restant sum should be sufficient to give them education and provide for their maintenance. That is to say each should know before, the duty of a cytyzen in the free Government, that he must defend his Country against foreign as well internal Enemis who would wish to change the Constitution for the vorst to inslave them by degree afterwards, to have good and human heart sensible for the sufferings of others, each must be married and have 100 ackres of land, wyth instruments, Cattle for tillage and know how sto manage and gouvern it as well to know how to behave to neybourghs, alway with kindness and ready to help them — to them selves frugal, to their children give good education I mean as to the heart and the duty to the Country, in gratitude to me to make themselves happy as possible.

Note that Kosciuszko not only asks for "Negroes" to be released but also calls for their education and providing them with the means to become productive members of society.

THE MASSACRE OF 15,000 POLISH OFFICERS DURING WORLD WAR II

A terrible atrocity committed during World War II by the Russians against the Poles got very little exposure after the war because of the Soviet Union's domination of Poland until just six years ago when Poland freed itself from the communist yoke. Poland was invaded by the Germans from the west on September 1, 1939. On September 17 of that year, the Russians attacked Poland from the east. On September 23 Hitler and Stalin reached an agreement on the division of Polish territory. The Russians acquired eastern Poland and immediately scattered 1.5 million of its inhabitants in labor camps. About 15,000 Polish Army reserve officers, most of them professionals or academics in civilian life, disappeared a few months after being captured. The bodies of 4,253 of them, all former inmates of a single POW camp, were found by the Germans in a mass grave in the Katyn Forest (near Smolensk) when they invaded the Soviet Union in 1943. Each was murdered with a single shot to the back of the head. For years, the Russians blamed the massacre on the Germans. Finally, in 1990, Gorbachev admitted that the Soviet secret police had killed the 15,000 Polish officers during April and May, 1940. It was a month-long operation that took place not only in the Katyn Forest but also in Kalinin, where about 6,000 were murdered, and in Starobelsk. In 1992 Russian officials released documents that showed Stalin had ordered the killings. It was the beginning of his plan to dominate Poland after the war by eliminating its leadership.

A retired officer of the secret police who had witnessed the killings in Kalinin said that they shot an average of 250 men a night for a month. They had orders that everything must be done during darkness and that was about all they could handle before daylight. There were about 30 executioners who used German revolvers because Russian weapons were not reliable enough. They would overheat with heavy use.

[Sources: Death in the Forest by J.K. Zawody, 1962; Lenin's Tomb by David Remnick, May 1994; Concise Columbia Encyclopedia, 1991; and copies of various documents provided by the Katyn Forest Massacre Memorial Committee, North Arlington, N.J.]

NEW ARRIVAL

The long-awaited Slownik Nazwisk Wspolczesnie w Polsce Uzywanych, compiled by Kazimierz Rymut, has finally arrived. The ten-volume set contains all the names found in the 1990 Polish census.

The names are arranged alphabetically with names also using masculine and feminine endings included under the masculine

form, (eg. Kaminska, Kaminski).

The information gleaned from this work will enable you to see the location by province of your family surname in contemporary Poland and their numbers. The books will be placed in our library for members use, they will not be lending material.

My Memories

Continued from page 7

foundry, which he left after a brief time. He said he didn't want "to be in Hell while he was still alive". Pawel returned to his wife and younger children in Poland shortly before the start of WWI. He was conscripted into the army but was fortunate to be given a K.P. assignment as a bread baker.

My mother, Maryanna, during her first summer in Buffalo, obtained employment through an agency to pick fruit in Canada. While there, a letter was forwarded to her from her mother in Poland asking Mary to send a picture of herself because one of the village women had told her that, "Indians will eat you!" In an effort to reassure her mother, she and a girl friend crossed the border without proper papers to have their photograph taken. As a result, these two, frightened fifteen year olds, unable to speak English, were detained and ensconced in a make-shift jail until the agent for the fruit company was able to get their release. A portion of Maryanna's pay was faithfully sent to her benefactor in Poland until the debt was paid.

To Maryanna Michalec, for her persistence, courage and love, our family owes a debt of gratitude and to the nameless and long-gone Good Samaritan, without whose financial assistance the journey to America would have been impossible, we say Thank You and Shalom Aleichem.

Potpourri, Continued from page 7

FARI, Sept 23-31, 1995. 5 days of visiting, hiking and viewing one of the largest and primeval forests in Europe. Home of the European Bison and Tarpany miniature horses. Cost: \$354.00. For more information contact:

STOWARZYSZENIE WSPOLNOTA POLSKA
00-322 WARSZOWA
UL. KRAKOWSKIE PRZEDMIESCIE 64

DONATIONS TO OUR LIBRARY

• Polish Digests, various editions for 1991, complete for 1993 and 1994, **Dr. Robert Pantera** • Listy Matejki Do Zony Teodory 1863-1881, **Mr. and Mrs. Sig Dory** • Wilkes Barre Phone Directory 1987-1988, **Edward Potera** • Erie PA Phone Directory 1991-1992, Buffalo Diocese Directory 1992, **Frank Wilczak** • Bflo. Courier Express New Pope articles, **Dorothy Cook** • PGSWNY Stamp, **Ted Smardz** • PGSWNY First Video Tour of Ellis Island, 2 parts 1992, **Fred Ciszek** • 1995 PGSWNY Calenders, **Jack Adkins Chevrolet** • History of Portage County, WI, **Anna Zehner Bruski**.

THANK-YOU !!!

ADDRESSES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Ancestral Canadian-American information, on over 1500 rolls of microfilm, on individuals who crossed the American-Canadian border between 1895 and 1954. A guide to these records and LDS Mormon film numbers. Cost is \$10. Contact:

J. S. Zaleski, Dept. 94-S, P.O. Box 10416, Detroit, MI 48210-0416

Genealogical information for Canada. Contact:

Manitoba Genealogical Society, East European Branch, PO Box 2536, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C-4A7, Canada or The Ontario Genealogical Society, 40 Orchardview Blvd., Suite 251, Toronto, Ontario M4R 1B9, Canada

To obtain U.S. phone book disc printouts (Cost \$5 per surname for up to 250 names, postage included)

Contact: Karen Kolb, 202 Joseph Drive, Tonawanda, NY 14150

For information on the Lackawanna Public Library's Steel Plant and Local History Museum, Contact: Director of Lackawanna Public Library, Sal Borodonaro (716-823-0630)

St. Stanislaus Kostka in Rochester, N.Y., built in 1909, is currently involved in the restoration of its 40 stained-glass windows, created in Austria in the early 20th Century. A booklet on this project is due to be published and will be available by late 1995. For more information, contact: St. Stanislaus Kostka (716-467-3068).

THE END OF THE LINE

by Dorothy Cook

Listen, my children
 And you shall hear
 Of my horse-thieving ancestor
 "Light-Finger" DuVeer.

When I started my search
 I expected to find,
 Composers and generals and authors refined-plus
 rich, old industrialist, the very best kind.

But great-grandfather, Jake
 Robbed a bank in Oriskany
 And our Civil War hero
 Twice, deserted his company!

How can this be?
 Won't you once look my way.
 I'm handsome and brilliant - ethical too.
 I can't be decended from that common clay.

I'll recheck tomorrow,
 I've surely mixed up some dates
 On the forebearers responsible
 For my magnificent traits.

Eureka! I've found it
 And it looks like a winner.
 It's MY LINE, at last.
 Why the page seems to shimmer.

With great expectations,
 I started to scribble.
 With these birth certificates
 You simply don't quibble.

But as I read on,
 I moaned and I groaned.
 My illustrious forefather
 Was "Father Unknown".

WITAMY New Members

Walter Madura Derby, CT
Joan Curley Buffalo, NY
Jean Deregowski Miller Churchville, NY
Henry B. Steves Attica, NY
Frances King Attica NY
Anna Bruski Zehner Lockport, NY
Frank Martin Cheektowaga, NY
Rosemary Tabaczynski Tonawanda, NY
Robert Tokarczyk Sterling Heights, MI
Msgr. Wm. Setlock Buffalo, NY
Joseph Welch Batavia, NY
Gerald Ortell Floral Park, NY
Joseph Kellas West Seneca, NY
Daniel Kij Lackawanna, NY
Ann Marie Pielach Clinton Township, MI
Frank J. Zwolinski Santa Rosa, CA

Submitted by Dorothy Cook:

Does anyone remember the humorous (but oh so true) sign on the bulletin board at the Mormon's Library over 12 years ago? The author is unknown to us, so we're unable to give him or her credit for recognizing some of the feelings that overtake many of us involved in this particular hobby.

QUARANTINED

The inhabitants of this place have been stricken with genealogy fever—a deadly and infectious disease.

Symptoms: Note paper stuffed in pockets and files, heart palpitations at the sight of gravestones and old trunks filled with letters, blood-shot eyes from excessive microfilm exposure, erratic speech patterns punctuated with “pilgrims” and “princes”, cold sweat on the arrival of the daily mail.

Prognosis: Incurable!

March Speaker

Ret. Col. Francis Winiarz was the guest speaker at the PGSWNY March 1995 meeting. Col. Winiarz spoke on the changes in Poland after WWII from his experiences of numerous trips.



PHOTO BY E. PRABUCKI

Still A Proud Heritage

By Martin S. Nowak

Last year, DNA tests showed that the late Anna Anderson of Virginia, who for decades claimed to be the Grand Duchess Anastasia, heir to the Russian throne, was probably a Polish peasant.

British forensic scientist Peter Gill ran tests on tissue from Anderson's intestine and compared them to DNA tests run on blood samples from Prince Philip of Britain. The prince is related to Anastasia through his mother. The tests showed that Anderson could not have been related to the last Russian Czar, Nicholas II, nor his wife.

Furthermore, Gill ran DNA tests on German Karl Maucher, a great nephew of a woman named Francisca Schanzkowska, who disappeared in Berlin in 1920, about the

same time Anderson surfaced there.

Schanzkowska was a Polish peasant whose true identity skeptics claimed was that of Anna Anderson. The tests showed that Maucher and Anderson were related.

Czar Nicholas, his wife, and their five children were supposedly killed by the Bolsheviks in Russia in 1918, but the remains of the Czar's son, Alexei, and a daughter, believed to be Anastasia, have not been found.

It still remains a mystery how Pani Schanzkowska could have known intimate personal details of Anastasia's family life, including private conversations Anastasia had with her cousins, that Anderson was able to repeat, years later, to those same cousins in an attempt to prove she was Anastasia.

POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF WESTERN NEW YORK

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PGS. WNY
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