



# SEARCHERS



DEDICATED TO POLISH AMERICAN FAMILY RESEARCH

"Preserving Our Past Since 1988"

No. 16, Winter 1996

## The Krakow Crib

(Fanciful Christmas mangers inspired by the medieval architecture of Krakow, Poland)

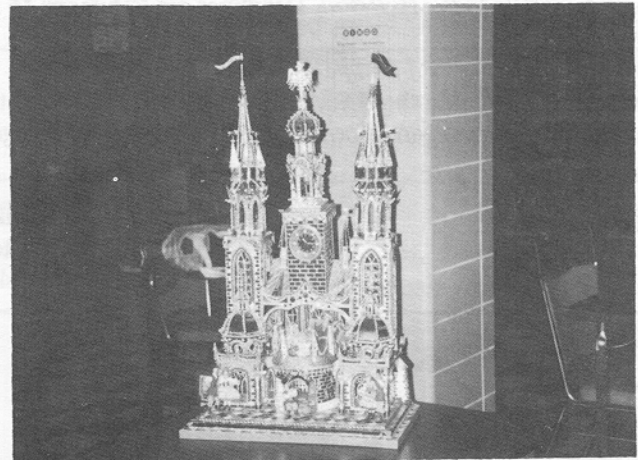
By Judith Krauza

In the late 13th century, Franciscan Friars from Italy introduced nativity plays into Poland. Early displays were static figures with scenery and were placed in churches. By the 14th and 15th centuries, puppet figures had developed and the plays moved just outside the church. Church authorities banned nativity plays in the 18th century because of their increased secularization, more a form of entertainment than religious instruction. The people took the plays into the streets and their homes.

A Krakow folk crib is shaped like a church with steeples. At first, it had a stage for puppets, thus clearly linking it with the earlier tradition. Now, the figures are static or move mechanically.

The Krakow crib brings the church and the manger scene into the home. Meticulously crafted and well proportioned, it is made from wood and cardboard, covered with colored foils ornamented with beads and sequins. "Found" bits and pieces are transformed by creative minds and talented fingers. These "fantasies" are shaped with Krakow's architectural monuments firmly and lovingly in mind.

Elements inspired by a number of different buildings, of various architectural periods and styles, may all find their way into a single Krakow crib. The biblical cave of Bethlehem, site of Jesus' birth, becomes a church with towers like those of St. Mary's Church (1320-1477) in the Market Square (laid out 1257). To this day, a trumpeter marks each hour from one of its towers. The entrance may resemble the Barbican (1498), a



Krakow Crib made by Stanislaw Paczynski, of Krakow, for Judith Krauza.

defensive tower outside the Florian Gate (started 1307 and reconstructed in the 15th century).

The gold dome of the Sigismund Chapel (1517-1533) of Wawel Cathedral (circa 1020-1364) might find itself in unexpected proximity to the Cloth Hall (1380-1400, 1555). Soldiers and folk dancers mingle with the biblical nativity figures—Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. The legendary trumpeter of Krakow, or *Lajkonik*, or the tartar-on-horse figure which commemorates a 13th century Krakovian victory, may appear, as well as—Death, the Devil, Herod and the Three Kings—traditional characters in the nativity plays. Flags fly from turrets, and elaborate models feature stained glass windows lit from within. Krakow cribs vary from a few inches to several feet in height.

Before World War I, Krakow cribs were built by bricklayers in suburban Krakow to supplement their summer labor. The cribs were sold in the Market Square to groups of carolers and folk entertainers. The largest cribs were often saved by their makers for their own caroling activities. Prosperous Krakovians

(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:

**The Polish Genealogical Society of Western New York, 299 Barnard Street, Buffalo, New York 14206.**

If you wish to contact one of our committees, 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 \$15 a year in the U.S. and \$18 in Canada. This entitles you to two editions of the Searchers and two Bulletin updates.

New members receive an information package to help them get started. Annual membership dues are to be paid in January.

<b>Officers:</b>	President Vice President Treasurer	Mike Drabik Kathy White Jenny Wolski	Secretary Founder	Laurie Bialoglowicz Mike Drabik
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<b>Bookstore</b>	Helen Skarbek	All purchases must be made at meetings Accepting ideas for items to be sold	<b>Searchers/Bulletin</b>	Laurie Bialoglowicz Typesetting, format, editing, and publishing Helen Skarbek Accepting articles, member and nonmember Leo Majchrzak surnames, and letters to the editor for Mike Drabik publication William Radlinski Polish Bits and Pieces Ed Bialoglowicz Mailing
<b>Photocopy</b>	Brian Stanish	Intercommittee use only	<b>Archives</b>	Richard Zielinski PGSWNY photos, letters, etc., to be docu- Daniel Kij mented for history of the Society
<b>Surname Index</b>	Kathy White	List of names being researched and locations in which they are being researched.	<b>Villa Maria Lawn Fete</b>	Florence Witul Sign-up list and organization of our participation in this annual event
<b>Membership</b>	Lynn Rzepecki	Applications/new membership packets to help in getting started	<b>NYSCOGO</b> (New York State Council of Genealogical Organizations)	Jim Lyons PGSWNY delegate
<b>Roster</b>	Lynn Rzepecki	Master lists, address changes	<b>Awards</b>	Edward Prabucki Submit names for annual awards to members for outstanding participation. Deadline for submis- sion is September 1
<b>Library</b>	Dorothy Cook	Donations to library and general information	<b>October Workshop</b>	Mike Drabik Sign-up list and organization of committees for this annual event
	Richard Zielinski	on contents and use		
	Lynn Rzepecki			
<b>Travel/Tours</b>	Lynn Rzepecki	Trip information, reservations, and deposits		
	Daniel Kij	Welcome ideas for travel and local tours		
	Dorothy Krantz			
<b>Register Tapes</b>	Laurel Keough	Accepting Tops register tapes for the Society		

#### MEETING REMINDER:

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



(Continued from page 1)

## The Krakow Crib

would invite a group of carolers into their homes and reward them for an entertaining presentation. There was a special area in Krakow's Market Square where groups of carolers awaited such invitations.

The first organized competition for crib makers took place in December, 1937; a second in 1938. Competitions did not take place during World War II, but crib making and caroling continued. The Krakow Historical Museum revived the competition after the war, and people from all walks of life began to make Krakow cribs. Children became involved and crib making is now passed down in Krakovian families. The competitions continue, with a children's category. They take place in Krakow's Market Square around the Mickiewicz monument, in view of St. Mary's Church and the Cloth Hall and in close proximity to other architectural monuments which serve as their inspiration. The call of the trumpeter sounds from above. [Printed with the permission of the author. Judith Krauza gave a lecture and slide presentation on the Krakow Crib at the September meeting of PGSWNY.]

### Professional Researcher in Poznan (Formerly Provinz Posen)

Experienced researcher ready to help you in Poznan vicinity. Includes State and Ecclesiastical research, identifying locations of origin. Fluent in German, Polish, and English. For more information, please visit my home page:

<http://www.man.poznan.pl/~bielecki/genpol.htm>

or

send details and four IRC's for rates and services to the following address:

Lukasz Bielecki

Os. Kosmonautow 21/80

PL - 61 -642 Poznan

or

E-Mail: [bielecki@rose.man.poznan.pl](mailto:bielecki@rose.man.poznan.pl)

## Polish Phone Books

By Keith Kaszubowski

Most Americans doing genealogical research in Poland are aware of the *Slownik Nazwisk Wspolczesnie w Polsce Uzywanych* (The Directory of surnames in Current Use in Poland). This ten-volume set of reference books lists 607,178 surnames in Poland and gives the total number of people bearing those surnames throughout the 49 provinces as of 1990. However, it does not list a given name or address for any individual.

The next logical step in locating living relatives in Poland may be to obtain a province phone book and, with any luck, establish a correspondence with a distant cousin, or a long-lost great-aunt or great-uncle. A half-ounce letter can be mailed to Poland at a cost of 60 cents. Each phone book lists names alphabetically. Also included is a listing for all the province churches. One fact to consider is that, as of 1995, there was only one phone for every 6.6 people in Poland. Just over 15 percent of the population has phones, as compared to the United States, where over 50 percent of the people have phones.

Currently, NYNEX has the following listings for Polish province phone books: Bielsko Biala (1994), Gdansk, Katowice, Radom, and Warszawa (all from 1995). Their inventory is constantly changing, and they suggest you call every couple of months to check on future availability of other province books. Their toll-free number is 1-800-544-4988. The cost is \$40 per book. Shipping and tax is \$5 for one book or \$7 for orders of multiple books. Allow ten days for delivery by UPS. The Polish Genealogical Society of America and the Library of Congress also have several Polish phone books in their possession.

The least you will obtain from your Polish phone book is the names of the people descended from those who once walked with your ancestors. I feel a sense of belonging in making myself acquainted with those same names.

Good luck with your research!

**Reminder**—Dues for all members are payable in January (\$15 in the U.S. and \$18 in Canada). Send your surname form along with your check in the proper amount to the treasurer.

## Surname Search



*Member and nonmember 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 you're researching, and location, if known.*

*Nonmembers please include \$3.*

### Geraldine E. Beck

308 N. Annapolis Ave, Atlantic city, New Jersey 08401

Surnames	Location
Trzcinski	Debnica/Brodnice/ W. Pruz.
Puchalski	Lignowy/Klowka/
Puhalski	Tablonoma
Maruszewski	Piasieczna/Brody
Marushewski	
Kozubski	Poznan
Plucinski	Tunowo
Glowacki	Debenica

### Judith A. Newman

1778 Hunters Trail, Rock Hill, South Carolina 29732

Surnames	Location
Firek	Unknown
Klosinski	Unknown
Michalski	Unknown
Nowicki	Germany
Watorek	Prussia
Walczak	Warsaw, Poland

## Polish Telephone Directory

On a recent trip to Poland, one of our members, Donald M. Kuciewski, obtained a telephone book from the province of Nowy Sacz, which covers a large area in the southern mountain region of Poland. If anyone would like an address from this book, he is willing to look it up. Just send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to:

Donald M. Kuciewski

6035 S. Transit, LT. 455  
Lockport, New York 14094

## Family Search

**Veronica B. Jarzab, 116 E. Rivera Dr, Tempe, Arizona 85282-5118**

Seeking information on:

**Jakub Marcin Adamczyk**

**b. 15 December 1879 - Czermin or Otag, Galicja (m. Anna Malak, f. Marcin - married to Zofia Gasiorek in Poland in 1905.) Resided in New Jersey. Jakub had a sister living in the town of Watervliet, New York.**

**Zofia Gasiorek**

**b. 16 June 1888 - Medrzychow or Boleslaw Dabrowa, Galicja (m. Maria Pawlowska, f. Albertus)**

**Rosemary Tabaczynski, 33 Grove Street, Tonawanda, New York 14150**

Seeking information on:

**Michael Tabaczynski**

**d. 1922 in Buffalo, New York (St. Peter & Paul Church, Williamsville)**

**Antonia Lamparska - b. 1889**

**Antonia Tabczynska**

**d. 1963 in Buffalo, New York ( Resurrection RC Church)**

**Dan Muszynski, 6281 Grandview, Erie, Michigan 48133-9621**

Seeking information on:

**Valentine Sniadach (1880-1901 in Krukowa/Zareby, Praznysz, Warszawa, 1901-1905 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)**

**Ludwika Deptula (1878-1902 in Krukowa/Zareby, Praznysz, Warszawa, 1901-1905 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)**

**Martin Deptula (1850-1902 and after 1912 in Zareby/Krukowa, Praznysz, Warszawa; 1902-1905 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and 1905-1912 in Toledo, Ohio. He went back to Poland ca 1912.)**

**Andrew Muszynski (1862-1890 in Strzelno, Bydgoszcz; 1890-1902 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Poniatowski, Wisconsin)**

**Agnes Halas (1863-1882 in Strzelno, Bydgoszcz; 1882-1902 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Poniatowski, Wisconsin)**

**Except for Martin Deptula, all of the above died in Toledo, Ohio.**

**Bruno C. Szdek, 4625 Rip Van Winkle Lane, Las Vegas, Nevada 89102-5758 — Phone (702) 876-3861**

Seeking information on:

**Vincent Kapchinski (Kapcinski, Kapzynski) b. 19 July 1851 (Jan 1850) d. Feb. 2, 1933. Emigrated in 1870 from Prussia/Poland.**

**sp. Ellena (Helen) Putz (Puc) b. 24 May 1851 (March 1850) Also emigrated in 1870 from Prussia/Poland. Married in Texas and settled in Bryan, Brazos, Texas. Helen's siblings were: Jacob Putz, and Janie (or Annie) Putz Bukowski (in Texas).**

**Wojciech (Albert) Syzdek - b. 17 February 1858, d. 24 June 1943.**

**(sp. Maryanna Bielamowicz (f. Anthony Bielamowicz, m. Justina Papczak). All were probably from or near Baczal Dolny or Jaslo, Galicia. Immigrated with sons Michael and Henry in 1885 to Bremond, Texas. Albert's half-brother, John Syzdek (d. late 1940's)**

*(Continued on page 9)*



## POTPOURRI

### Polish Churches in Buffalo, New York as found in the 1910 City Directory

First Polish Baptist*	680 William Street	Joseph Antoszewski, Pastor
Church of the Transfiguration*	144 Mills Street	Rev. James Wojcik, Rector Rev. Louis Chodacki, Asst.
Church of the Assumption	347 Amherst Street	Rev. Thomas Stabenau
Corpus Christi	Clark corner Kent	Rev. Hyacinth Fudzinski Rev. Stanislaus Czelusniak Rev. Francis Ryznar
Saint Adalbert	Stanislaus & Rother	Rev. Thomas Flaczek, Rector Rev. Theophilus Semelka
Saint Casimir	Clinton & Beers	Rev. Michael Dyminski
Saint John Kanty	Broadway & Swinburne	Rev. Peter Pitass
Saint Stanislaus	Peckham & Townsend	Rev. Msgr. John Pitass

Holy Mother of the Rosary Polish National Catholic Church (Sycamore & Sobieski) was founded in 1895/1896. It does not appear in the City Directory. Residing reverend until 1911 was Rev. Stephen Kaminski.

Saint Luke\* (Sycamore & Miller) and Saint Peter & Paul (809 Clinton Street) parishes were founded in 1907 and 1908, respectively. Neither is identified in the 1910 City Directory under Catholic Churches in Buffalo.

\*Denotes parish closing in 1993.

### New PGSWNY Surname Data Base

The PGSWNY is compiling a brand-new 1997 current membership surname database. A printed copy will be available at PGSWNY meetings and a copy will be sent to our sister societies.

Although you may have previously submitted this information, we are asking that you submit your updated information. Included is a column in which you can list the name of the parish (parafia) or synagogue of your ancestors in Poland. This inclusion may result in finding a connection to another researcher in your area of interest. Since we are considering making this information available to other researchers on the Internet next year, it is imperative that you also provide the PGSWNY with authorization to print your name and address on the Internet, allowing someone else to contact you by postal mail. If you do not wish for your surnames or your address to be released on the Internet, please check the appropriate box. Please return this form, the Volunteer Survey questionnaire, and membership renewal with dues by January 31, 1997.

## Valuable Research Resources

By Mike Drabik

We, genealogists, are involved in gathering personal family history. This quest is not as simple as opening a book and finding all the answers. Many other factors come into play in the investigative pursuit of one's roots. We can enhance our family histories with all kinds of additives, such as historical facts and cultural details, to make the finished product of our research more exciting and interesting to the reader.

One question that surfaces often involves reference material on the early Polish community in Buffalo and Western New York. A comprehensive study of this major ethnic group has yet to be written. There exist several works that cover some aspects of the Polish-American community for 123 years from June 1873, when St. Stanislaus parish was established in Buffalo.

Information on the growth of Buffalo's Polonia can be found in *Księga Pamiatkowa Złotego Jubileuszu Osady Polskiej i Parafji Św. Stanisława Bi M w Buffalo, New York* (A commemorative book of the 50th anniversaries of the Polish settlement in Buffalo and St. Stanislaus parish). It was compiled by Mieczysław Haiman, a well-known Polish chronicler. The 400-page book covers the early years of the Polish community's migration to Buffalo and Western New York, the formation of the first Polish parish (St. Stanislaus), the development of the community and its organizations, businesses, institutions, and newspapers. By 1923, there were 23 national (ethnic) Polish parishes in the diocese of Buffalo, and many of these are included in this book. Since the book also commemorates the parish's anniversary, it also contains information on the priests who served, the Felician Sisters, the parish complex—its societies, data on the parochial school, and a list of veterans. Also included are biographical sketches of business people who sponsored the publication of the album.

The *Album Pamiatkowe i Przewodnik Handlowy Osady Polskiej w Mieście Buffalo*, pre-

ceded the above-mentioned book by 17 years. Compiled by Wincenty Smolczynski and Henryk Lokanski, this work can mainly be described as a directory of Polish businesses and professionals up to 1906. The first section of this 60-page book contains information on Buffalo's early history and its importance to the nation. It also highlights the development of the Polish community from the formation of St. Stanislaus parish in 1873. This book contains sketches—some brief, some detailed—of prominent Polish individuals who supported the printing of the directory. Some of the data provided are a genealogist's "dream come true". This book contains the birth date and location, parents' names, education, profession, marital data, names of children, and what activities the person listed was involved with. Also listed are most of Polonia's societies and organizations founded before 1906. It also lists parishes and communities; such as, Cheektowaga, Depew, West Seneca, and Olean. A sister volume to this book is in the archives at Orchard Lake, but no known copy is available in Buffalo.

Each of the national (ethnic) Polish parishes printed a commemorative album for one of its anniversaries. These jubilee books frequently contain lists of parishioners who were members of societies or contributed to the parish anniversary fund, in addition to the history of the parish. This is a valuable reference source that the family history researcher should not overlook.

More recent information on Buffalo's Polonia can be found in the album printed on the occasion of Poland's 1,000th anniversary of Christianity (966-1966). It contains information on Polish history and traditions, as well as a brief history of all the Polish parishes in the diocese of Buffalo, a list of members of the clergy, religious orders, and Polonian institutions and organizations. This commemorative book was published by the Diocese of Buffalo Millenium Committee and appeared in both Polish and English versions. It contains many photos of parishes and the clergy.

During the past 50 years, the Polish-American Historical Association has produced a

(Continued on page 12)





## The Genealogy Computer Page

By Dave Pavlock

*This is the first in a series of articles to help you in your quest into the past using modern technology. I will attempt to write in what we, in the South, call "Alabama Kitchen English", non-technical terms we can all understand.*

### Why do I need a computer for family genealogy search?

You may not need one but you can do a great deal of research using a computer. The two big advantages are:

1. You can do your research from home
2. You can find information that would not be easily available from other sources.

The computer will not replace other tools; it will supplement them. Imagine sending a letter (e-mail) to Poland. It will arrive there in minutes, not days, and the reply can be received just as fast. The best part is that there is no long-distance phone charge. Once you are hooked into the Internet, you can write to Warsaw, Poland, as easily as you can to Batavia, New York.

### What does it cost to get onto the Internet?

The cost to be on the Internet is \$20 a month. Commercial services like America Online or CompuServe cost \$10 and up, depending on how much time you spend using the service.

### How much does a computer cost?

You will need a computer with a Pentium processor (the processor governs the speed at which a computer functions) and a modem (the modem connects your computer to the telephone), as well as a monitor (screen) and a printer. The computer and monitor will cost approximately \$1,500 to \$2,000, and a printer can be purchased for about \$200.

### What else do I need to get on the Internet?

A modem, the proper software (a program inside the unit that has a specific purpose), and a subscription to a company that provides access to the Internet (Metropolis or AT&T, in Buffalo) are required.

### What can I do with a computer?

You can read electronic versions of out-of-town newspapers, the weather, stocks, look up phone numbers, send and receive mail, and search for people. (I looked up the Pawlak family name and found over 2,000 places on the Internet where it was mentioned, not only in the USA, but in Poland and in Germany.)

Imagine what a chore it would be to gather all the phone books in the United States (there are hundreds) so that you could search for a lost cousin. The computer can do this. *Switchboard* has assembled all the phone books; all you do is log on to their web site:

(<http://www.switchboard.com>),

and type cousin Elmer's last name and the state where you think he lives. You can even leave the state blank if you don't know it. If Elmer has a listed phone number, you can get his number, plus his address and the names of dozens of other individuals with the same name. *Mapquest*, another program, will also draw a map of Elmer's neighborhood

(<http://www.lookupusa.com>).

If you want to search Social Security records to locate information on a relative who passed away, it's on the Internet (if the death resulted in benefits being paid to anyone). These records will provide you with the birth and death dates of the individual and the zip code of the place where the benefits were mailed:

(Continued on page 11)

## Polish Bits and Pieces

By W. A. Radlinski

### Polish-American Sports Hall of Fame

The Polish-American Sports Hall of Fame was formed in 1972 to recognize athletes of Polish descent. It is located on the campus of St. Mary's College in Orchard Lake, Michigan (25 miles northwest of Detroit). Candidates are nominated by a board of directors but are elected by a panel made up of about 200 Polish and non-Polish sports figures from around the country. While the Hall has a decidedly Michigan flavor, it has, nevertheless, achieved national prominence. Its current honor roll includes most of the top names in Polonia sports.

Among the Hall of Fame's 65 members are: Former baseball players Ted Kluszewski, Tony Kubek, Bill Mazeroski, Stan Musial, Phil Niekro, Bill Skowron, and Karl Yastrzemski; former football players Steve Bartkowski, Ron Jaworski, Ted Marchibroda (current coach of the Baltimore Ravens football team), and Dick Modzelewski; former Super Bowl winning coach Hank Stram (Wilczek); boxing champion Tony Zale (Zaleski); wrestling champion Stanley Zybyszko; NCAA champion basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski; and five-time national ice-skating champion Janet Lynn (Nowicki). [Source: *Chasing the American Dream* by Thomas Tarapacki, Hippocrene Books, 1995.]

### Teutonic Knights' Role in Polish History

The Teutonic Order was a military and religious order of German knights (Teutonic Knights) organized in 1190 for service in the Crusades. In 1226, Mazovia's Duke Konrad, preoccupied with internal struggles, called in the Teutonic Knights to assist in the task of subduing his aggressive Baltic neighbors and converting them to Christianity. (Mazovia was then a province of Poland, whose capital was Warsaw.) Disregarding their pact with Konrad, the knights established an autonomous state that controlled most of the southeast shore of the Baltic, thus barring Poland and Lithuania from access to the sea. The Poles and Lithuanians tried, separately, to stop the encroachment of the knights,

and both were separately defeated.

An alliance between the two countries was formed in 1386, when Grand Duke Jagiello of Lithuania married the young Polish monarch, Jadwiga, accompanied by the conversion of Lithuania to Roman Catholicism. This dynastic union, referred to as the Commonwealth, bore fruit in 1410 when their combined armies defeated the Teutonic Knights at the Battle of Grunwald. [Source: *Poland, A Country Study*, Department of the Army, 1983.]

### Saint Adalbert—First Polish Saint

Poland is truly a land of saints. In its 1,030-year Christian history, it has produced 73 saints. The first was Adalbert, bishop of Prague, who was martyred in 997 while preaching Christianity to the pagan Prussians living in the Baltic Sea area. He was sent there by King Boleslaw of Poland who, when he learned of Adalbert's death, sent emissaries to retrieve the body so it could be given a Christian burial. The Prussians, however, demanded a ransom of silver equal in weight to that of Adalbert's body. A makeshift balance was erected with the body on one side and a pile of silver pieces on the other. One by one, the pieces of silver were removed to achieve balance. To everyone's amazement, the scale did not level off until all but one small piece of silver weighing about an ounce remained. This "miracle" frightened the Prussians and so impressed the Poles that Adalbert was later canonized; and many Poles to this day pray to St. Adalbert when they have money problems.

[The legend of the weigh-in comes from an article by Kaya Ploss in the newsletter of the American Center of Polish Culture, July 1994. A different account is given by F. C. Anstruther in the book *Old Polish Legends*, 1991. The latter talks about the ransom being in gold and a small gold ring from a peasant woman tipping the balance. Adalbert was a Bohemian. His Polish name is Wojciech and his feast day is April 23.]

### Poland's New President

In a run-off election, Aleksander Kwasniewski was elected president of Poland, defeating incumbent Lech Walesa by 650,000 votes out of over nine million cast for each candidate. He was



inaugurated on December 22 for a five-year term. Kwasniewski, 41, is a former Communist bureaucrat and a well-organized politician. This man is tele-genic, has great appeal among Poland's young people, and speaks English. He ran on a program of democratic market reforms and pledged to maintain Poland's commitment to integration with the West. His name is pronounced Kvasch-niev-ski.

Walesa did not take his defeat gracefully and refused to attend Kwasniewski's inauguration. He reportedly wants his old job back in the Gdansk shipyard where he was an electrician and led the *Solidarity* democratic revolution.

### Polish Heraldry

"The principles by which coats of arms were originally acquired in Poland differed from those of Western Europe where they were familial or individual. Polish coats of arms belonged to groups of persons who served the Crown together, or distinguished themselves in battle, or resided in the same territory, or carried out extraordinary endeavors, or for other, obscure reasons. Thus many families shared the same arms and a higher proportion of the population possessed noble status than was the case in Western Europe. Each Polish coat of arms has its own name which is usually different from family names. Once obtained, a coat of arms was handed down through the generations and inherited by all family members. However, as a consequence of the eighteenth century partitions, Russia, Prussia, and Austria abolished the status quo and introduced new rules. All three powers required nobles to own land and to be high government officials or deputies in the Parliament, or their descendants. In 1921, the Constitution of the Republic of Poland abolished the noble class, its titles, and all privileges that had accrued to the coats of arms." [Quoted from *Polish Polish Bits and Pieces Genealogy & Heraldry* by Janina W. Hoskins, Library of Congress, 1987.]

### Polish Colored Eggs—Pisanki

The art of coloring eggs in Poland dates back to prehistoric times. It is believed that such eggs

were placed under the threshold of homes as an offering to protective spirits of the household. With the coming of Christianity, the egg became the symbol of victory of life over death in the Resurrection, and the ancient custom was perpetuated at Eastertime. It is now an art form, and Polish decorated eggs are treasured by collectors as well as souvenir buyers.

Families carefully guarded their secrets of creating these beautiful eggs. The work was usually done by women in a room considered "off limits" to males. If a man unwittingly stumbled into such a room, not only was he chased out but the women had to throw a pinch of salt over their shoulders to cleanse themselves. Colored eggs are known by a variety of names, but the term *pisanki* is generally applied. Actually, *pisanki* are batik-style eggs on which wax is applied and the designs scratched through it with a stylus before they are placed in a colored dye. [Source: Mainly from *Polish Customs, Traditions, & Folklore* by Sophie Hodorowicz Knab, Hippocrene Books, 1993.]

(Continued from page 4)

### Family Research

(sp. Appollonia (surname unknown). John settled in Chicago, Illinois, or East Chicago, Indiana. His daughter, Josephine, married a **Sarana(o)** or **Sorana(o)**. Their children were: Nicholas, Albert, and William. Last known address, in the 1930's, was 26 Portsmouth Place, NE, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Daughter, Emily (d. 25 November 1953), married Michael **Gocal** and resided at 1002 Roxana Place, East Chicago, Indiana. Their children were: Walter Raymond, Millicent Marie, and Marcia Jean. In the 40's-50's the family had a (western) musical program on Radio (WKAN) Kankakee, Illinois, known as the *Sun Valley Boys* and *Sun Valley Sweethearts*.

### The Library

Several books have been borrowed from our society's library by members of our organization during our monthly meetings. Many of these books have been kept for several months. We will begin to apply a late charge of \$5, beginning in January, for books that are not returned the month after being checked out.

## The History of Ellis Island

[From *The Skarbek Family News*]

### The Early Years

To begin with, it is Ellis's Island, **not** Ellis Island. Sam Ellis was a New York merchant during the time of the American Revolution. Through his business dealings, he came into possession of a tiny sand bar in the New York harbor, which was then called Gull Island. It was about one-fourth the of its present size. The island was uninhabited and shell fishermen reclaimed oysters in its vicinity; thus, it acquired its second name—Oyster Island. Young New York couples often used the island as a picnic grounds, rowing over from bustling lower Manhattan for a bit of relaxation away from the city.

At the time of the revolution, Sam Ellis was a Loyalist and was against American independence. After the battle of Brooklyn Heights, it became apparent that some sort of defense was necessary to protect the New York Harbor. Bedloe's Island, Governor's Island, and Ellis Island were selected as troop garrisons. By this time, Sam's politics had changed, and he gave his full support to the plan.

When Sam Ellis died in 1794, his grandson inherited the property. Eventually, the island became more of an arsenal than a garrison and, in the 1800's, public outcry demanded the closure of the arsenal. Around this time, the government began to develop new immigration policies.

### A Changing American Immigration Policy

Following the American Revolution, the pace of immigration quickend, but there was little government regulation. From 1776 until the Civil War years, all a person had to do to become an American was to come to our shores. Though legal citizenship was soon instituted, there were no restrictions on American immigration for the first 100 years of our nation's existence.

Immigration was encouraged for a time during and after the Civil War. The Homestead Act of 1862 guaranteed payment of the prospective immi-

grant's boat fare—a kind of government loan program. This legislation also promised the future citizen that he could not be drafted into the service until he became a citizen of the United States.

These enticements led to a huge exodus of the poor, the downtrodden, etc., from Europe. What did they face on arrival? "Landing was chaotic. Before 1847, boarding-house runners, tavern keepers, and peddlers were allowed on board to make bargains directly with the newcomers. Once on the dock it was worse, with no interference from the police. Immigrants might be cheated while exchanging money, sold tickets to wrong destinations at inflated prices, bilked by all manner of merchants, and enticed to flea-bitten boarding houses where they were further taken advantage of." [An excerpt from Barbara Benton's *Ellis Island*]

### Castle Garden

In 1855, New York's Castle Garden became the first American immigrant receiving station. Ironically, its purpose as Ft. Clinton was to defend New York from the British. Castle Garden was originally an island, but numerous landfills converted it into an appendage of lower Manhattan. It was located in Battery Park.

Unfortunately, records of our ancestors, who may have passed through either Castle Garden or the wooden structure on Ellis Island, were lost in the great Ellis Island fire of 1897.

Several attempts to regulate immigration took place after the influx of immigrants that occurred in the late 1800's. The working man was concerned about "cheap foreign labor" and the unions were putting pressure on Congress. A head tax was instituted in 1882, and immigrant contract labor was barred in 1885.

### Ellis Island Born

To facilitate enforcement of the new laws, construction of the Ellis Island complex began in 1890. On New Year's Day in 1892, a 15-year-old girl from County Cork Island, Annie Moore, became the first immigrant to set foot on Ellis Island.

(Continued on page 11)



(Continued from page 10)

## The History of Ellis Island

It was a huge people-processing plant. (The dining room, alone, could seat 1,000 individuals.) Immigrants were subjected to a medical inspection and a mental test. They were required to state their name and age, perform simple multiplication functions, etc. If the immigrant was thought to be an idiot, insane, a pauper, likely to become a public charge, suffering from a dangerous, contagious, or loathsome disease, had been convicted of a felony or other infamous crime, or was a polygamist, he was barred from entering the country under the Immigration Act of 1891.

After the original structure on Ellis Island burned to the ground in 1897, it was rebuilt. A brick structure replaced the former wood-frame building.

In a further attempt to slow immigration, the head tax was raised again, and *Anarchists* were banned. In 1907, over 1,150,000 immigrants entered the country. The head tax was again increased in 1907, and imbeciles, the feeble minded, and prostitutes were placed on the unwelcome list. Immoral aliens were declared "persona non grata" in 1910. In 1917, a bill requiring literacy (in at least one language) became law.

Finally, in 1921, the current system that allows only a certain percentage of immigrants per nationality came into effect.

Ellis Island was given a complete face lift in the 1930's. A national scandal involving forged immigration documents brought 250 Ellis Island employees to justice.

During World War II, the island became a Coast Guard training station. Sixty-three thousand guardsmen were trained there and shipped out to naval fronts around the world. The Coast Guard decommissioned Ellis Island after the end of the war. From 1945 to 1954 it was a holding port for political detainees. The ferryboat, *Ellis Island*, made its last run on November 29, 1954, and Ellis Island was shut down.

**Librarian**—If anyone is interested in taking over the position of librarian for next year, please inform Mike Drabik.

## Restoration

Ellis Island was now a white elephant. It was turned over to the General Services Administration and the Government tried selling it; but none of the developers bid a high enough price. Although a Senate subcommittee, headed by Maine Senator Edmund Muskie, was organized to decide what to do with the island, nothing was done until President Lyndon Johnson merged Ellis Island with the Statue of Liberty National Monument in 1965. It then became part of Liberty State Park. A restoration plan was developed and begun, but not completed.

In 1976, President Gerald Ford approved a congressional appropriation of one million dollars for the restoration of the Ellis Island facilities, along with an annual budget allotment of \$500,000 for operations.

Ellis Island was reopened in 1976; however, it was not the "poor and the downtrodden" who passed through its doors but their children and their children's children. During its first year of operation, 50,000 Americans returned to pay homage to the site of their parents' and grandparents' entrance to America.

(Continued from page 7)

## The Genealogy Computer Page

(<http://www.infobases.com/ssdi/query0.1.htm>).

A walk of many miles starts with one step; a computer that is connected to the Internet will save many of those steps. The first step is to get in touch with someone who is using a computer and can help. Speak to a knowledgeable clerk at a computer store, buy a computer magazine. If you have any questions, call me at (904) 944-1655. My e-mail address is ([arroddave@gulf.net](mailto:arroddave@gulf.net) or **America on Line at DPAVLOCK**). My next article will include more specifics on tracking with *Family Tree Maker* and "surfin' the net".

[Dave Pavlock, who recently became a member of PGSWNY, is originally from Salamanca, New York. He is in the broadcasting business and is now living in Pensacola, Florida.]

(Continued from page 6)

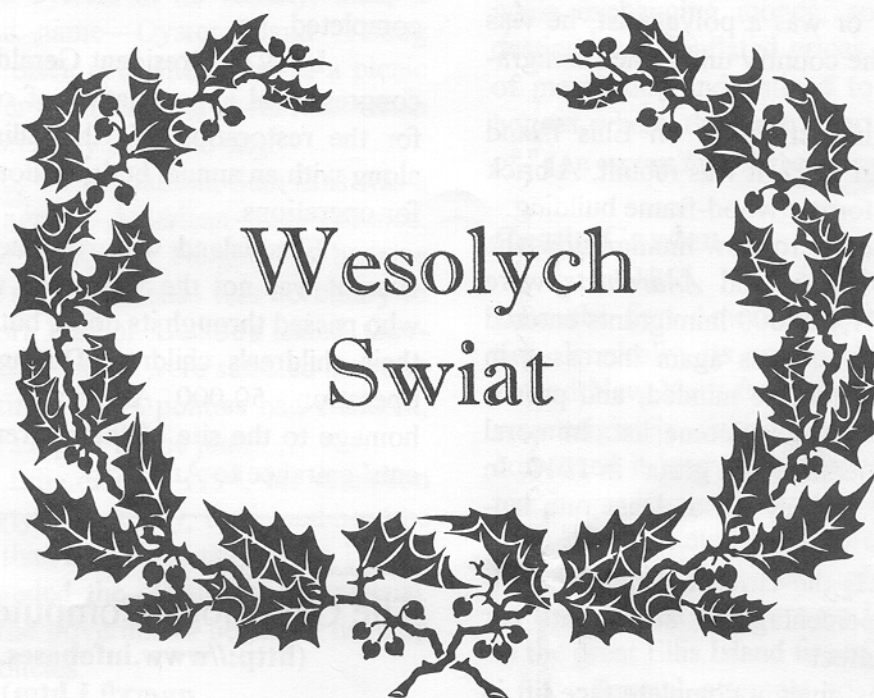
### Valuable Research Resources

biannual publication, *Polish-American Studies*, which contains articles submitted by many of Polonia's leading educators and researchers.

All the above-mentioned references can be found at the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library in Lafayette Square. Some are also available at the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, Villa Maria College Library, and our own society's library.

### Television Series

Channel 17, our local public television broadcasting station, will be running a series entitled, *Ancestors*. This series should be of interest to all family historians. Scheduling has not been completed at this time, but the 10-hour-long series will air in 1997. Announcement will be made in the local newspapers.



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