



SEARCHERS



DEDICATED TO POLISH AMERICAN FAMILY RESEARCH

"Preserving Our Past Since 1988

No. 17, Spring 1997

Genealogical Research in Poland

By Donald M. Kuciewski

I traveled to Poland in August of 1996 to visit ancestral villages, meet distant cousins, and research archives. The duration of my trip was 24 days.

My paternal ancestors came from the area around Lomza, which is located 120 kilometers (75 miles) northeast of Warsaw. The Kuciewskis and Piasciks settled in the villages of Debniki, Jurki, Nowogród, Zbojna, and Dobrylas. My maternal ancestors were from the Beskid Wyspowy mountains, about 120 kilometers southeast of Kraków—Limanowa, Kamienicz, and Zalesie—the birthplace of Grandfather Sopata. East of Limanowa is Gorlice, where Grandmother Karpinska was born; and Ropa, where she lived for a while. My Uncle Walter was born in Halicz, in the Ukraine. It is located south of Lwów.

Prior to my visit, I was able to contact distant cousins and found a few pen pals. One friend is retired and the other two are Catholic priests, so each one of them had some time to spend in assisting me. Before I left, I copied some ancestral photographs and organized my current genealogical information into four sections—one for each family line.

Half of my funds were converted into traveler's checks and the other half into new, unmarked bills in denominations of \$20 or less. However, I discovered that traveler's checks were rather difficult to cash in the smaller cities and impossible to cash in towns and villages.

My nine-hour direct flight to Warsaw, via Lot Airlines (Polish), began in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. A cousin, Anna K., picked me up at the airport and took me to the home of my first host. I rented a car from Wypożyczalnia Samochód, ulica Mazowiecka 2/33, which operates from the owner's

apartment. Rental fees for a 1995 Polonez and a 200-kilometer (125 miles) daily limit were 100 złoty (\$37) per day, with a 200-złoty refundable damage deposit. One of the requirements, while using the vehicle in the city, was to park in a "secured" lot at no charge. (Yes, cars are broken into or stolen in Poland.) The agency would recognize neither my International Driver's License nor my New York State Driver's License, and my host had to cosign the agreement. I discovered the reason for this was that the agency owner feared I would steal the vehicle and drive it to another country. Main roads are two-lane paved highways, but are rougher and narrower than our roads. Expressways between large cities are excellent, and most road signs are familiar.

I had planned my research in four steps: 1. Interviewing relatives, 2. Talking to local elders, 3. Researching church records, and 4. Checking out civil archives.

My actual research turned out to be quite different. The eldest relatives remembered names, but no dates; the younger cousins knew nothing about their grandparents or ancestors; and no one had old records or photographs. Everything was destroyed during the war (Lomza, and the surrounding area, was a "Russian front" during the war). The young people were more concerned with earning a living than past family history.

The village elder in Debniki was a little more helpful. From him, I learned that the Kuciewski family left after the war for an unknown destination and that the original surname was Kuciej. Churches did have some records but, again, many were destroyed in the war. I found some information in two parishes and in two archives. Two of the priests I encountered were very helpful but two others were not. One of them referred me to the organist, who keeps the records, and I found some data on my Piascik great-grandparents. The other priest denied

(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

Deadline dates for submitting articles to the Searchers are as follows:

Spring Edition—**January 30** for March mailing;

Summer Edition—**May 30** for July mailing.

Fall Edition —**September 30** for November mailing

Submissions may be sent directly to the editor—either hard copy or disk (Microsoft Works document).

Membership Dues. . . A reminder from the Treasurer:

Dues are \$15 a year in the U.S. and \$18 in Canada, and \$25 overseas. This entitles you to three editions of the Searchers. New members will receive a *Getting Started* package and back issues of any publication printed prior to joining during that membership year.

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Meeting Schedule for 1997

Monthly meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Villa Maria College Cafeteria, 240 Pine Ridge Road, Cheektowaga, New York.

April 10	Research and Library Hours 7-9 p.m.
May 8	Membership Meeting and Lecture 7 p.m. Speaker: Pat Virgil, Assistant Librarian from the Buffalo and Erie county Historical Society.
June 12	Research and Library Hours 7-9 p.m.
July	Membership Picnic - To be announced
August 14	Membership Meeting 7 p.m.
September 11	Research and Library Hours 7-9 p.m.
October 9	Research and Library Hours 7-9 p.m.
November 13	Membership Meeting 7 p.m. (Nominations for 1998 Officers)
December 11	Christmas Party 7 p.m. (Election of Officers)

(Continued from page 1)

Genealogical Research in Poland

having any records, even after I showed him my grandmother's baptismal certificate, which he had previously sent me. I discovered that the best time to visit the churches was in the late afternoon or evening, since the priests are not available earlier. It is also best to make an appointment, if possible.

Cemeteries, too, were destroyed in the war and are being reused. Hence, I could not obtain old gravestone inscriptions.

Civil archives were easier to visit but more difficult to locate since they are not as obvious as a church building. They are housed in unobtrusive, gray buildings reminiscent of the Communist era. A red sign with white lettering reading "Urząd Ciwylnego" usually denotes the location of a civil office. The offices are small, poorly lit, and contain old furniture. Their hours are from 9 or 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and no appointment or fees are required. The personnel is friendly and helpful. Most records in the archives are dated from 1945 but some old records do exist. Land records in the Lomza area begin in 1954 because all properties had to be resurveyed. I was able to obtain clues and directions to other archives by showing my genealogical notebook and explaining my presence in Poland.

In the Lomza area, I searched the following archives: Archiwum Państwowe, which had some land records from 1933—none of which concerned me; Ewydencja Gruntów Geodezja Łomżyńskie, which had land records from 1954 (1962 for the village of Debniki, where a cousin lives); Urząd Stanu Ciwylnego, which had no old records but directed me to a village elder who was not at home; Kościół Narodzenia NMP, where I was told they have no records; Kościół Św. Włodzisława A Paola, where the organist found great-grandfather's death record and where some records are dated from 1915.

My next host, in southern Poland, was able to provide transportation. In the southern mountain region, I stayed in the village of Zalesie, at the rectory of the parish of Św. Maksymiliana, which is only 15 years old. The pastor, Father Stanisław B., was very helpful. His archives contained some old books that had been transferred from nearby Kamienica, where the area's only old parish is located. I found my Sopata great-grandparents and

their address, No. 57 Kumin Street, which is just up the hill from the rectory, and met my cousin Bolesław, who is the image of Grandfather Sopata. Neither of us knew the other existed until the Sunday I met him.

Kamienica lies in a deep valley about ten miles south of Zalesie. The church, dating from 1330, also had old records, although some were destroyed by fire. The pastor was very accommodating, and I found more information about my great-grandfather Sopata.

Back in Zalesie, Father Stan made calls to Gorlice regarding Grandmother Karpinska. No old records were there, and I made no attempt to search civil archives there. I did drive through Gorlice and Ropa on my way to the Ukraine.

My last host was in Lubaczów, near the eastern Polish border, from where I went to the Ukraine. I stayed in the Archiwum i Biblioteka for two nights as a guest of Father Bronisław G., who took me to Halicz. We started out at 4 a.m. to arrive at the Ukrainian border before dawn. There were long lines of cars and trucks waiting at the crossing on both sides of the border; they had been waiting for hours. Father wore his cassock because he has crossed this border many times and knew the guards had a great deal of respect for priests. We immediately drove to the head of the line and passed through six checkpoints quite easily. At midpoint, there was a barbed wire fence, guarded by two soldiers armed with submachine guns. Father did all the talking while I remained silent and frightened. The crossing station was dimly lit, grimy, and in disrepair. The inspectors took their time, but when I declared my cameras, no questions were asked.

The Ukrainian roads were very poor and there were many police road blocks. We were allowed through immediately when they saw that a priest was driving the car. It took about four hours for Father to find an interpreter for me in Lwów. We finally arrived in the very old, run-down town of Halicz. Luckily, the elderly woman, whom I interviewed, was the cousin of my friend.

When I returned to Zalesie, I obtained a telephone book for the province of Nowy Sącz, *Spis Telefonów, Województwo Nowosądeckie*,

(Continued on page 6)

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.

**Keith Kaszubowski, 57 Crescent Ave.,
Hamburg, NY 14075-6501 e-mail: Kaszubik@aol.com**

<i>Surnames</i>	<i>Location</i>
Baska/Boska	Gdansk
Dorawa	Slupsk
Dzwonkowski	Bydgoszcz
Kaszubik	
Knopik	
Lorbiecki/ Rolbiecki	
Worzalla	
Michalowski	Kostrzyn
Waligora	Poznan
Kostuj	Kalisz
Pabich	Walkow

Family Search

Kathi White, 16 Hillside Pkwy, Lancaster, New York 14086, e-mail: Frombufalo@aol.com

Seeking information on:

Descendants of **Kaczmarek** brothers, **Kazimierz b.1851 (m. Apolonia Waligora)**. Apolonia's brother was **Wojciech (Albert) Waligorski**. These families emigrated to Buffalo c. 1890 from the Sroda area of Poznan and were living on Sweet Ave. in Buffalo in 1895, and on Ashley St. in 1920. Any **Jedrasiak-Jendrasiak** family who may have emigrated with them. Also, any **(C)Helminiak** or **Giczkowski** family who came from the Szubin area of Bydgoszcz, any **Dombrowski** or **Jedrysek-Jendrysek** family from the town of Ostrow, Ropczyce, or Rzeszow, and any **Kawa** descendant who came from Turza, Tarnow.

Laurie Bialoglowicz, 1064 Reynolds Rd., Corfu, New York 14036, e-mail: Whitwood1@juno.com

Seeking information on:

Relatives of **Piotr (Peter) Bonczyk (Baczyk) b. 1863** in Lady, Poland, **(m. Aniela (Angeline) Deska, b. 1866** in Male Siekierki, Poznan). They arrived in the U.S. in 1889 and settled in Buffalo, N.Y. (St. Stanislaus Church). Also, descendants of **Andrzej Bucholtz, b. 1859** in Potulice, Poznan, **(m. Jozefa Patycka, b. 1861** in Potulice), who arrived in the U.S. in 1892 and settled in Buffalo (St. Adalbert Church). Andrzej's parents were **Andrzej Bucholtz** and **Balbina Madlicka**. He had two brothers, **Stanislaw** and **Wojciech**, who may have settled in Detroit, and a sister, **Maryanna**.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

I recently received a request from Poland concerning the location of descendants of the 19th century Polish explorer, Sir Paul Edmund Strzelecki (1796-1873). He was responsible for the exploration of the interior of Australia and the discovery of large gold fields. His name is commemorated in the Strzelecki range of hills in Western Port Australia, the Strzelecki Creek in South Australia, and also several species of Australian flora and fauna.

A great-great-great grandson of the brother of Edmund discovered that a 1936 conference about Strzelecki, in Poland, received information from a **Boleslaw Strzelecki** in the U.S. He also discovered that **Boleslaw Strzelecki** lived at 11 West 30th Street in New York City in 1939. He suspects that the two are the same and that

Boleslaw may be a descendent of Edmund. He also learned that this **Boleslaw** participated (or perhaps organized) a centennial conference (1840-1940) concerning Edmund.

I did a search of the Strzelecki family in the U.S., and they are numerous. About 385 Strzeleckis are listed in the U.S., so that contacting each one is an arduous task. I also checked the obits for New York City, and they only show a Father Strzelecki, born in Poland, with no relatives. Perhaps, as an interest to your readers, and as a courtesy to the people in Poland who have often generously helped Polish-Americans find their ancestors, you might consider publishing a request for information about possible descendants of this **Boleslaw Strzelecki**, or Sir Paul Edmund Strzelecki.

(Frederick S. Zimnoch, VP Polish Genealogical Society of Massachusetts, c/o P.O. Box 38, Northampton, MA 01061-0381; e-mail: zimnoch@crocker.com.)

POTPOURRI

We'd like to thank all those who have renewed their membership in the PGSWNY for 1997, and extend a warm welcome to all of our new members!

PGSWNY News

The newly elected officers for 1997 are:

President—Philip Best

Vice President—Kathi White

Treasurer—Laurie Bialoglowicz

Secretary—Daniel Kij

Trustees—Michael Drabik, Jim Lyons, and Ed Prabucki.

New Changes

Many updates and progressive changes are being planned for the new year. As of this writing, they include the following:

- A proposal to change the name of our society to the "Polish Genealogical Society of New York State".
- We are eliminating bulletins and adding an additional edition of the *Searcher*. The *Searcher* will now be published three times a year—in the spring, summer, and fall.
- The addition of a newly formatted column, entitled "Family Search". Members may submit a query of 50-100 words regarding their ancestors. You may submit your name, e-mail and/or postal address, in addition to the word count. Submissions may be sent directly to the editor at: 1064 Reynolds Road, Corfu, New York 14036, or via e-mail to Whitwood1@juno.com.

We are also planning on several exciting indexing projects for which we are in need of volunteers. Included in this issue, you will find "*Looking for Volunteers*" information, regarding some interesting projects we are planning on undertaking.

Please consider helping our society to preserve these records, which are not on microfilm. In addition, anyone with information regarding New York State (Polish) funeral home records, business directories, travel agency or insurance records, churches and their parishioners, etc., is asked to advise us. We will attempt to assist in computerizing local Polish resources before it is too late!

Help Wanted

If you live in an area outside of Western New York and would like to act as a correspondent, we are in need of people to cover the following Catholic Diocese boundaries of New York State: Rochester, Syracuse, Ogdensburg, Albany, New York City, Brooklyn and Rockville Center.

We are also in need of a PGSWNY webmaster to keep up with the many additions and resources we would like to see added to our own webpage. The PGSWNY currently has a webpage attached to our FEEFHS page, but we would like to start building our own pages. If interested, contact Kathi White at: Frombufalo@aol.com.

FEEFHS News

The Fourth Annual International Convention of the FEEFHS (Federation of East European Family History Societies) will be held at the Best Western Plaza Hotel (formerly Howard Johnson's) in Salt Lake City, Utah, from Saturday, September 27, to Tuesday, September 30, 1997. Registration information and rates are to be announced soon. A tentative agenda will include information on using gazetteers and maps to find places of origin in central and eastern Europe, effective use of your time at the Family History Library, effective use of archives, worldwide, overcoming central and east European language

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 3)

Genealogical Research in Poland

from Father Stan and brought it home with me. In it I found many more Sopatas and other surnames that are familiar.

Although I did not accomplish everything I had hoped to, I did see where my grandparents were born and lived. I slept on the Piascik family farm that dates back to 1820, lived among common Poles, ate their food, shared their lives for a while, and made life-long friends.

My research expenses were small. Civil archives do not charge a fee, and a \$5 donation to a church was gratefully accepted. My greatest expense was for lodging, meals, and transportation.

If you decide to do research in Poland, I recommend that you find friends to live with, know exactly the location of ancestral villages, take copies of photographs and your current genealogical information, locate every archive in your area of interest, and have your friends make appointments at churches. Also, take cash in small denominations, avoid large tourist sights, and bring back a telephone book from the area you visit.

Polish genealogical societies are an excellent source of information, and you might want to contact them before you attempt to do research in Poland. For me, this trip was well worth the time, the effort, and the expense.

Selective Service Records

By Kathi White

More than 24,000,000 World War I Selective Service records are on file at the National Archives in East Point, Georgia. Finding an ancestor's draft registration may produce valuable personal information; such as, date of birth, place of birth, color of eyes, marital status, wife's name, name(s) of children, etc. A search for your ancestor's registration may be made if any of the following criteria is met.

- June 5, 1917—All men between the ages of 21 and 31 years were required to register.
- June 5, 1918—All men who had become 21 years of age since June 5, 1917, were required to register. A supplemental registration was

held on August 24, 1918, at which time men who had reached age 21 between June 5, 1918, and August 24, 1918, were required to register.

- September 12, 1918—Provided for registration of all men between the ages of 18 and 21, and 31 to 45 years of age. This was the third, and final, World War I registration.

In order to request your ancestor's draft registration from the National Archives, you must be able to supply a full name and the city and county of registration. For certain states and cities, a full street address is necessary* (see list below). Should you need to supply a street address of which you are unsure, the most accurate way to achieve expedient results is to visit or call the local historical society of the city in question. Most historical societies have original, or microfilmed, copies of city directories for specific years.

You should identify the residence of your ancestor for both 1917 and 1918. Supply both of these addresses when searching for a draft registration. It is important to note that some draft registrations may be available at the Family History Center in the city of registration. This information can possibly be obtained without assistance from the National Archives. The geographical system utilized for draft districts is much like that of a "ward" on U.S. census records. Registration was broken down into Selective Service Exemption Districts. If you use draft registrations on microfilm at your FHC, your results will be faster and easier if you know the district number.

You may obtain the form for requesting information (World War I Registration Card Request) from:

National Archives—Southeast Region
1557 Saint Joseph Avenue
East Point, Georgia 30344

California—Los Angeles, San Francisco*; *District of Columbia*—Washington*; *Georgia*—Atlanta*; *Illinois*—Chicago; *Indiana*—Indianapolis*; *Kentucky*—Louisville*; *Louisiana*—New Orleans*; *Maryland*—Baltimore*; *Massachusetts*—Boston*; *Minnesota*—Minneapolis, St. Paul*; *Missouri*—Kansas City, St. Louis*; *New Jersey*—Jersey City, Newark*; *New York*—Albany, Buffalo, New York City,



The Genealogy Computer Page

By Dave Pavlock

I looked in the bookstore at some books on the Internet. The more I read, the more confused I got. Is there some simple way to find what's out there?

Everything is out there, and some of the books in the stores are confusing, but they *do* sell a lot of them! The Internet's information booth is known as a "search engine". You type in the topic on which you are seeking information, and you might be given a hundred, or more, places in which to find it. Save your money and don't buy Internet road maps, books, or other complicated aids you don't feel comfortable with. Instead, check one of the Internet's information booths—*Alta Vista*, *Excite*, or *Yahoo*—to help you get started. There is another called "HOT BOT". It is a combination of several search engines. For those who are already familiar with the Internet, there is *Big Dummies Guide to the Internet*, that can be accessed through

any web search engine. Simply type in "Big Dummy" (without the quotation marks) and see what you find! A search of the "Gopher" search engine provides over 60 items related to "Big Dummies".

How do I pay to use the Internet?

You usually pay about \$20 a month to your Internet Service Provider (ISP), who has a computer system that connects your home computer, through your modem, to this huge network of computers worldwide. That's \$20 for unlimited use. There are no long-distance charges to send or receive e-mail. Our taxes support the government, and universities, that lease phone circuits worldwide. We tap into these circuits to send e-mail. Your credit-card carrier is billed for the Internet service.

(Please send your questions for the Computer Doctor to: Dave Pavlock at arrodave@gulf.net, or postal mail to: 7340 Mimosa Drive, Pensacola, FL 32526.)

Selective Service Records (Cont)

Syracuse*; *Ohio*—Cincinnati, Cleveland*; *Pennsylvania*—Luzerne County, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh*; *Rhode Island*—Providence*; *Washington*—Seattle*, *Wisconsin*—Milwaukee*.

Potpourri (Cont)

problems, and problem-solving workshops.

Record Updates

Roger Joslyn, a fellow of the American Society of Genealogists (FASG), is in the process of updating a bibliography on federal and state census records, with the assistance of the New York State Library staff. The bibliography was last revised in 1981. Since that time, locations of records have changed, new indexes have been published, and some previously "missing" censuses have been found.

As part of this updating project, users of these records are being asked to contact the State Library with any helpful information; such as, the location of

original censuses and the existence of transcriptions, abstracts, and indexes (in manuscript or published form). Please send your information to:

Melinda Yates

New York State Library Reference Services
New York State Library Cultural Education Center
Albany, New York 12230

Memorial

Jenny Wolski

(February 3, 1929-February 3, 1997)

In loving memory of Jenny Wolski who passed away on February 3, 1997. Jenny was a charter member of the Polish Genealogical Society of Western New York and served as its treasurer from January 1995 to December 1996. Jenny will be sadly missed by all of us.

Lesser Polonias

by Dorothy Cook

It's quite understandable, due to the size and scope of the original Polish immigrant settlement on Buffalo's east side, that any subsequent settlement by Poles in other city areas would pale by comparison. Two districts in which many Poles settled are the Black Rock (Assumption Church) and Hertel Avenue (St. Florian Parish) sections in northwest Buffalo.

The Black Rock area was known to early residents as "The Rock" and is not to be confused with the original Village of Black Rock, annexed to Buffalo in 1853. The actual *black rock* was formerly located at Niagara and School Streets, and the village was the mile-wide strip of land along the length of the Niagara River. The "Rock" of Polish settlement extended from Scajaquada Creek on the south, east to Bridgeman (one block short of Elmwood), north to Chandler Street and the Erie and Belt-Line railroad tracks, and west to Tonawanda Street.

Its main artery was Amherst Street, and it was here that the greatest commercial development took place. In addition to many small businesses, there was a public library, a clinic, a public bath house, a fire station, and the Polish Cadets Social Club.

By 1875, thirteen Poles had settled in the Grant and Amherst Streets area. Eventually, the southwest corner of this intersection became the site of the Black Rock Farmers' Market. Located behind the market was an area nicknamed "Hell Town" by the residents. It was the place where newly arrived families from Poland, or those too poor to live elsewhere, lived in overcrowded conditions. The Tops Market is presently located on this site.

The first wave of immigrants was predominantly from the German part of Poland. Many of the Poles that came from that area of Poland were able to speak German, as well as Polish, and were able to adjust to their new homeland in an area where German was also spoken. They had less difficulty assimilating than later immigrants who came from Russian- or Austrian-occupied Poland. This second, larger wave of Polish immigrants displaced some of the

earlier settlers, who resented the newcomers and voiced their unflattering opinions in one of the local daily papers.

The first tracks of the Belt-Line were installed in 1860 and were essentially complete by 1881. A circuit of the city took only 45 minutes. *Buffalo—Lake City in Niagara Land*, a book compiled by Brown and Watson, observed that the line encouraged some of the residents from the Broadway-Fillmore section of the city to resettle in the Black-Rock area. Jobs close to home, in new industries—Pierce-Arrow, Atlas Steel Casting, Kittinger Furniture, American Brass, and Pratt and Lambert—undoubtedly played an important part in the population growth.

In January 1889, the parochial school at Assumption Church was opened under the aegis of the Felician nuns. However, the school-age children, who could not afford the tuition at Assumption school or could not speak Polish, attended Public School No. 20 at East and Amherst Streets. The biggest obstacle for the children of this area was crossing 20 railroad tracks, just east of Tonawanda Street, two to four times a day on their way to and from P.S. 20. This situation was corrected when the new P.S. 42 was built on Grant Street in the second decade of the twentieth century.

In 1901, many residents were able to walk a short distance to visit the 350-acre Rainbow City, the site of the Pan-American Exposition. It is reported that approximately eight million visitors attended the exposition that summer. The West Amherst gate was located at Elmwood Avenue. Located near this entrance were the Phillipine Village, Alt Nurenberg, the Press and Express Office, and the Electricity Building on the left. The Hospital Service Building, Infant Incubators, and the Midway were situated on the right of the entrance.

My grandmother was able to find employment at Voelker's Hotel, which was opened to accommodate fair visitors. It was located on the northwest corner of Elmwood and Amherst. Her son worked inside the Fair Grounds as a news vendor. Their combined wages helped to augment my grandfather's income.

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

There was also a very small cemetery in this area—the United Evangelical—at Grant and Austin Streets.

A 1918 city map indicates that Hertel and Black Rock were contiguous. In reality, the tracks and the railroad right-of-way, north of Chandler Street, divided the two, making them separate entities. Hertel Avenue, from Elmwood Avenue to Military Road, was the backbone of this community and the area in which taverns, bakeries, and other small business were located. (There was also a cemetery—the German M/E—situated a block east of Military.) Hertel Avenue was originally called Cornelius Creek Road, since the creek meandered along the road on its path to the Niagara River.

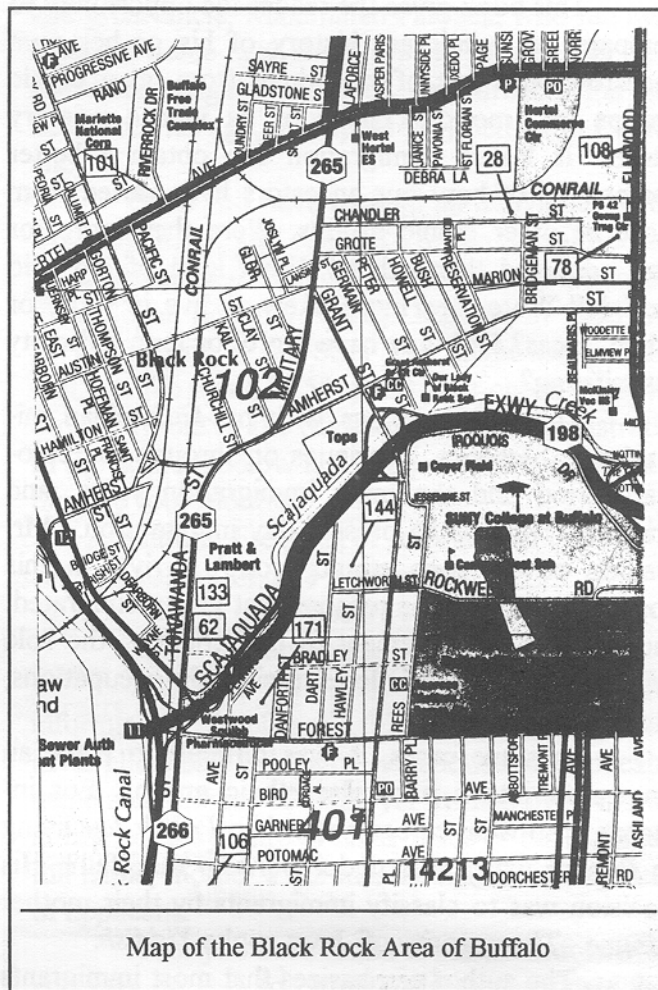
The opening of St. Florian's Church seems to indicate an increase in home construction prior to this time. The area provided newly built homes for upward-mobile Poles who were able to afford them but wished to remain in a Polish community. There was a mix of large, modern doubles and smaller, cottage-like singles.

In January of 1919, my grandfather purchased a single home in this area for \$2,800; three years later, the house was sold at auction. The home was bought with a purchase money mortgage. If the mortgagee missed a single payment, he could be considered in default and the mortgagor could legally demand payment in full of the entire mortgage.

St. Florian's Parish played a major role in the religious, social, and educational lives of its communicants, as did Assumption Church in The Rock. I have been unable to determine what public grammar school serviced the district in which St. Florian's School was located. It may have been PS No. 42, on Grant Street; PS No. 51, on Hertel Avenue just west of Tonawanda Street; or PS No. 21, two blocks east of Elmwood Avenue.

The original wooden structure of PS No. 21 was erected in 1844 and the newer brick building was constructed in 1901. A pupil who attended this school in the 1870's recalled that Hertel Avenue was a mud road that ended at the Colvin Farm and that a group of French people lived in log houses on

Hertel, west of Delaware. He also remembered that one of his teachers was such a strict disciplinarian that she had a dunce class—hats and all. If a student was caught whispering, she used a wooden peg to keep the child's jaws apart. I wonder what form of discipline she would use if she were teaching in today's schools.



Map of the Black Rock Area of Buffalo

Librarian

Daniel Kij will take over the position of Librarian which was vacated by Dorothy Cook. We welcome Dan to his new position and request everyone's cooperation in assisting him in his new venture. We'd also like to thank Dorothy for the fine job she did in setting up the library shelves and documenting our new acquisitions.

If anyone wishes to donate material to our library in the future, please notify Dan so that he can make a record of it.

Book Review

By Martin S. Nowak

Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life

Coming to America was written by a University of Cincinnati professor of history, who has written other books about East Asian immigrants.

This book gives the reader the opportunity to compare the immigrant history of his or her own ancestors with that of individuals from other ethnic groups in America. Those of us whose primary interest is Polish immigration can obtain a better perspective of how our ancestors' lives varied from those of other ethnic groups. Were they more, or less, educated than others? What kind of jobs did they do? Were they more likely to live in rural, or urban, areas? Did they have more, or less, difficulty assimilating?

The author begins with pre-Columbian migration to America, continues on through the colonial period and the mass immigration years, and brings us right up to present-day immigration. Mr. Daniels covers each ethnic group's arrival in this country and states the reasons that group emigrated, the location of settlement in this country, the role religion played in their lives, their main occupations, etc.

In some cases, it was difficult to place an immigrant into a particular ethnic group. For instance, into what category would a *Polish Jew* living in *Poznań* which was under *German* rule, fall? His decision was to classify immigrants by their mother tongue. The majority of Jews spoke *Yiddish*.

The author emphasizes that most immigrants came to this country for economic reasons, not liberty; they were not among the poorest of their countrymen; and they retained their ethnic identities by passing on traditions from their homeland to their children. He also explains the impact of various laws on immigration and the attitudes of American-born individuals toward the newcomers.

Mass migration from eastern and southern Europe ended with the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924. The rate of immigration decreased during the depression and war years. However, there was a resurgence during the 1980's and 1990's, and

the nation has also had to cope with the problem of the entry of illegal aliens.

Though most of us sympathize with those who have recently immigrated to America, we, too, are apprehensive of the changes that these immigrants might bring to this country and to our lives, as were the early settlers when our ancestors arrived. (This book is available at the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library.)

Phone Books From Poland

By Paul Binkowski

NYNEX, the regional Bell operating company that services New York and parts of New England and is in the process of merging with Bell Atlantic, has an operation in Poland. As part of the operation 16 telephone directories are published. Listed below are the directory names, numbers, and price. For more information, or to order any of these directories, call Directory Central at: 1-800-432-6657. All books are \$40.

Directory	Number
Bielsko-Biała	99001
Bydgoszcz	99002
Częstochowa	99003
Gdańsk	99004
Kalisz	99005
Katowice	99006
Kielce	99007
Kraków	99009
Łódź	99008
Opole	99010
Poznań	99011
Radom	99016
Szczecin	99012
Warszawa	99013
Wałbrzych	99014
Wrocław	99016

Help Wanted

We are looking for a Membership Chairman. Our present chairman is filling the position on a temporary basis. If you are interested in working in this capacity, please contact Philip Best.

The Social Security Death Index

By Keith Kaszubowski

The Social Security Act was passed by Congress on August 14, 1935. Initially, benefits were intended for retired workers in commerce and industry. Benefits were extended to include wives and dependent children of retired workers in 1939. Since 1956, the present form of coverage has been in existence. Social Security Numbers (SSN) replaced Military serial numbers in 1972. Several years ago, a law was passed which requires parents to apply for a SSN for their child within six months of its birth.

The U.S. Social Security Death Index is a computer database, which is available at Family History Libraries, some public libraries, and on the Internet at <http://www.ancestry.com/ssdi>. The index includes about 39 million deceased individuals whose deaths were reported to the Social Security Administration. The index was updated in May 1996 to include about 51.2 million records of deaths reported before the end of 1995. The majority of deaths recorded on the index occurred after 1962. Only about 1.5 million deaths before 1962 are recorded, some which date as far back as 1937. There are some birth dates listed as early as the 1860's. Prior to 1988, only the month and year of death for an individual was recorded on the index.

You can search the index by surname. In the case of a female, it is suggested that you search under her married name first, then the maiden name. You do not need an SSN to search the index. If you know the person's given name and approximate date of birth, this will facilitate your search. Prior to World War II, Polish surnames were listed with masculine and feminine suffixes to denote gender; i.e., Kuczkowski (m.) and Kuczkowska (f.). With given names, search for both the birth name and its English equivalent; i.e., Pelagia may have been translated to Pearl or Ella, Stanislaw was replaced with Stella, and Wojciech was Adalbert or Albert, etc.

Low Social Security numbers were issued to northeastern states and higher numbers to southwestern states. Before 1963, numbers beginning with 700-728 were assigned to railroad workers.

Records on the index may include some, or all, of the following: Surname, given name, date of birth, Social Security number, state where SSN was issued, date of death, last residence of the deceased individual, and the address to which survivors' benefits were sent.

I was able to locate the record of my long-lost great-uncle, Maximilian Parysek, who ran away from his home near Buffalo in 1913 and was never heard from again! He used the surname Parysch, lied about his age, and apparently settled in California.

Once you have located an individual record from the index, you can write to the Social Security Administration to obtain an SS-5 form (Application for a Social Security Card). The fee, in 1995, was \$7 per record; if the SSN was unknown or incorrect, the fee was \$16.50. Send your check or money order payable to the Social Security Administration to the address below and expect a waiting period of three to four months.

Attention: Freedom of Information Officer
4-H-8 Annex Bldg
6401 Security Blvd.
Baltimore, MD 21235

The SS-5 form may provide the following information: Applicant's full name, address at time of application, full name of spouse if applicable, name and address of employer at time of death, age at last birthday, date of birth, place of birth, father's full name, mother's full maiden name, and signature of applicant.

After you have found the above information, you may be able to obtain a death certificate from the state in which your relative died. Please note that a person's last residence on the index may not be the same as the place of death. The address for the vital records office of every state is listed on the index. If you know the place and date of the individual's death, you may be able to obtain an obituary from the local paper in that specific community. This might also enable you to locate living relatives who may provide you with additional information. Each new clue you obtain opens up another door to obtaining more information in your Polish family history research!

Looking for Volunteers

Project 1: Poles Filing Declaration of Intent in Erie County

Information will be extracted alphabetically and transferred to index cards for eventual entry in a computer database. Volunteers should be able to work independently at Erie County Hall and be familiar with Polish surnames. County Hall is open Monday- Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Project 2: Translating Obituaries from the Dziennik Dla Wszystkich

Volunteers must read fluent Polish, be capable of translating text into English, and be able to work independently. Research is to be done at the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society. This research could be done Thursday-Saturday from 12 noon to 5 p.m. The Dziennik, from 1911 on, is on microfilm. A minimum of three hours a month is requested.

Project 3: Recording Information from Index Cards—St. Stanislaus Cemetery

More Polish people are buried in St. Stanislaus Cemetery in Cheektowaga than in any other local cemetery. We have been granted permission to computerize burials records. Volunteers must be able to work at the cemetery office on Pine Ridge Road, Cheektowaga, New York. Volunteers should preferably have a computer with a Microsoft Word Program, although this is not an abso-

lute necessity. Dates of death and burial can also be done on index cards for eventual input into a computer database.

A minimum of three hours a month is requested for each of these projects. If you are interested in working on any of the projects mentioned, please notify the Project Chairman, Martin Nowak, and provide him with the following information: Your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, if available, and the project for which you wish to volunteer.

You can send the above information to the **Martin Nowak, Project Committee Chairman, c/o PGSWNY, 299 Barnard Street, Buffalo, New York 14206.**

Ancestors

The *Ancestors* series which Channel 17 has been televising will end on Saturday, March 29. The following week, they will begin rerunning the series in half-hour segments for ten more weeks. In case you missed some segments the first time, this is your chance to view the series in its entirety.



Wesołego
Alleluja



POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF WESTERN NEW YORK

299 Barnard Street
Buffalo, New York 14206

