



SEARCHERS



DEDICATED TO POLISH AMERICAN FAMILY RESEARCH

"Preserving Our Past Since 1988"

No. 19, Winter 1997

Neighborhood Nostalgia

By Dorothy Cook

The article by Edward Prabucki which appeared in the Summer issue of the *Searchers* was the catalyst that caused me to search my memory and try to recall what the Riverside shopping district in the mid 1930's was like. While this wasn't an ethnic Polish neighborhood, perhaps residents of the "Rock" or those who sometimes made the trek to Tonawanda and Ontario Streets will remember some of the establishments that were located there.

Sixty years ago, most people did their shopping on foot, and we were no exception. From our street, you turned north to reach the blocks of stores that made up the Riverside shopping district. On the left, about a block before Ontario Street, was our shoe repair shop, Sternberg's Market—where my mother bought fresh produce—the Marine Bank, a realty office, and Rungs Furniture. On the other side of Tonawanda was Hutt's Dairy and the office of Dr. Sandresky, who was our family physician until he retired in the early 1940's. His examining room always smelled of carbolic acid and, yes, I saw my first National Geographic Magazine in his waiting room.

When you crossed Ontario, you entered the commercial section of Tonawanda Street. Located there were Riverside Men's Quality Shop, W. T. Grant, Woolworth and Kresge (both 5 & 10 cent stores), and J. T. Rowland & Sons Department Store. We also had a Walter & Youngman Pharmacy, Harvey & Carey Drugs, and a Liberty Shoe Store.

The housewife who was looking for food bar-

gains could choose either Danahy-Faxon or the Mohican Market for her shopping. One of these was later taken over by the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company. During the late 1930's, a Loblaw Groceteria opened in this area; it was a pioneer in the field of self-service markets. Shoppers in those days needed strong arms. There were no carts, only wicker baskets, for you to carry your selections.

Interspersed among the larger stores were a Greek candy shop and soda fountain, a milliner, a furrier, a dress shop, taverns, diners, Thielman's Florist, and Wedell's Bakery. My mother bought desserts, which she found too difficult or too time consuming to make at home, at Wedell's; i.e., napoleons, orange and lemon slices, and jelly rolls.

There were at least two dentists in this area; we went to both of them. We started out with Dr. Stiller (above the Park Florist) but switched because of the length of time a patient had to spend in his waiting room. We soon discovered that he scheduled several people for the same time so that, if two people were "no shows", he still had someone to fill the chair. Unfortunately, most patients showed up for their appointments. (The photographer that my father took his two rolls of film a year to for developing was also located in this building.) When we stopped seeing Dr. Stiller, we transferred our business to Dr. Dickson, who was on the second floor, next to the Riverside Theater.

Adjoining the theater was Riverside Sweets. You could buy a bag of black licorice candy for a penny at that time. That, plus the price of the movie admission, brought our weekly entertainment cost to a total of 11 cents. With the exception of a few Shirley Temple films or an early Disney flick, I saw few movies until I was old enough to attend with my friends. I was about 11 years old before Saturday

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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.

Officers for 1997

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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.

November 13 Membership Meeting 7 p.m.
(Nominations for 1998 Officers)

December 11 Christmas Party 7 p.m.
(Election of Officers)

The first two meetings of 1998 will be held on **January 8** and **February 12**.

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Neighborhood Nostalgia

afternoon matinees became the highlight of my weekends.

To promote attendance at movies during the 1930's, the manager of a theater gave away a piece of chinaware to each customer who paid the 25-cent adult fee at a specified performance each week. One week the choice would be a cup, the next week a saucer, etc. If you were collecting the whole set, weekly attendance was obligatory, even though you really didn't care to see the movie that was featured. One evening, I was allowed to go to the movies on "Dish-Nite" with two of my friends. Since the dishes were not wrapped up, there was a lot of clanking of china during the performance.

The Liberty Shoe Store, which was selling children's all-leather shoes for one dollar a pair, offered each child, who was fortunate enough to get new shoes, his choice of a large jig-saw puzzle as a bonus. Other stores offered similar extras to promote business.

Things were a lot cheaper in those days. A three-piece bedroom suite went for \$69, and Florshiem shoes sold for \$6.65 a pair. Three pairs of silk stockings could be purchased for 99 cents (nylons were not around yet), U.S. Keds for 49 cents, and a union suit for 98 cents. You could also purchase a center-cut chuck roast for 10 cents a pound. Although these prices might seem like a shopper's dream, one must remember that most shop clerks were earning about \$9 a week. An ad in the newspaper read, **"Earn up to \$1,200 a year at a government job"**.

I loved the 5 & 10-cent stores with their wooden floors and counters serviced by real live salesladies who helped you make your selection, rang up your purchase on their cash registers, and wrapped or bagged the items for you. There was no long wait in a check-out line. What an array of merchandise was sold— notions, lingerie, goldfish, canaries, books, toys, yard goods, plants, jewelry stationery, dishes, cooking utensils, house dresses, and much, much more.

Molded glass containers filled with little pieces of colored candy were displayed on a shelf behind a 15-20 ft. long candy counter. The small containers

were shaped like cars, dolls, fire engines, or other everyday objects. I coveted these and begged for one each time a candy purchase was being considered but was always refused. It was considered much too "extravagant" a purchase, considering the small amount of candy inside each one, so my dream of owning a glass telephone or teddy bear was never realized. (The cost was about 29 cents.) Today, these little glass containers—without the candy—are worth approximately \$65-\$75 apiece to antique collectors!

Occasionally, my father would take me "down Tonawanda Street" for a Harvey & Carey Nut Brown Sundae. The sundae was made up of two scoops of chocolate or vanilla ice cream covered with a chocolate sauce, but was always devoid of nuts. The "nut brown" described the color of the chocolate topping! (Truth in advertising.)

I wish I could remember all the stores that lined Tonawanda Street between Ontario and Royal, but I don't. I only remember that the sidewalks were alive with people of all ages. You could always count on your mother running into an acquaintance and chatting for what seemed like hours, while you shuffled from one foot to another whining, "Can't we go now?" Sometimes, we even met Bugs, our family dog, trotting through the shopping district.

As the Christmas holidays approached, my mother would take my brother and me to Kresge's or Woolworth's to do our shopping. We'd roam the aisles looking for appropriate family Christmas gifts for which we were required to use our own money saved from the nickels Dad gave us each week.

We'll probably never see neighborhood shopping centers like these again. The stores were familiar, the atmosphere was friendly, and shopping was actually "fun"!

Pomost International

Pomost International is a non-profit, charitable association dedicated to spreading an awareness of the English language and American culture to the countries of eastern Europe. Meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month (except July) at the Williamsville Branch Library on Main Street in Amherst, at 7 p.m. New members are welcome. Anyone interested may contact Richard Gucwa at (716) 838-2414.

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.

Letters to the Editor

I totally enjoyed the article by Ed Prabucki on "East Side Nostalgia" in the Summer *Searchers*. I recognized many names and locations I heard as a child. Also, I found your Adam Mickiewicz article extremely well written and concise, yet very descriptive.

My daughter and I spent five full days wading through well-organized ledgers at St. Stanislaus Church and totally unorganized ones at St. Adalbert's, while visiting in July. An attempt at info from post-1903 Transfiguration records at the Diocesan Archives was futile, as everything apparently comes to a halt when Msgr. Kern is not on the premises.

The Historical Society provided some clues via Polish obit, but all five film readers were in use, so the project to put these on computer is a super idea.

Those huge Deed and Mortgage ledgers in the County Courthouse basement provided a swell trail of addresses which enabled us to locate the various wards and districts needed to search the crumbling census records. We were able to track properties in Derby and Eden after locating them on tax maps and visited the present owners.

The LDS Library lists four films for Buffalo DOI's 1839-1895, but we were able to cover more, quite easily, in the County Courthouse file card index of naturalization records.

Can anyone translate "Przemienienia Paniskiego" found in an obituary?

Geraldine Beck
Atlantic City, NJ

(Editor's Note: "Kosciol Przemienienia Paniskiego" is the Polish name for Transfiguration Church. Thank you for your comments. The report on your experiences during a recent visit may be of help to others who are searching for similar records locally.)

Family Search

Frank Zwolinski, Jr., 416 Denton Way, Santa Rosa, CA 95401 (707) 546-6903, e-mail: fzwolins@floyd.santarosa.edu.

Seeking information on: Wawrzyniec/Lorente "Lawrence" Zwolinski, b. July 1862, d. December 1902 (m. Agneska "Agnes" Wichlacz b. 1872, d. December 3 1952). Their children were: Maria "Mary", b. July 27, 1888, d. April 1953 (m. Jerome "Romie" Lindsey/Lindsay, b. about 1889). Catherine "Kate", b. August 24, 1891 (m. Charlie Sidney). Frank Lawrence, b. September 6, 1895, d. August 15, 1977 (m. Lillian Cornish, b. February 26, 1899, d. May 3, 1987). Adeline, b. November 3, 1897 (m. Claude A. Janick, b. circa 1898, d. December 16, 1957). Rose, b. Jan. 9, 1900 (m. Ray Losey & Stewart Rickner). There were also two girls—Francis Agnes and Agnes Cecelia, who died while very young. The family lived in Rochester, New York, and the parents were originally from Poland. I would like to obtain information on any living relatives of these families.

Fran King, 79 Genesee St., Attica, NY 14011-1120

Seeking information on:

Louis Magreta (or Ludwik Magryta), b. April 27, 1864, in Poland, d. February 1921 (of T.B.), in Buffalo, NY (m. approx. 1890 to Regina Marszalak [or Marshalak], b. March 27, 1874, in Poland, d. January 19, 1913 [of T.B.] in Buffalo, NY.) They immigrated approx. 1897. Their children were: John, Tony, Peter, Stanley, Maryanna, Petronella, and Geneieve Regina Magreta Lake (my mother). Also, Szymon Depowski and Anna Grabowska, who were named as sponsors on my mother's baptismal certificate (December 25, 1910). We have some relatives in Michigan and are working on the connection to them.

The Long Shot

The Scene: Old Erie County Hall, Dept. of Surrogate (Indices), on a quiet afternoon in 1980.

Cast of Woman No. 1 (age 52) and her daughter (age 27)

Characters: Woman No. 2 (age 48) and her niece (age 25)

Woman No. 1: (Speaking to her daughter on arrival) "To expedite our research, I'll check the index for Koch and you check for Pfohl."

Woman No. 2: (Overhearing their conversation) "Pfohl! My niece is, at this very moment, checking through Pfohl wills in the basement."

The outcome of this scenario is that the earliest Pfohl ancestors, of the daughter and the niece, to settle in this area were third cousins. The couples were ultimately able to assist one another in their family research. What was most amazing was that four people were looking for information on the same family at the same time and in the same place. What are the odds of such a coincidence occurring—one in a million?

(Editor's Note: This scene reminds me of a story told to me by a

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The Genealogy Computer Page

By Dave Pavlock

At a recent family reunion, I learned the kind of information movies are made of. Relatives of mine, who escaped from Poland in the mid and late 1930's before the war started, came over on two ships. All that anyone remembered were the names—the "Pilsudski" and the "Batory". They came over one at a time, as funds allowed, from Gdansk, Poland, to Halifax, Nova Scotia. Shortly after the last person arrived in Canada, the ship was torpedoed and sunk by the Nazis. Powerful drama, indeed—but what about the ships?

On GENPOL (a worldwide, free information exchange) on the Internet, I asked if anyone had any information on the ships. In two days, I had the information on Polish ships, including tonnage, launch date, etc. Then, a person living in Virginia said he was going to the Mariners Museum in Newport News, Virginia, and would get photos. WOW—is this some country, or what?

A week later, the photocopy of the ships arrived, and the person only asked for a stamp in return. With the photos came information on how to order material on other ships. I had the name of

a ship from a grandfather on another side of the family—the "Patricia"—which sailed from Hamburg, Germany, to New York City in 1909. I obtained that information from the copy of his petition for naturalization in Little Valley. The museum had a photo of the "Patricia", too.

I guess I could have gone to the Family History Center and looked through their books. Perhaps I would have found these ships also, but I got three photos and never had to leave home. That's the Internet—a connection from my desk to the world of information and fellow family searchers.

(Note: You can write to: **The Mariners Museum Library, Newport News, VA 23606**. For \$15, you can get a glossy print of a ship from the museum. You can also get information on ships from the **Mystic Seaport Museum, 50 Greenmanville Ave., Mystic, CT 06355**). If you are on the Internet, check these out:

<http://www.genquest.com>

<http://w3g.med.uni-giessen.de/CGB/genetxt>.

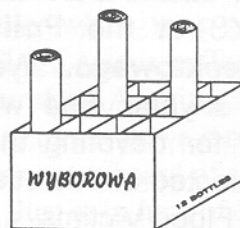
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friend. Her cousin had been sent to Germany on business by his employer. Since his grandparents came from Germany, he brought his family with him to visit the land of their ancestors. While they were traveling through one town, they stopped at a local tavern for a "pit stop". As they were leaving, the bartender called to him saying, "Paul, are you going to be coming in later?" Astonished, Frank responded that his name was not Paul. Then, he was told that he looked just like a man who lived in town and was a frequent visitor of this establishment. Paul's surname was the same as Frank's. The two later met and discovered they were related. Frank never knew what part of the country his grandparents were from. Another "One in a million long shot"!

If you have had any similar experiences, or have heard of someone who has, tell us about it!

Filing Rolled Maps

Genealogists use maps. After a while, they collect quite a few and many of them are rolled. Here is an easy way to file them neatly:



Get an empty cardboard box from your local liquor store, the kind that has separators for 12 bottles. Cut off the top and you have a storage place for filing rolled maps vertically. No need for rubber bands.

On a sheet of paper, draw a grid of 12 squares that matches the box grid, write the names of the maps you have placed in the corresponding square, and you will have a handy index to help you find the maps at a later time.

William Radlinski

POTPOURRI

Surgeries

Jim Lyons, President of NYSCOGO and our representative in this organization, underwent surgery in the spring and is now on his way to a full recovery. We wish him well. Earlier this year, Stephanie Gaiek and Helen Skarbek also underwent surgery and we would like to extend our best wishes to them for continued good health.

Joint Meeting

A joint meeting of PGSNYS and the PGS of Greater Cleveland was held at St. Stanislaus Church in Erie, Pennsylvania, on August 9 to promote the formation of a PGS in Erie. A return visit was scheduled for October 25 at the same location.

LDS Library Update

The Family History Center on Maple Road in Amherst is still closed for renovation. The Orchard Park facility, however, is open.

Volunteers

On behalf of Florence Witul, chairperson, we would like to thank all those who helped out at the **Villa Maria Lawn Fete**. Thanks also to those who assisted Rita and Ed Prabucki in making our **summer picnic** a success. Lynn Rzepecki, Daniel Kij, and Janice Bartoszak represented the PGSNYS at the **Polish American Festival in Cheektowaga**. We'd like to thank them and anyone else who participated in this event for devoting their time. The money they collected at this event was donated to the Polish Flood Victims.

Missing Books

Missing from our library are two commemorative copies of the 50th Anniversary of Transfiguration Church in Buffalo. If anyone is aware of the location of these books, we would like to request that they be returned to the library.

Genealogist in Poland

Michael Kurtin, of the Texas PGS, is studying in Poland and is willing to do genealogical research for other genealogists in southern and eastern Poland. He can be contacted for price and details. Following is his address:

Michael Kurtin

Dom Akademecki Meski

Ul. Konstantynow 1b

20-708 Lublin, Poland

Congratulations!

We'd like to extend our congratulations to Rita and Edward Prabucki, who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary this year. They were married on August 5, 1947, in St. Valentine's Catholic Church in Buffalo.

One Hundred Years

The Polish National Catholic Church celebrated its 100th anniversary with a concelebrated mass at the new Mother of the Holy Rosary Cathedral, located on Broadway in Lancaster, New York. Five bishops of the Polish National Catholic Diocese and guest Bishops Mansell and Gross, of the Buffalo Roman Catholic Diocese helped celebrate this mass.

Membership Dues

Membership fees are due at the January meeting. However, you may pay your 1998 dues any time before that date. Members who are not paid up at the February meeting will not receive the *Searchers* at that time.

Poland During the Napoleonic Era

By Edward Prabucki

I feel as though I am in a self-made prison searching endlessly for details of the lives of my ancestors during the Napoleon period.

Some literary giants of Europe, but of Poland in particular, are attracted to the time of Hitler's rule and the recording of the violent history of those years. I, in turn, am devoted to the Napoleonic age and the fact that Poland was propelled into center stage for a much longer time during his reign than it was during the age of Hitler. Each era was one of imperialism, but Napoleon attempted to solve Poland's dilemma, free them from indecision, and instill the country's youth with a patriotic fervor to serve under him and remove the chains that bound the nation.

As in other times, the Polish people had to surmount the insurmountable and bear the unbearable during the reign of another oppressive foreign ruler. During the first decade of the 19th century, after the third partition took place, Polish citizens were ruled by the Czar of Russia and the Emperor of Prussia. I am certain that the Czar and the Emperor possessed qualities of street bullies and applied their kinds of tactics in ruling the people of Poland.

My grandfathers detested living under the rule of Russia and frequently voiced their dissension on this subject. Polish families, including my ancestors, were forced to live under such poor economic conditions that many Polish children didn't survive long enough to celebrate their first birthday. There was a shortage of medical supplies before the partitions, but there were virtually none afterwards.

The imperialistic foreign rulers of Poland during the 1790's tried to erase Poland from the map of Europe, just as the dictators tried to do in 1939. However, the Polish people, resenting this intrusion, had other ideas. Recalling my father's narratives, I became aware of the determination of my forefathers to rid their beloved country from this pestilence. Just as feelings of patriotism called my relatives, in their youth, to serve our nation in World

War I, World War 2, the Korean Conflict, and the war in Vietnam, my youthful ancestors in Poland were called to serve in Napoleon's armies.

Bonaparte insisted on the creation of the Duchy of Warsaw, which was formed in 1807. This was land that was wrongly seized by Prussia in 1795. I feel that, at that particular time in its history, Poland needed Napoleon as much as Napoleon needed the Polish youths to carry out his military campaigns. These young people believed that service under Napoleon would free Poland from the servitude of Russia and Prussia. It was during that era that several of my ancestors—Piótr, Józef, Stanisław, Wałenty, and Andrzej Prabucki, 17 to 25 years of age—entered military service.

The call for young volunteers was heard throughout Poland, and Polish youths by the tens of thousands answered the call, many of them serving under Generals Poniatowski and Dąbrowski. I am certain that my ancestors were among the dedicated youth that enlisted for service in Napoleon's wars in Europe. The call for men to serve in the armed forces continued until after the invasion of Russia in 1812. They were recruited in the Duchy of Warsaw for service in the Polish Legions, to aid Napoleon in his campaigns throughout Europe. Having a bleak future and a meager existence, my ancestors left their families to take part in what they believed was a patriotic cause.

Prior to the Russian invasion in 1812, there were many conflicts, many unrecorded, with Poland's antagonists in the proximity of Pultusk, Praga, Warsaw, Raszyn, and Góra. Thousands of troops were dispatched to Spain in 1808. In one battle, which took place on April 19, 1809, the Polish Legions suffered colossal losses in combat against an Austrian army. Many were also sent to Haiti to put down a rebellion in the New World and were never heard of again.

Just as in June of 1941, the invasion of Russia by Napoleon's army in June of 1812 was no secret. Bonaparte was as firmly convinced of the defeat of Russia as Hitler was in 1941. With an army of 600,000—of which 100,000 or more were Polish—he crossed Poland's border and marched toward Moscow with great confidence on June 25, 1812.

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Poland and the Napoleonic Era

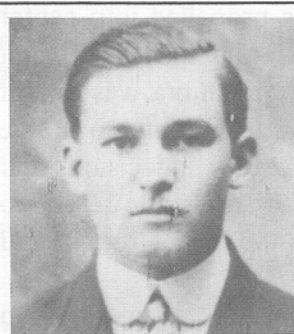
They had no major contact with Russian troops until they reached Vitebsk on July 28. There they overcame the resistance and entered Smolensk on August 17. After more casualties, with a preponderance of them from disease, they continued on to Borodino, where they arrived on September 5, and captured it with a huge loss of troops. Many of the losses were attributed to a lack of immediate medical attention. Polish Legions under General Poniatowski were involved in this battle but many of the casualties were unrecorded. There was another brutal battle on September 7, near Moscow, and the army entered the desolate city on September 14, 1812.

Tragically, Napoleon's staff lacked tangible plans for their entry into Moscow. Bonaparte attempted to convince Czar Alexander 1 to sue for peace. Failing this, he left Moscow on October 19, 1812, with only 75,000 remaining troops.

I ask of all historians devoted to Napoleonic history, "What happened to the 525,000 individuals that are unaccounted for?" Certainly, they didn't melt into thin air. I searched through church and civil records from 1810 on, perusing the death statistics, and found none with my family surname. I assume that hundreds, maybe thousands, of troops fended for themselves and were involved in rear-guard actions in an effort to stem the harassment of Russian troops. I recall from my studies of Polish History at Transfiguration School, that General Poniatowski was deeply involved, against insurmountable odds, in the Battle of Berezina in November of 1812. Undoubtedly, the remaining survivors of the Polish Legion wandered through the snow and mud like cattle, camping out in the open, their fingers numb from the cold, their legs weak from marching and a lack of food, the circulation of their blood reduced to a trickle, until many collapsed and were left for dead. How many of these brave troops survived this inconceivable martyrdom only the Lord knows, since they lacked identification.

My grandfathers often said that the dangers of

Poland's past are much like those of today and that of the future, with no promise of peace. My Grandpa Petyk often stated that it was very common for fallen heroes in wars during those times to be propelled unceremoniously into open excavations and covered over, often without grave markers to verify their existence. Whatever the reason for this indifference, the fact is that they were lost to their families. All five of my youthful ancestors may have perished in this dreadful manner while attempting to restore their lost freedom.



Corp. Franciszek Prabucki, Polish Blue Army-1918—killed in action
(Ed Prabucki's uncle)



SSgt. Bernard Prabucki, U.S.A.F., 1943-1944—killed in action
(Ed Prabucki's brother)

In three wars—World War I, World War II, and the Korean Conflict—my family lost three young male members—all designated as "Killed In Action". Two of the three are somewhere under the earth in an unmarked grave known only to God. As did my ancestors in Poland, they paid the ultimate price for freedom and peace in the world.

Local Dom Polski Sites

By Michael Drabik

Genealogy is a multifaceted field. In order to understand why our grandparents did something in a certain way at a particular time, we need to know a little about their customs, traditions, and history. The customs and traditions they brought to the new world, were modified to suit their new environment. These immigrants were industrious, thrifty people who left us riches more valuable than gold. They gave us a heritage rich in culture and tradition, a strong faith, plus numerous organizations and institutions, which they supported.

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Local Dom Polski Sites

Presently, I am working on a project to identify and describe the activities of the various "Dom Polski" facilities in Western New York. To date, I have located two in Buffalo and one in each of the following: Depew, Dunkirk, North Tonawanda, Lackawanna, and Perry. The driving force behind these institutions, whose main function was to serve as a community center, was the Z.N.P., or Polish National Alliance. (This was a Chicago-based fraternal insurance organization founded in 1889, which is still in existence. It is the largest and most influential of all the Polish fraternal organizations.) Its lodges were "gminas", or councils, which required meeting rooms, as well as a hall, or auditorium, in which to hold public rallies, banquets, cultural affairs, patriotic programs, dances, and wedding receptions.

The Dom Polski was not run exclusively by the Z.N.P. Other groups—singing, gymnastic, literary, and dramatic societies used the facilities. Polish culture was promoted and perpetuated through an array of programs. Observances of the Polish insurrections of January and November, as well as the Constitution of May the Third, took place here. Commemorative anniversaries of the deaths of renowned Poles like Fredrick Chopin, Adam Mickiewicz, Mikołaj Kopernik, Kazimierz Pułaski, and Ignacy Jan Paderewski were celebrated at Dom Polski. Most of these buildings also contained a Polish lending library or reading room, as well as a Polish language school, which was usually held on Saturdays for children who attended public schools. Some of these institutions offered instruction in Polish folk dancing or sponsored a marching band. It was also a meeting place for the Polish scouts. These activities were sponsored by various Polish fraternal organizations.

Many married couples have said, "We met at a dance at Dom Polski". Before the advent of movies, television, and other modern functions, the weekly "Social", a dance held on Friday or Saturday nights, was a place for young people to meet and have a good time.

Over the years, the structure of society and neighborhoods has changed. The Dom Polski buildings, which were once packed to capacity, are now empty or—in the case of those located in Depew, Lackawanna, and Perry—abandoned. The two surviving Polish homes are located in Dunkirk and North Tonawanda. The Dom Polski located on Broadway in Buffalo was taken over by the city for back taxes and now operates as the Polish Community Center, Inc., but it is a Polish community center in name only. The other Polish home was situated on Clinton near Smith Street in the Sts. Peter and Paul parish vicinity. This facility was sold to an investor in the 1950's and was later taken over by the parish's Athletic Club, which ran it until the 1960's, at which time the structure was destroyed by fire.

History of Assumption Parish in Black Rock

by Kathi White

Prior to the incorporation of Buffalo as a city in 1832, the original settlement of the village was known as Black Rock. One of the first Catholic churches founded in Black Rock was St. Francis Xavier German Catholic Church in 1850. In February 1859, Father John J. Zawistowski, who was born in Poland and ordained in Germany, joined the parish. His first assignment, from October 1857 to February 1859, was at St. Joseph's R.C. Church in Elysville, which is now part of Buffalo. According to Father Zawistowski, most of the earliest Polish settlers in Black Rock arrived from Silesia. Since they spoke German, they adapted well to life in Black Rock.

These immigrants affiliated themselves with French and German parishes—St. Louis, St. Michael, and St. Francis Xavier. The second wave of Polish emigrants, from Galicia, settled on Buffalo's East side. By the 1880's the number of Poles in Black Rock had increased significantly and they met to discuss forming a parish of their own. In 1888, Father Teophil Kozlowski was appointed the first pastor of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church.

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History of Assumption Parish in Black Rock

On September 8, 1888, the cornerstone was laid and, on November 21 of the same year, the church was incorporated. The dedication of the two-storied, red brick structure was held on January 6, 1889. The church was located on the second floor and classrooms were on the ground level. By 1903, the school housed 147 students. Due to the rapid increase in enrollment, the entire building was converted to a school and a new, elaborate church was built. It was dedicated by Rev. Ladislaus Hordych on August 16, 1914.

Pastors and their Tenure:

Rev. Teophil Kozłowski, 1888-1891; Rev. Victor Zareczny, 1891-1892; Rev. James Wojcik, 1893-1895; Rev. Thomas Stabenau, 1896-1900; Rev. Adam Marcinkiewicz, 1900-1901; Rev. Louis Chodacki, 1901-1914; Rev. Ladislaus Horydych, 1914-1925; Rev. Ladislaus Brejski, 1925-1961; Rev. Maximillian T. Bogacki, 1961. (Source material: Published work, *Millennium 966/1966*.)

Number of Early Baptisms:

Sept. 16-Dec. 23, 1888—4; Mar. 20-Dec. 25, 1889—25; Jan. 12-Dec. 23, 1890—44; Jan. 4-Dec. 31, 1891—63; Feb. 21-Dec. 25, 1892—58; Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 1893—63; Jan. 9-Dec. 24, 1894—53; Jan. 1-Dec. 22, 1895—110; Jan. 12-Dec. 25, 1896—58; Jan. 2-Dec. 19, 1897—64; Jan. 1-Dec. 25, 1898—5; Jan. 1-Dec. 24, 1899—68; Jan. 1-Dec. 30, 1900—73.

Marriage records indicate that 12 couples were married in 1890, 10 in 1891, 13 in 1892, and 9 in 1893. Following are the names of couples who were married at the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in 1890 and the witnesses to those marriages, as transcribed by Dr. Gredel.

Michael **Sidler** and Anna **Rodek**; wit. Joannes **Spodnik** and Catherine **Skatala**
 Antonius **Wierzchowski** & Rosalia **Ignatowska**; wit. Jos. **Frankowiak** & Maria **Miklas**

Adalbertus **Jakala** & Josepha **Kostusiak**; wit. Andreas **Mrazek** & Helena **Weyna**
 Joannes **Golata** & Sophia **Sitarek**; wit. Joseph **Andrzejewski** & Josepha **Knuth**
 Joannes **Szurgut** & Anna **Kniotek**; wit. Joannes **Kozłowski** & Helena **Weyna**
 Andreas **Mrozek** & Anna **Kuper**; wit. Jacobus **Strzemp** & Regina **Scichula**.
 Franciscus **Okonczak** & Barbara **Szulce**; wit. Joannes **Okonczak** & Maria **Przybyl**
 Joannes **Dypowski** & Catherina **Paluch**; wit. Joannes **Jaksut** & Hedwigis **Szerek**
 Joannes **Kulikowski** & Maria **Piwonska**; wit. Joannes **Panek** & Paulina **Bukowska**
 Ignatius **Szary** & ? **Mypztura**; wit. Laurentius **Chojerski** & Catherine **Galvin**
 Martinus **Jerzewski** & Cecla **Zietek**; wit. Max. **Kaczmarowski** & Cecilia **Zietek**

Memorial

Robert Pantera, D.D.S.

(Died July 1997)

In memory of Dr. Robert Pantera, who was a charter member and former president of the Polish Genealogical Society of Western New York. He contributed much of his time toward the advancement of the society and was always willing to help in any way he could. We extend our condolences to his wife, Angeline. He will be missed by all of us.

Bitten By The Bug

Two cousins were recently "bitten" by the same genealogy "bug". PGSNYS member, Dave Pavlock of Pensacola, Florida, and Anne Marie Grabowski-Costello of Kill Buck, New York (near Salamanca), began searching their Pawlak/Pavlock roots at about the same time.

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Cleveland Meets Buffalo in Erie

ERIE, Pa.—The Polish Genealogical Society of Greater Cleveland and the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State held a joint meeting, here, August 9, 1997.

The two groups met at a facility made available by Fr. Urbaniak, pastor of St. Stanislaus Church. Fr. Urbaniak gave the group a history of St. Stan's parish, which was founded in 1885. After the talk, the two groups socialized and discussed Polish ge-

nealogy.

Before the meeting, Daniel Kij, acting President, and Michael Drabik, founder of the Buffalo society, presented Cleveland president John F. Szuch with an original oil painting of General Casimir Pulaski. Szuch is a longtime collector of General Pulaski memorabilia and is currently working on a pictorial book on these Pulaski items. The painting was done by Buffalo member Laura A. Dory.

The two societies



Members from the Polish Genealogical Society of Greater Cleveland and the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State.

made plans for another Erie get-together, which was held October 25 at St. Stan's school cafeteria.

(Editor's note: The above article and picture about the meeting in Erie appeared in the November 1997 issue of the *Polish American Journal*.)

(Continued from page 10)

Bitten By The Bug

They discovered that the local saying, "If you're Polish and from Salamanca, you're probably related", had merit. Dave came up with the idea of compiling a list of Polish names from Salamanca to see where the crossovers occurred. An advertisement was subsequently placed in the local Salamanca newspaper. A request was made for people to bring documents of significance and/or family trees to the local library, where copies would be made for future reference. Mary Sartori, who is an employee at the Salamanca Library, has family in Poland and periodically visits there.

A book, which will include the data base of Polish names that Dave compiled, the documents that Anne Marie gathered, and the translations provided by Mary, is on the horizon. Anne Marie also recently completed a Family History Book, which includes autobiographical pages of family members, including pictures.

A family tree for Melchior Pawlak/Pavlock and

Michelina Przybylska; Melchior's son, Michael; and Michael's wife, Anna Emborsky/Imborski; has also been completed.

Last summer, an organizational meeting of the newly formed Cattaraugus County Genealogy Club was held and 32 individuals were present.

This is further evidence that the genealogy virus is spreading.

Tarnow Province

General Information

Area in square kilometers: **4151**

Number of towns: **9**

Total number of administrative districts: **47**

Population in thousands: **687.10**

Population per square kilometer: **166.00**

Urban population: **35.60%**

Number of people below working age: **32.00%**

Natural population increase: **6.10**

Net migration within Poland and abroad: **-.50**

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Tarnów Province

Industrial workers: **18.60%**
 Construction workers: **3.80%**
 Agricultural workers: **47.90%**
 Transport workers: **2.80%**
 Workers in commerce: **9.90%**
 Registered unemployed: **14.00%**

Total investment in billions of old zloty at current prices: **14.00**

Industrial production sold in billions of old zloty at current prices: **3695.60**

Total number of production plants: **17,486.20**

Districts

Bochnia, Bolesław, Borzecin, Brzesko, Brzostek, Ciekowice, Czarna, Czchów, Dąbrowa Tarnowska, Debica, Debno, Gnojnik, Gromnik, Greboszów, Iwkowa, Jodłowa, Lipnica Murowana, Lisia Góra, Medzzechów, Nowy Wisnicz, Olesno, Pilzno, Plesna, Radgoszcz, Radomysł Wielki, Rad-

low, Ryglice, Rzepiennik Strzyzewski, Rzezawa, Skrzyszów, Szczucin, Szczurowa, Szerzyny, Tarnów, Tuchów, Łapanów, Wadowice Górne, Wierchosławice, Wietrzychowice, Wojnicz, Zakliczyn, Zabno, Zegocina, Zyraków.

**Map**

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<http://bmb.ippt.gov.pl/poland/tarnow.html>

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