



# SEARCHERS



DEDICATED TO POLISH AMERICAN FAMILY RESEARCH

"Preserving Our Past Since 1988"

No. 20, Spring 1998

## My Great Grandfather's Grave

By Edward Kornowski

**T**his is the story of how I found my Great Grandfather's gravesite.

I had searched for the location of this grave for over a year and thought that there was no grave marker and that records were lost. Being an avid genealogy enthusiast, I kept on looking for its location. It was my intention to have a marker installed when I found the grave.

After going through census records, I estimated the year in which Michael Kornowski, my great grandfather, died. His name appeared in the 1880 census but not on the 1892 census. I later found his death certificate, at Buffalo City Hall, which listed the date of death as May 2, 1891. Place of burial was St. Adalbert's Cemetery.

I began my search by calling St. Adalbert's Cemetery and was informed that there are now three St. Adalbert's Cemeteries. I was told that the burial was probably at the Old Cemetery on Dale Road in Cheektowaga, New York, since the death occurred in 1891. Then, I was told that the records for this cemetery were lost in a fire and that only records after 1933 were available. At that point, I figured the only way to find the site was to physically read all the grave stones in the cemetery. I was also told that most markers in 1891 were wooden crosses and probably would have rotted away by now. There was an open field of grass where there were no markers, but I still needed additional information to find the exact location.

Upon looking through the microfilm of St. Adalbert's Church records at the Buffalo and Erie County Main Library, I discovered no entries of deaths

recorded in the church ledger. Several months later, at a meeting of the Polish Genealogical Society, I met some people who were also researching sites in this cemetery. They had been to St. Adalbert's Church on Stanislaus Street in Buffalo and had viewed the church records there.

My next stop was the rectory of St. Adalbert's. Since the church is not located in the best of neighborhoods, it was bolted up like Fort Knox, but after a bit of pounding on every door and window, I was greeted by Father Ted. I explained to him the reason for my visit and was allowed to view the death ledger, which was precisely the same as the microfilm. There were no entries from March to September of 1891. Father Ted, who was recently assigned to St. Adalberts, sensed my frustration and offered me another book—*The St. Adalbert's Cemetery Daily Journal*. Together we searched for my Great Grandfather's name. Zip! Nothing! Nada! Nothing at all under May 1891. Father Ted apologized and said, "Here, look for yourself." I sat and flipped the pages thinking I might find the name of another relative. Soon I noticed that the entries were arranged by sections, rows, and lines. This was the list of burials supposedly lost in a fire. The year 1891 began popping up numerous times for each section. At last, there he was—Michael Kornowski, section "K", grave 30, but no line number. Jackpot!

Back at the cemetery, I stopped at the caretaker's shop and asked the workers where section "K" was. "We don't know", was the answer. They showed me a book that they made by writing down all the names from the gravestones. Kornowski was not in the book, so they suggested that I check with the main office at 6200 Broadway in Lancaster, New York. Maybe they could tell me where section "K" was.

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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.

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### Tentative Meeting Schedule for 1998

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, unless otherwise stated.

### Reporters (This Issue)

Edward Prabucki  
Edward Kornowski  
Dorothy Cook

May 14	June 11	Aug 13	Sept 10
July (TBA)	Cheektowaga	Oct 8	Nov 19
	Town Park	Dec 10	Christmas
	Park (Picnic)		Party

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## My Great Grandfather's Grave

At the main office, I spoke to Terry Gladkowski, the superintendent. He never heard of a section "K" but showed me all the maps he had and told me that some older graves were once located where the railroad tracks are now. These graves were apparently moved but he did not know the section letter of that area. I promised to keep him informed because I would want to put a marker on this grave. I then decided to visit the cemetery again to record the names and dates of graves from the year 1891. I could get a few from the open field and then match them up with the book at the church. So I returned to the cemetery and walked around recording names and dates. At that time, I discovered the grave of the infant son of my cousin Leonard Kornowski and his wife Kathy—Leonard P. Kornowski—who died in 1971. This is located in the tree area known as the baby section.

Then, I returned to St. Adalbert's rectory to compare my notes to the ledger. I was able to confirm at least six names as being in section "K", so I wrote down the location numbers, and went back to the cemetery placing a paper with the number on each of the six known graves. Section "K" was just beyond, and to the left of the baby section, with the first row being right past the trees. I still had not determined which line was the one in which Michael was buried, since the line was left blank in the book. Judging from the entries, I assumed it would be line one, two, or three. Line one had few markers—only one large stone near the road, which was weathered and hard to read. That was enough for one day. Finding the section was enough of a thrill for the moment.

My plan, then, was to try to establish the location of graves in the number 30 spot. If I got enough, I could stretch a string to line one and go from there. "Too bad I didn't copy the name on the large stone at the end," I thought, "I could use that as a reference point."

After working on Saturday, I decided to stop by the cemetery on the way home to see if I could get the name off the large stone. I would need it when I visited the church on Monday. I had previously

planned on bringing some colored chalk to rub on the letters to enhance them. However, I was coming home from work and had none with me. It snowed that Saturday, but I figured as long as the road was plowed I could get the name quickly.

When I arrived at the site, the bottom part of the stone was partially covered with snow. As I removed the snow, parts of the stone remained damp and slightly darker than the rest of it. This made the letters easier to see and I was able to make out the last letters: "*o-w-s-k-i*". This did not excite me too much, because many Polish names have that ending. As I continued to remove more snow, I was unable to suppress a smile, which then became a laugh. There was the name *M. KORNOWSKI* staring back at me.

Jackpot! Not only did I find the grave, but it already had a marker. There is quite a bit of writing in Polish on the upright portion and it is well weathered. I plan on returning to photograph the marker and try to decipher it.

This is how I found the grave of my great grandfather, the *Emigrator*, Michael Kornowski. He arrived here in America on April 20, 1880. Today, 106 years after his death, he rests in peace only 25 feet away from his great grandson.

Sometimes persistence *does* pay off. Finding this grave was a very rewarding moment of my life.

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## Easter and Its Rituals

By Laurie Bialoglowicz

**E**aster, the most joyous day of the Christian year, is a moveable feast. It occurs on a different date, set by lunar calculations, every year. In a.d. 325 the Council of Nice, during the Papacy of Pope Gregory the Great, designated that Easter would fall on the first Sunday following the full moon that appears on or after the vernal equinox (March 21). One of the reasons for this was that pilgrims needed moonlight to travel to the great Easter Festivals. It can never occur before March 22 or after April 25.

Many of the rituals associated with this feast are pagan in origin, since it occurs in the spring when the pagan people of Europe and Asia held their Spring Festivals as a celebration of new life.

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### Letters to the Editor:

Short of staking my life on it, I'm almost certain there's an incorrect statement on page 9 of No. 19, the Winter 1997 edition of the Searchers.

With regard to the following statement: "Prior to the incorporation of Buffalo as a city in 1832, the original settlement of the village was known as Black Rock." I believe it should read, "Prior to the annexation of Black Rock by Buffalo in 1854, the original settlement of the village was known as Black Rock". Also, shouldn't Black Rock read "New Amsterdam"? Here is some information my research revealed:

**Black Rock** - Below what are now Niagara and School Streets, the **black rock** underlined by dark limestone rose four or five feet above the Niagara River. There was no true settlement until after the Jay Treaty of 1792. In 1802, New York State secured title from the Iroquois to a mile-wide strip of land along the Niagara River. For the next decade, Buffalo attracted the greater number of settlers while Black Rock controlled the Erie harboring and shipping business. Naval yards on Scajaquada Creek built five ships that contributed to Perry's victory at the Battle of Lake Erie. Housing lots were first laid out near the "rock" which

became known as the Upper Village of Black Rock. The Lower Village of Black Rock, or Black Rock Dam, was later located north of Scajaquada Creek. Black Rock was annexed by Buffalo in 1854.

**Buffalo** - Located at the mouth of the Buffalo Creek outside of the State Reservation. In the 1780's or 1790's, most settlers remained only as long as the primitive environment prevailed. Joseph Ellicott wrote that, "This building spot is situated about 60 perches (?) from the lake". Ellicott also plotted a grid system of streets with some east/west avenues striking off in acute angles from Niagara Square. He was concerned that the Indians would insist that one of their reservations would intrude upon a site north of Buffalo Creek. Ellicott finished laying out the town in 1801 but did not make his first land sale until 1804. He referred to the city as New Amsterdam. By 1811, New Amsterdam, or Buffalo Village, as it came to be called, extended north to Chippewa, east to Ellicott Street and west to Pearl Street. It contained numerous houses, four taverns, eight stores, a court house, a jail, and a newspaper. Buffalo was incorporated as a city in 1832.

*Dorothy Cook*

### Long Shot

While checking naturalization records at county hall, I usually engage in conversation with other searchers. Sometimes I can help them or they might be able to help me. One time, there was another gentleman searching through the naturalization index cards. He appeared to know what he was doing, so I did not offer to assist. Also, I was in a rush and didn't want to get delayed "shooting the bull".

A short time later, I was in the other room reading census books when the fellow came up to the counter to have some copies made. The clerk asked him if it was the Bernard Prentiss page he wanted copied. My ears perked up! "Bernard Prentiss?" I asked. "I just happen to have a few pages of notes on him." It turns out the fellow was a nephew of Prentiss and was doing a family history. The Prentiss family is that of my wife's grand-

mother.

Needless to say, we got together and exchanged pictures and information. I was able to obtain a picture of my wife's great grandmother and another of her great great grandmother. All this by a chance meeting in the basement of County Hall.

*Edward Kornowski*

**Editors Note:** I'd like to thank those who have contributed to this column, and encourage others to do so. I'm certain most long-time researchers have had some interesting coincidental experiences. I'd like to invite you to share them with us. Also, if any of our members, whether local or out-of-town, have researched a topic they would like to share with other members in this newsletter, please send your stories to:

**Laurie Bialoglowicz**  
1064 Reynolds Road  
Corfu, New York 14036

or

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## Easter and Its Rituals

Its name may have derived from that of the goddess *Eostre* or *Ostera*, although some believe that it has its origin in the word *oster*, which means "to rise".

Although there is uncertainty about the date of the Nativity, we do know that the Resurrection occurred in the spring because it took place at the time of the Jewish Passover, when God smote the first-born of the Egyptians and passed over the homes of the Israelites who had marked their doors with the blood of the lamb. The Jews celebrated this on Saturday, but Christians chose the following Sunday, believing that it was on the morning after the Sabbath, the first day of the week, that Mary saw her risen Lord at dawn in the garden.

Some people believe that if Easter falls on March 25, the date which was thought to be the day of the Crucifixion, some national misfortune will follow before the next Eastertide. It is also believed to be an ill omen for either the Day of Resurrection or Good Friday to fall on that date.

In early times, Lent started on a Sunday, but when this day was exempted from fasting, the number of days of fast was decreased to 36. Therefore, the four days preceding the first Sunday were added, and Ash Wednesday the day on which ashes are placed on the foreheads of the penitential, became the first day of Lent. The ashes for this observance are obtained by burning the remains of palms from Palm Sunday of the previous year.

The three or four days before the beginning of Lent (Egg Saturday, Quinquagesima Sunday, Collop Monday, and Shrove Tuesday) have traditionally been a time of festivity so that food which could not be eaten during lent would be cleaned up in a series of feasts. Practical jokes and mischievous pranks were also tolerated because this was the time of the "Last Fling" before the quietude of Lent. In Germany, the Thursday before Ash Wednesday was *Wife's Night*, a day on which women ran through the streets and played tricks on all the men they met along the way.

In pre-Reformation days, Christians were expected to prepare for fasting by confessing their sins and being *shriven*. The day before Ash Wednesday became known as Shrove Tuesday and soon became a time of hilarity and feasting. In England, this day is known as Pancake Day or Goodish Day (because good things are eaten then). After morning services, the bell that once called the faithful to be shriven (now called the pancake bell), is rung. It is the signal for fun to begin and the pancakes to

be made. The Roman feast, *Fornacalia* (Feast of Ovens), also occurred in February, and the making of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday may have derived from those days when small wheaten cakes were eaten.

In European countries, children went *lent crocking* on Shrove Tuesday, requesting eggs and meats as they went from house to house. They threw broken crockery at the doors of those who refused them. In English towns, boys celebrated Nickanan Night or Shrove Monday by removing gates and door hinges and hiding them. They also took off with brooms, pails, and other portable items that householders neglected to lock up.

To children of East European ancestry this day was *Pączki Day*, when the smell of yeast dough rising in a bowl was present. Each year, I impatiently waited for that first doughnut to cool so that I could sample one. Anyone living near a German bakery will also recall the pleasure of eating fresh *Fastnachtkuchens*.

Celebrations during the three days preceding the Lenten season began in Italy. Three days of shrove still continue in Latin countries of Europe and South America. It is not known when Mardi Gras (literally fat Tuesday), adapted from Mardi Gras celebrations of Italy and France, began in the western hemisphere. When Charles d'Iberville planted the French flag in 1699, near what is now Billoxi, he remembered that it was Shrove Tuesday and feasted his own men and a friendly tribe of Indians with wine. This was said to be the first Mardi Gras celebration in the New World, and Billoxi celebrates the occasion in the traditional manner with parades, balls, and masquerades.

Mardi Gras in New Orleans, the gayest of these celebrations, began in 1827, and Mobile's first celebration occurred in 1830. In Alabama, Florida, New Orleans, and the province of Quebec in Canada, it is a legal holiday.

In England the mid-Lent, or fourth Sunday, is called Mothering Sunday. It was at that time that people returned to the church in which they were baptized and brought up to attend services. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, servants and those working away from home, were granted a holiday so that they might visit their mothers on this day. Children would meet under their parents' roof, bringing *simnel* cakes (A rich plum cake which is believed to have been named after two bakers—Simnel and Nelly) and other small gifts to their mothers. This practice is still carried on in provincial towns.

Holy Week, which starts on Palm Sunday, the

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## Easter and Its Rituals

celebration of Christ's triumphant march into Jerusalem, is the stage upon which the drama of the last days of Christ is acted out in the church. In the Roman Catholic Church, this event is commemorated by the carrying of palms in procession. The Sallow Willow often takes the place of palms in England. Where willows are scarce, box or hazel is used to decorate homes and churches. Until recent times, the Welsh ate figs or fig pudding at their midday meal on this day, and older people still refer to it as Fig Sunday. Another English name for this day is Spanish Sunday, a title which comes from the practice of children making a drink from broken pieces of Spanish liquorice. Ordinary water could not be used for this drink. It had to be drawn from a particular holy or wishing well in the neighborhood, and a special pilgrimage was made to obtain it.

Maundy Thursday, the name given to Holy Thursday, is believed to have derived its name from *mandatum* in reference to the new commandment of love which Our Lord gave His Apostles at the Last Supper (*Love one another and do this in memory of me*). It's the day when Christ washed the feet of the twelve Apostles. The Pope washes the feet of thirteen priests, twelve representing the Apostles and the thirteenth, who is always young, representing the Angel who is said to have come to the table of St. Gregory the Great. The kings of France and England also did this but they did not always wash the feet of only twelve men. Some kings washed the feet of as many men as there were years in their own age, with one king washing the feet of 52 men. Before the Revolution, the Archbishop of Moscow also performed this ritual.

Good Friday, Crucifixion Day, may be a corruption of God's Friday. This is a legal holiday in many countries, including some parts of the United States. In parts of Europe, it is called **Holy** or **Great** Friday, and in Denmark, it is known as **Langfredag**, or **Long** Friday, with *long* having the same connotation as *great*.

On this day, blacksmiths would not shoe a horse or work with nails because of the use nails were put to on Calvary. In the Isle of Man, householders never used iron tools in the home on that day for the same reason. Fire irons and griddles were put away, and if a fire needed stoking, it was done with a *rowan-wood stick*. Farmers did not work with horses; fishermen stayed ashore because they believed it to be impious and ill-omened to go out to sea on that day; and miners would not go into the

pit because they thought some disaster would occur if they did. It was also said to be unlucky to wash linens or clothes on this day and it was believed that anyone who did so would find the water stained with blood.

In Spain, seeds are planted on Good Friday because it is believed they will always thrive since this is the one day of the year that the soil is said to be redeemed from the power of Satan. A figure of straw or some other material, representing Judas Iscariot, was dragged through the streets of Portugal, and crockery was broken on that day in Devonshire in the belief that the jagged edges of each broken piece would pierce the body of the betrayer. A straw figure called Jack-a-Lent was dragged about on Ash Wednesday and pelted with stones and mud, then burned or shot to pieces with guns in many English parishes. It, too, was supposed to represent Judas.

The children of Liverpool still "burn Judas" at Easter in some parts of the city. Very early in the morning, girls and boys with blackened faces march through the streets carrying a figure of a man dressed in old clothes. They parade through the area shouting "Judas! Judas!" until they tire of the sport. Then they make a bonfire on some convenient waste ground and throw the effigy into the flames. They dance around the fire with joined hands.

Mayan Indians of X-cacal light new fires for the year on the morning of Holy Saturday. These fires represent Christ, who is returned to life. In Holland, Germany, and southern Sweden, Easter bonfires are lit on Easter Eve while in some rural areas of Holland, boys chase girls around the fires and throw soot on them. This messy practice is not resented by the victims because it is supposed to bring good luck.

People of Great Britain and Ireland go to the top of a hill before dawn to watch the sun rise, since they believe that the sun dances on Easter morning. If a person is unable to see the dance, it is because the devil is standing between him and the sun. The figure of a lamb is said to be seen in the sun on Easter morning.

Easter eggs, hot cross buns, and the Easter Hare were all part of pagan rituals. Symbols of Eostre are the egg and the rabbit, signifying fertility. Eggs were dyed with herbs and onionskins, painted, marked with names, hung on trees, and hidden in baskets. They were painted red for Thor and yellow for Eostre. Germans broke their egg shells because witches, who could not cross water on foot, were able to cross in egg shell boats.

The children of Hungary exchange eggs as tokens of friendship and, in some parts of the country, they are



hung on little Easter trees which young men set up outside the homes of girls they admire. In Yugoslavia, they are marked with the letters XV for *Christos vaskrese* (Christ is risen). Geometrical or abstract patterns, or Christian symbols like the Fish and the Cross, are often used in Poland. One of the legends told to account for the presence of eggs on the Easter table is that the first *pisanki* were made by Our Lady in Nazareth when Jesus was an infant. She boiled eggs and painted them red, green, and yellow to amuse her son. Since then, every good mother or housewife always has done the same, and because eggs are symbols of new life, they do it on the day of the Resurrection.

In Russia, Poland, and other East European countries, the traditional greeting on Easter Day is, "Christ is Risen," to which a person replies, "He is risen indeed." The Easter table is set out and eaten at any time from early morning onwards. The food is blessed beforehand by the priest who says a prayer over it and sprinkles it with holy water. In Poland the table is decorated with green leaves. In the center sits a lamb made of sugar, bearing the sacred flag, and all around are cold roast pork, ham, sausages, salads of various kinds, cakes, and other sweets. "*Pisanki*" are *always* included.

There are egg rollings and egg hunts. Some people even take red eggs to church and eat them at a specific time in the service as a symbol of the end of Lenten fasts. The custom of egg rolling at the White House is said to have been started by the wife of President Madison, and to have continued without interruption ever since, except in times of war.

It is customary almost everywhere to put on new clothes at Easter, a whole outfit if possible, or at least a new hat or new pair of gloves. If one can't afford that, a new tie, scarf, some ribbons, or even a pair of shoelaces is enough.

In England the practice of Lifting or heaving, to commemorate Our Lord's rising, was carried on. On Monday, the young men of the village took a chair decorated with flowers and greenery and lifted the women of each house three times. The girls took the chair and lifted the men on the following day. Sometimes the frolicking got too wild, and the practice gradually died out.

The Monday after Easter is Ducking Monday in Hungary; it was the day on which young men formerly dragged girls to ponds at dawn and threw them in. In Poland, boys and girls splash each other and sometimes follow the splashing with a mock fight in which hard-boiled eggs are the weapons. This practice, called *Dingus*

or *Smegus*, lasted for two days during the Middle Ages, and those who took part in it dressed up in the clothes of the opposite sex. It was later forbidden by the Church but continues until today in a milder form.

*Dingus Day* parties continue to mark the end of the Lenten season in Western New York and other parts of the United States. Just as everyone is Irish on St. Patrick's Day, you don't have to be Polish to enjoy a good *Dingus Day* party.

## Missing Marriage Records of Assumption R.C. Church

*By Dorothy Cook*

Whenever I read a history of the Assumption R.C. Church in Buffalo, New York, I find it odd that persons interested in *very* early records of this parish don't find it unusual that baptisms are recorded from September 1888, deaths listed from 1888, but no marriages were recorded until 1890.

My grandmother spoke to us of having been married here at the earliest, or one of the earliest, ceremonies in the church (Wieczorek/Drzewiecka). Two other couples spoke their vows on the same morning in the autumn of 1888. According to my grandmother, the marriages were not performed in the church proper but on the lower level. I first thought she meant the basement, but after reading more about the church, it's conceivable that she was referring to the school on the first floor.

About fifteen years ago, the parish had some very early record books, which were 10" x 12" and 1" thick. There was one for baptisms and one for deaths, but the one for marriages was no longer available and no one seemed to know of it or whether it still existed. I checked St. Francis Xavier marriages and all Polish Catholic Churches in operation prior to 1890 in the hope that a visiting priest (who might have performed the ceremonies) had accidentally taken this early marriage book to his home-parish rectory.

Any information regarding the above would be greatly appreciated.

~~~~~  
More of our problems are caused by good people  
being weak than by evil ones being powerful.  
~~~~~

*Mark Walters*



## My Beloved Ancestral Mothers

*By Edward Prabucki*

**T**his research of the maiden names of my mother and ancestral mothers has had the same effect on me as that of my ancestral fathers—one of sublime mystery and emotional intrigue. I felt a deeply rooted, profound need to dedicate my time to honor my ancestral fathers. Presently, I feel that my ancestral mothers require the same dedication because of their compassion and devotion to their faith and their children. After finding each of their maiden names, the revelations of their infinite sorrows became evident through tragic, historic statistics.

I felt the need to stride through the window of knowledge to put into print more than is revealed in Church records. Our ancestral mothers were very cognizant of what Our Lord intended them to do—to perpetuate their love and devotion for their descendants. Church and Civil records have their limitations because they are just statistics. It is through Polish History that the story of their lives and devotion comes to light. The advice I received from members of the Polish Genealogical Society was that one must start with his mother.

My mother, **Mary Petyk**, was very devoted and very dependable in times of need, but she left us far too soon. To me, she was a precious treasure, but even more, she was a "Gift from God". I am certain that my ancestral mothers were not under the illusion that theirs would be the riches of this earth. When I became aware of my mother's arrival from Poland in 1905 in the arms of my grandmother, **Jozefa (Rutkowska) Petyk**, as a teenager, I questioned her relentlessly for more personal information. I learned of my mother's attendance at Corpus Christi parochial school, her First Holy Communion in 1913, her employment at Duffy's Silk Mill during World War I, and her first contact with my father. To my disappointment, it was a lackluster meeting and wasn't very romantic. It would have seemed more romantic if they had met at a social dance at Dom Polski or at a card party and dance at Corpus Christi, but this was not the case. I was informed that Grandfather Petyk advertised for boarders during World War I, and my father, Jan Prabucki, answered the ad. Franciszek Prabucki, who had shared an apartment with him, volunteered to serve with the Polish Blue Army and, since my father was then left alone, he sought residence elsewhere. Nevertheless, this unromantic meeting resulted in marriage on June 19,

1919, and the births of three sons and a daughter.

My father informed me about another ancestral mother, **Rozalia Skrzeczkowska**, a very loving mother who gave birth to seven children. Sadly, only three of them survived. She lived, or rather existed, under the harsh economic conditions of want and adversity under Russian domination of Poland. After her only surviving son, my father, left for America in 1913, she lost contact with him during World War I. She feared that he was serving with the U. S. Army in a hell hole in France, and I found out that she was in tears every day and died of grief on March 3, 1918.

My search for my third ancestral mother began in the church records of the Warsaw and Gdansk Provinces, since I was aware that it was there that my ancestors lived and were baptized. It was with ecstasy that I read on a micro reader that my ancestral father Piotr, husband of Rozalia, was born to Michal and **Tekli Paczkowska** (my third ancestral mother). What I thought was impossible became a reality through these records. Tekli Paczkowska, who was a dedicated soul living under austere conditions, was married on February 13, 1859. She lived in an era when Polish citizens were burdened by heavy taxation, survived the Insurrection of 1863-64, and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Jan Prabucki (a brother-in-law) became a death statistic in 1864, and it is my belief that he was involved in the Insurrection, since he lived near Warsaw. As I perused these records, I began to feel that their faith in Poland was strong but their allegiance to Russia was not. To my dismay (and that of many other Poles doing research in this area), it was decreed during this time, that all church and civil records be written in Cyrillic in the section of Poland that was under Russian occupation.

Soon, I began to search for the maiden name of another ancestral mother. Michal Prabucki, son of Roch Prabucki and **Mary Gocaton** (my fourth ancestral mother) was baptized on June 3, 1836. They also had two other sons and survived the Insurrection of 1830-32. Church records indicate that there were heavy casualties during this time. Five Prabuckis died within one month—two on August 30, 1831, two prior to that date, and one on September 6, 1831. Since the Russian Army had marched through the town of my ancestors during those days, who can say that they didn't die at the hands of the Russians. When the Insurrection failed, Czar Nicholas I took out his revenge on all Polish citizens and many youths were sent to Siberia. Though she faced a dismal future, without the assistance of her sons to ease the

### Prabucki Family Matrimonial Chart (1598-1975)

Date of Marriage	Birth	Mothers & Ancestral Mothers	Residence	Children
1975 Edward D.	1949	Carol Chmura	Buffalo, N.Y.	(2)
1947 Edward R.	1921	Rita Podlas	Buffalo, N.Y.	(8)
1919 John A.	1892	Maryanna Petyk	Buffalo, N.Y.	(4)
1890 Piotr	1864	Rozalia Skrzeczkowska	Grady, Poland	(7)
1859 Mikolaj	1836	Tekli Paczkowska	Udrzyn, Poland	(5)
1827 Roch	1804	Maryanna Gocaton	Udrzyn, Poland	(3)
1797 Jozef	1764	Wiktorja Kwiatkowska	Udrzyn, Poland	(5)
1760 Kazimierz	1731	Jadwiga	Poreba, Poland	(4)
1727 Andrzej	1705	Maryanna	Poreba, Poland	(6)
1698 Tomasz	1674	Maryanna	Poreba, Poland	(2)
1672 Gregorz	1646	Zofia	Poreba, Poland	(3)
1643 Albertous	?	Agnieszka	Poreba, Poland	(2)
1598 Laurentium	1580	Jadwiga	Plock, Poland	

I have my doubts as to whether Laurentium and Jadwiga are part of the Family Tree due to the time span and the fact that they were married in Plock.

burden of her daily existence, my ancestral mother survived.

Once again, I sought the name of another ancestral mother (my fifth), but I needed to know who the parents of Roch were. I discovered that he was born to Jozef Prabucki and **Wiktorja Kwiatkowska** on August 22, 1804. Hers was the most tragic of all the lives of my ancestors. Her teen-age years were uncertain, turbulent years for she lived under the reign of the last King of Poland, Stanislaw Poniatowski. She witnessed the Russian Invasion of 1792 and the Kosciuszko Insurrection of 1794. The three sons of Kazimierz and Jadwiga Prabucki—Andrzej, born on November 4, 1766; Stanislaw, born on February 29, 1769; and Walenty, born on February 14, 1773—were not found in the death records of the church, and I feel they were directly or indirectly involved in these wars. They may have lost their lives or

been deported to Siberia, along with tens of thousands of Polish youths, on the orders of Catherine of Russia. Two years after the Third Partition of Poland, Wiktorja married Jozef Prabucki, the youngest son of Kazimierz and Jadwiga, on June 25, 1797. Her teen-age son and four other male relatives in their late teens and early twenties, who were from the same town, did not survive the Napoleonic Wars. No statistics on them were found in the church records. Wiktorja died on September 6, 1831—the very day that the Russian Army began its siege on the defenders of Warsaw—and I wonder if she was a victim of this final tragedy.

Upon returning to the church records, I found the birth of Jozef, son of Kazimierz and **Jadwiga** Prabucka (my sixth ancestral mother), on March 18, 1764. However, her maiden name was not listed in the records. She

*(Continued on page 10)*

(Continued from page 9)

## My Beloved Ancestral Mothers

was married in 1760 and had two sons who were born during the reign of the Saxon King, Augustus the Third, and two more born under King Stanislaw Poniatowski. The Saxon Kings held court in Dresden and were more interested in personal gain than in the welfare of Poland. Three of Jadwiga's sons were lost during the violent days of 1792-1794.

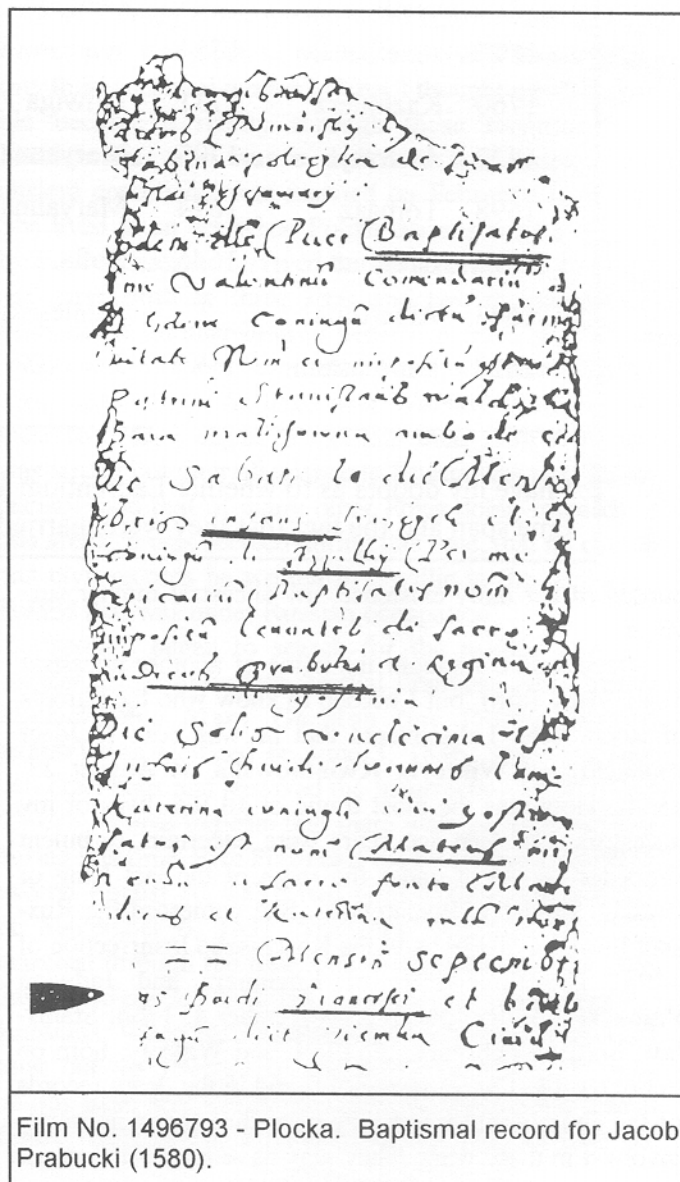
Kazimierz was born on March 5, 1731, to Andrzej Prabucki and **Maryanna** (my seventh ancestral mother). Maryanna gave birth to six sons; I was unable to find out her maiden name. They lived during the time of King August II, a questionable ruler of Poland who signed a treaty with Russia that guaranteed Polish independence. I feel that Poland, at this time, sowed the seeds of appeasement with Russia and Prussia and reaped a harvest of unwanted intervention that led to Poland's demise.

I continued my research, although many of my family members thought that more information was unobtainable. My search revealed that Andrzej was born to Tomasz and **Maryanna** Prabucka (my eighth ancestral mother) on November 7, 1705. Maryanna was married on November 14, 1698, and gave birth to two sons—Lukasz and Andrzej—during the reign of King Stanislaw Leszczynski, who was forced out by the devious manipulators of Polish elections. During her teen years, she lived under King Jan Sobieski. In my opinion, Sobieski was the last of the patriotic rulers of Poland, and history reveals him to be a successful defender of Europe during the invasions by the Turks in September 1683. Though he headed an army of 25,000 Polish youths, I was unable to find out anything about those who served under him. Maryanna had three male relatives of military age—Grzegosz, Warzyniec, and Ignacy—but I sincerely doubt that any of them served in the Polish Army during that period.

My perseverance was rewarded when I found the record of the birth of Tomasz on December 9, 1674, to Grzegosz and **Zofia** Prabucka (my ninth ancestral mother) in Poreba. It was during this era that King Jan Sobieski defended Poland from the raids of the Cossacks, the Tartars, the Swedes, and the Ottoman Turks. These rapacious savages felt that Poland, an Agrarian Nation, would not be too difficult to overcome. Thanks to Sobieski's knowledge of the use of cavalry and infantry, they were defeated.

As I progressed, my search became more difficult, but I found the record of the birth of Grzegosz in Poreba. He was born to Albertous and **Agnieszka** Prabucka on March 6, 1646. Agnieszka, my tenth ancestral mother, lived under three kings—Wladislaw IV, Casimer II, and M. Wisniowiecki. The "Thirty Years War" was beginning and the raids on Poland commenced. Charles X of Sweden and the Muscovites kept Poland in constant turmoil. Again, I was unable to obtain Agnieszka's maiden name.

Finally, my research came to an end. In my final tribute, I can only offer my sincere prayers to my ancestral mothers—five whose maiden names were recorded, and the five precious ones whose maiden names were not recorded—and I thank God for his beautiful gifts to me.



Film No. 1496793 - Plocka. Baptismal record for Jacob Prabucki (1580).



## POTPOURRI

### April Meeting

Due to the fact that Villa Maria College students will be having their spring break during the time of our regularly scheduled meeting, we will convene in the Special Collections area of the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library at Lafayette Square on Saturday, April 18, at 10 a.m.

### Congratulations!

Alice and Bronislaus Prabucki will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary on May 1, 1998. They will be returning from their winter retreat in Ocala, Florida, to renew their vows at Infant of Prague Church. Their relatives will join in honoring them on this occasion.

### Former Market Broadway Manager Dies

Michael J. Baranski, who was manager of the Broadway Market in the 1980's died March 23,

1998. He was the brother of actress Christine Baranski, who appears on *Cybil*, a weekly television sitcom. He was 48 years old.

### FEEFHS News

The president of FEEFHS has cancelled plans for the 1998 Convention on the advice of the FEEFHS Executive Council due to unsatisfactory arrangements. The 1999 Convention will be held in Los Angeles September 22-26 at the Airtel Plaza Hotel and Conference Center in Van Nuys.

### New Officers

The new officers for 1998 are: **Daniel Kij**, President; **Lynn Mycek-Rzepecki**, Vice-President; **Florence Witul**, Secretary; **David Newman**, Treasurer; and **Janice Bartoszek, Dorothy Cook, Dorothy Krantz, Edward Prabucki, Joseph Welch**, Trustees. We congratulate them and are looking forward to an interesting and informative year.

*The following excerpts have been taken from **Where Are They Sleeping?**, A Complete Listing of Cemeteries & Burial Sites in Genesee County. Printed with the permission of Susan L. Conklin, Genesee County Historian.*

## Plants Carved Onto Gravestones and Their Meanings

<b>Daisy</b>	Innocence	<b>Poinsettia</b>	Birth of Hope
<b>Forget-me-not</b>	True Love	<b>Pomegranate</b>	Resurrection
<b>Grape or Grape Vines</b>	Emblem of Christ "I am the Vine"	<b>Poppy</b>	Sleep, Rest, or Consolation
<b>Honeysuckle</b>	Resurrection	<b>Primrose</b>	Love, Memory, Youth or Sadness
<b>Iris</b>	Protection	<b>Rose</b>	Human Love or Passion
<b>Ivy</b>	Friendship or Remembrance	<b>Shamrock</b>	Trinity
<b>Lily</b>	Purity or Resurrection	<b>Thistle</b>	Sin or Fall of Man
<b>Lily of the Valley</b>	Humility	<b>Tulip</b>	Charity or Love
<b>Morning glory</b>	Resurrection	<b>Vine</b>	Blood of Christ or Followers of Christ
<b>Myrtle</b>	Love or Triumph	<b>Violet</b>	Modesty
<b>Oak</b>	Strength, Endurance or Majesty	<b>Willow</b>	Grief
<b>Pine and Cone</b>	Fertility and Regeneration, or Healing		

## Gravestone Symbols and Their Meanings

<b>Angel</b>	Messenger of God to Man
<b>Anchor</b>	Hope or Safety
<b>Bible</b>	Charity
<b>Book</b> (Open)	Perfect Knowledge
(Closed)	Concealed From Man
<b>Dove</b>	Spirit of Love
<b>Single Hand</b>	
<b>with a Finger</b>	
<b>Pointing Up</b>	Rest in Heaven
<b>Hands Shaking</b>	Meeting in Heaven
<b>I.H.S. or I.H.C.</b>	
(Greek Letters)	"Jesus, Saviour of Man"
<b>Lamb</b>	Innocence or Modesty
<b>Rose</b>	Human Love or Passion
<b>Urn</b>	Death (A vessel for ashes of a cremated body)
<b>Willow</b>	Grief or Sadness

(If you find a hand folding a rose that is broken, it is usually for a young woman who died before becoming a mother.)

## Tombstones

*Following is a list of materials used for grave-stones and the years those materials were most prevalent.*

**1790-1830**

Slate or Sometimes Sandstone

**1830-1840**

Hard Marble

*Popular motifs: Weeping Willows and Urns*

**1840-1870**

Softer Marble

*Decorative Designs and Cursive Inscriptions*

**1870-1900**

Marble, Cast Iron, Zinc Alloy (white bronze)

*Creative Designs: Books on Pedestals, Tree Trunks, and Monuments*

**1900-2000**

Polished Granite

*Bold Lettering to Computer-generated Designs*



# Happy Easter

### POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK STATE

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Buffalo, New York 14206

