



SEARCHERS



Number 28 & 29

POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK STATE

Spring/Summer2001

PRESERVING OUR PAST SINCE 1988

Finale Of The Missing Headstone

by Edward Prabucki

A decade or so ago, Rita Prabucki, my wife, drove to St. Stanislaus Cemetery in Cheektowaga, New York on Memorial Day to place flowers on the grave of her grandfather, Jan Milinski. I, who understood the most her dedication in her visits to the cemetery, understood the least on seeing the removal of that headstone from her grandfather's grave site. Little was said and much less explained to us by those in authority. (But much later in time their silence was somewhat understood via an email.) In light of this, I could not minimize her loss for answers, and needless to say her loss compounded my sorrow.

Never losing our dedication to obtain the reason for its removal, we sought some answers to this loss, but sadly it continued to be a never ending research project, until one evening as I checked my email. On the PGSNYS membership mailing list, Ed Kornowski posted a email re: *Adventure Anyone?* It read as follows: *We have come across a cemetery stone and would like to research it. It is located on the old Donner Hanna / Republic Steel site. The writing on it is Spoczywa S P JAN MILINSKI Ur sie 23 Wrzc 1877 Um 27(?) Maja 1909 Brost(?) Zdrowas Marya. I have searched the Internet and can't seem to find anything. The stone is cracked and what I was wondering is where it belongs and how it got to where it is. If possibly there was a cemetery there or if the stone was somehow moved to this site. It is now near railroad property and a steel company. I would appreciate it if you could help. Thank you, Karen McLeod*



Milinski buried there, born Sept. 1877 died May 1909. The other part is that he asks for a "Hail Mary" to be said. This may prove to be where it is from ! Don't have another logical explanation. Michal PGSNYS

Karen's reply is as follows: Hi, You were right, I called St. Stan. Cemetery and that is where he is buried and they are coming Saturday to pick up the stone. Thanks for your help. Karen

There were many times we were confronted with a dilemma compounded by frustrated dead-ends as well as inexplicable indifference from many we asked. I am proud of my wife's dedication to seek a closure over this loss as well as that of Rita Hider, Dave Newman and Laurel Keough who assisted us in creating a Website for Jan Milinski. Also to Mike Drabik for his quick reply to Karen McLeod and his knowledge of Buffalo's Polonia.

My final comment is that to ignore a problem is indolence, to forget is moral weakness.

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The PGSNYS meets the second Thursday of each month in the Villa Maria College cafeteria
240 Pine Ridge Road, Cheektowaga, New York, at 7:00 p.m.

Membership Dues... A reminder from the Treasurer:

Dues are \$15.00 for the year. This entitles you to 3 editions of the Searchers. New members receive an information package to help them get started. Annual membership dues are to be received by your expiration date which will be listed in the upper right hand corner of the mailing label. Please refer to this date when paying dues the following year.

Please notify us of any change of address.

For submission to the Searchers Newsletter, deadlines are as follows:

Spring Edition - April 15th for June mailing

Summer Edition - June 15th for August mailing

Winter Edition - October 15th for December mailing

Contact: **Lynn Mycek Rzepecki** articles@pgsnys.org

Mail

Due to the large amount of mail received, please take note when writing us for assistance: The PGSNYS will answer ONLY correspondence that includes a self-addressed, stamped reply envelope. All correspondence should be directed to:

The Polish Genealogical Society of New York State
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.

PGSNYS Officers For Year 2001:

President	David E. Newman	president@pgsnys.org
Vice President	Edward W. Kornowski	ekornowski@aol.com
Secretary	Daniel Domino	Domino8@prodigy.net
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Founder	Michal Drabik	michal50@juno.com

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James Lyons	jjklyons@froggernet.com
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All meeting cancellations due to bad weather will be announced on News Radio 930, AM WBEN

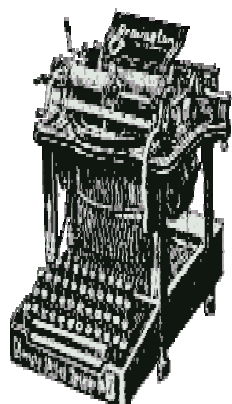
Please Visit The Polish Genealogical Society Of New York State's Web Site:

www.pgsnys.org

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Presidents Message



Spring
2001

Greetings! Welcome to the Spring Summer 2001 Searchers Edition. A special "Double" Edition we hope you will enjoy. Due to time constraints this very busy season we thought we would double up, to help our busy Searchers volunteer staff.

Before beginning this year, I'd like to say thanks to all who served as officers and board member during the year 2000. Also, congratulations to continuing and new members who were elected for 2001. Since I ran unopposed, I guess I'll do this president stuff another year-though I must admit, I really enjoy it. So many new projects are on the drawing board, but not enough hours in the day to complete.

In looking at last years goals, it seems none of them have been thoroughly accomplished, started but not finished. So this years goals will hopefully be, to com-

plete them. We started a few small projects that worked out well, one being our PGSNYS mailing list for internet users.

Updating the New Member Package

Lynn Mycek-Rzepecki is heading up this project. I encourage members of the society to take a look at the membership booklet you received and submit suggestions to Lynn, either at the PGSNYS postal address or directly at Mycek@prodigy.net

Move a large portion of PGSNYS library holdings to the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library (BECPL)

This month we've donated about 12 Buffalo City Directories to the Orchard Park Family History Center. The BECPL already owns these directories and these directories are from the 1970's which won't be much use to us now. Donating them was the next best thing. Our society library is overflowing, and could use a few volunteers to help maintain it.

Update PGSNYS Web Page with 1999 Surname Index and Dziennik Database

It's been decided to hold off adding the Dziennik Database until after the indexing is completed. Project Coordinator Ed Kornowski is having fun answering Internet queries. This Fall the 1999 Surname Index should be available. Web page creators, could use a few volunteers to help with the upkeep of our web-

page. Any volunteers please contact me directly.

Speaking of volunteers, we could use some dedicated volunteers to help with special committees. The officers and board members have quite a few good ideas they would like to implement in the upcoming months, and need a few people who are willing to give of their time. Any of you who are willing to give a few hours please contact me directly and I will advise you of the projects and committees we need help with.

Sincerely,

David Newman

Your President



PGSNYS ANNUAL PICNIC

Was held on Thursday, July 12th
at 5:30 p.m. at Como Park Lake
in the Lancaster Place Shelter in
Lancaster, NY

And was Catered By:
Kotecki's Grandview Grove

We dined on: *Charcoal Roasted Chicken, Fresh and Smoked Polish Sausage, Macaroni and Potato Salad, Lazy Pierogi, Chilled Garden Salad, Warm rolls and butter.*

And members only paid \$5.00 per person, our picnic takes place every July, for those of you who could not be with us, we hope to see you there next year!





How I found my Ancestors with the Ellis Island Arrival Re-

by David Newman

ABOUT THE DATABASE

Tracing our ancestors through Ellis Island used to mean a trip to the National Archives in Washington DC or your local Mormon Family History Centers to sift through what seems to be endless reels of microfilm.

In 1996, the Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island Foundation, which opened a museum at Ellis Island in 1990, decided to create a data center at its museum and raised \$22.5 million to do so. Thanks in part to a project put together by the Church of Latter Day Saints, all it takes now is a few clicks on the computer.

On April 17th, 2001 officials with the Church of Latter Day Saints and Ellis Island unveiled a new database containing arrival records for the 22 million immigrants who arrived on ships at the port of New York from 1892 to 1924. The database, includes 70 percent of all U.S. arrivals during that period and is available on the Internet. The database can be searched and includes immigrants' names, their port of origin, age, nationality, hometown and marital status.

Visitors to the new American Family Immigration History Center at Ellis Island can then get printouts of the information and, if they choose, buy a souvenir copy of the original, handwritten record and a photo of the ship that brought their ancestors to the United States.

Online visitors will be able to order the records and photos by the time this article goes to print. The database will also have room for visitors to add their own information, including family photos and stories, to share with relatives or the general public.

In 1996, the Church of Latter Day Saints, which encourages members to do genealogical research as a means of finding ancestors to baptize into the faith, had already begun to transcribe the information. The Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island Foundation took digital photographs of the manifests immigrants filled out on board ship, 12,000 Mormon volunteers copied the records into a database.

The task wasn't easy. Participants had to transcribe microfilm copies of the manifests, which often included dozens of entries per page in as many different languages. The work would have cost up to \$10 million without volunteer labor. It is estimated that 40 percent of Americans can trace at least one ancestor back to the port, which opened in 1892.

In the first few week of the unveiling of the database, it is estimated that an average of 200 million visitors used the site per hour.

MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE USING THE DATABASE.

For the past 5 years I've been searching for any relative on my paternal side (NIEWCZYK) who initially ventured over to the

United States. I've searched microfilm after microfilm, year after year. But to no avail, "A brick wall!". I've always wondered how I was going to go around, under, over or through this wall and when that would be. Without an indexed records, it is very difficult and time consuming to find what your looking for. Luck must be on your side.

I was reading my e-mail one day at the end of April, when someone forwarded me a message about the Ellis Island Database. I got excited! I punched in the website address (<http://www.ellisland.org>) of the database. I was immediately told that the web site was busy and to try again later. I was persistent and didn't give up easy. I kept trying till I got to the Ellis Island home page.

Once at the home page I had to click on the button Continue. Oh no, not another wait message! I persevered and kept clicking Continue till I got in. When you get to the main search page it asks you for the *First Name* and *Last Name* you are searching for. I only entered *NIEWCZYK* and then clicked Search. Not another Busy message-this is the third one! I said to myself, "I'll stay here till the computer spits out the ship information I'm looking for." For the next hour I click the Reload button on my browser till, low and behold, I got a hit on the database. Yahoo!!

The information I received on the screen was Name of Passenger:

Wojciech Niewczyk

Nationality: Austria Polish

Home Town: Posada

Age: 24y

Sex: M

Marital Status: S

Date of Arrival:

November 08, 1905

Ship Name: Kroonland

Port of Departure:

Antwerp, Belgium

All good genealogists want to verify digital records they find. So I took this bit of information to the FHC in Amherst on Maple Road and ordered the microfilm this records is on.

During the ordering process I learned that the Date of Arrival (in my case November 08, 1905) is the date the individual signed the record which usually was a day or two from the actual date the ship came in. Determining the correct Date of Arrival is important so that you order the correct microfilm your record is on. To find the correct Date of Arrival, a book that should be located at the FHC is called (European Passenger Ship Arrivals to the US) It has a carefully compiled listing of all ships that arrived in New York City during that time period. This book will have the correct arrival date of the ship that your ancestor came on.

When paying for the use of the microfilm, the smallest bill I had was a \$20. Usually the FHC has change, but this time they didn't. I drove down Maple Road to the 7/11 Convenient store and bought a hot dog, then drove back to the FHC.

I am still waiting for the microfilm I ordered to arrive at the FHC. In the next edition of the Searchers I will follow-up with the findings on the

microfilm.

Tips for a Smooth Genealogical Ellis Island Record Adventure

- ☐ Be patient when using the Ellis Island web site.
- ☐ Ensure you determine the correct Date of Arrival of the passenger you're looking for so you can obtain the correct microfilm.
- ☐ Have on hand the correct amount for money for renting microfilms at the FHC.



PGSNYS Website

Additions to the site:

There has been Guest Book and Message Board features added to the website. We encourage all members to check out these features and try them out.

Guest-book - Allows visitors to our web site to make comments about our website.

Location of PGSNYS Guest book: <http://www.pgsnys.org/guestbook/>

Message Board - Allows visitors to our web site, a chance to interact with each other and our society by submitting questions, comments or suggestions.

Location of PGSNYS Message Board: <http://www.pgsnys.org/wwwboard/>



Social Security Rate Increase\$

The Social Security Administration is raising the fees for requesting records as of 1 July 2001. The fee schedule will be as follows:

Request for copy of Original Application for Social Security Card

(Form SS-5), SSN Provided --- \$27

Request for copy of Original Application for Social Security Card

(Form SS-5), SSN Not Provided --- \$29

Request for Computer Extract of Social Security Number Application,

SSN Provided --- \$16

Request for Computer Extract of Social Security Number Application,

SSN Not Provided --- \$18

Search for Information about Death of an Individual,

SSN Provided --- \$16

Search for Information about Death of an Individual,

SSN Not Provided --- \$18

For more information about requesting records from Social Security, see the Social Security Administration's Guide to FOIA requests at:

http://www.ssa.gov/foia/ia_guide.htm

Keeping It Alive

by Mike Drabik

How many of us can remember the good old days when families gathered at Babcia's house for those delicious home cooked Sunday dinners? Our family was no exception, I have been told that Babcia Drabik insisted that the whole family gather at her house each week to enjoy her great food and family fellowship. The paternal family was so large that it was necessary for the family to divide into two seatings.

There were never-ending bowls of mashed potatoes and home grown vegetables-fresh in the summer or preserved during the winter and fall. Being that the family ran a small farm, chicken, duck, rabbit or wild game was always on the table. Babcia made great deserts, pies, placeks and strudels, never in short supply.

My grandparents died when I was rather young, but they continued to meet and visit one another and even share summer vacations together for the next twenty years.

It seems that once the uncles and aunts began to meet their demise, the family started to grow apart, ever so gradually. At first all cousins were invited to wedding receptions; then because of economics and size of the family, fewer cousins were asked to attend these functions. Even though this occurred, a death in the family would bring everyone together to pay their last respects.

Last June, a first cousin's once re-

moved was married. We were one of the few cousins invited. Sitting at the same table with us was my first cousin Patty and her husband Earl. Earl had left Buffalo early in the year and was now employed in a business in Florida. During the conversation, Patty and Earl told us that they had put their house in West Seneca up for sale and would be leaving WNY once the house sold. Wow, this was a really shock to me. Patty's older sister, Gloria and family were already out of state. This would mean that the whole father line from my Dad's late brother Stefan would be no longer be in WNY. Days later, I began thinking of this situation and decided to discuss this topic with my first cousin Judy, who lives only a few blocks from our home in Buffalo. Over a glass of wine, I related to her the new family experience and also my idea on starting up a family newsletter. Considering that 35% of our first cousins and an even larger number of the next generation were living outside of New York State, it was an appropriate way of keeping in touch. We decided that a quarterly paper would be the way to begin, with the initial issue dedicated to the grandparents and followed by each son and daughter (uncles / aunts) in successive editions.

The inaugural issue of the family newsletter came out in September 2000, the anniversary month of the death of both grandparents. A few older cousins who had better memories of Dziadzia and Babcia submitted articles reminiscing the days on the West Seneca farm with their grandparents. Photos showed the

life span of both grandparents. There was a recipe found of one of Babcia's cookies and some family history researched by yours truly over the years of root digging. The edition also gave a complete listing of addresses of all the descendants of our grandparents along with some email addresses that were known. To augment the issue, sections were dedicated to explanation of Polish customs and traditions and also a column on Polish Americana, illustrating how Polish Americans contributed to the greatness of America.

To date, three issues have been distributed with great success, but much hard work and assistance by a few dedicated relatives and a good friend. As to covering the cost of this publication, the method employed will be that each family branch will contribute to the printing and postage. So far this has worked and hopefully can continue.

So the next time someone says to you, Genealogy-isn't that just collecting names and dates?, you can tell them "Definitely not!" Genealogists are creative people who look for the ways to celebrate their heritage with others.



**PGSNYS Donations To The
Mormon Library in Orchard Park, NY**

To The Orchard Park Family History Center
Buffalo City Directories
1967,1970,1974,1975,1977,1978,
1980,1984,1986,1987,1995
Buffalo Southeast Suburban Directories
1974,1980,1990

WHAT DO KASHUBS AND POMERANIANS HAVE IN COMMON?

by Keith A. Kaszubik

Who has never been asked, "What nationality are you?" I imagine that most Kashubs would answer, "Polish-American" or "American of Polish descent." But nothing is ever that simple. In Polonia I sometimes answer, "Jestem Kaszuba" [I am a Kashub]. Unfortunately in the general public we sometimes need to conform because of some people who regard anything not simple as being abnormal (i.e., they can't even pronounce our names). Even some so-called educated people I have met are under the impression that the Kashubs are half-Polish and half-German.

In regard to my nationality I answer that I am Polish, German and Kashubian. Immediately I am looked at as if I just fell out of a tree. What's a Kashub? After all, as a very intelligent man once pointed out, the average American wouldn't know the difference between a Kashub and a Cashew! I try to explain, "the Kashubs are the last remnant of the Slavic Pomeranians." Then the snickers and smirks really begin! I am immediately identified with the Pomeranian dog breed! This scenario of laughter is usually brought to a crescendo when the subject of a pedigree is brought into the discussion along with genealogy (not to be confused with gynecology!). The Pomeranian dog is a member of the Spitz group and has its origins in Iceland and Scandinavia. It was ap-

parently bred to a reduced size in German Pomerania (hence its name).

These descendants of mighty sled dogs now weigh less than 7 pounds (lighter than my laptop computer). The Pomeranian once weighed as much as 30 pounds and is said to have resembled the German wolf spitz in size, coat and color. The region of Pomerania is derived from the Slavic po = along + morze = sea. Hopefully no one will ever confuse the Kashubian-Pomeranian Association with the American Pomeranian Club for dog owners. The great Kashubian poet, Hieronim Derdowski, would roll over in his grave!



National Archives Changes--1 May 2001, the security procedures at the National Archives will change. Everyone entering the building from Pennsylvania Avenue will pass through "airport-style" security screening. Anyone with a heart pacemaker or other medical device that the magnetometer might disrupt should ask to be screened with a hand-held wand. After going through entry screening, a security officer will issue a temporary NARA-issued identification that must be worn at all times. It will show the areas of the building that they authorize you to use. Microfilm researchers will get a green ID card; textual researchers will get an orange metal disk to clip to clothing; and visitors (business or government agency representatives) will get a red ID card. These IDs will be returned to the security desk in the Pennsylvania lobby when you leave.



A WARM WELCOME TO THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS WHO HAVE JOINED THE PGSNYS IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS

KOZIOL RITA M.
SCOTTSDALE AZ
HAMMES ARMELA
HUDSON OH
KLOSS CYNTHIA
LANCASTER NY
PRZYBYSZ LINDA
KENMORE NY
FIGIEL JOHN
HAMBURG NY
KONOPA DOLORES L
ANGOLA NY
YATES CHRISTINE
SOUTH WALES NY
JAMPOLSKA PANI DANUTA
WARSAW PL
JAROS SUSAN K.
WILLIAMSVILLE NY
ROBERTSON JUDY
MONACA PA
PULINSKI JASON
HAMBURG NY
CAREY COLLEEN
TRYON NC
GOLDEN JOANN
BURKE VA

Access to Post 1901 Canadian Census to be Denied Forever?

by *Chris Bukowski*

For those of you interested in researching family that you may have in Canada, your job is about to become even more difficult. Statistics Canada, the agency charged with the responsibility of collecting the Census of Canada every five years, has taken the position that NO public access will EVER be allowed to individual Census records taken after 1901.

They have refused to transfer control of these records to the National Archives, which would then permit the National Archivist to allow public access to them 92 years after collection. Their position is that the law for all censuses following 1901 explicitly prohibits the release of individual census records. To date, Statistics Canada has been unable to produce documentation to substantiate their position.

On 11 February 2001 an Access to Information Request was made of Statistics Canada to show documented evidence of the "promise" of never-ending confidentiality of Census. They have been unable to do so to our satisfaction and a complaint will be registered with the Information Commissioner.

In 1999, an ad-hoc committee, now called the Canada Census Committee, was formed over the Internet. It is not the only group working toward the same goal, however, no other group we know of is encour-

aging participation from all Canadians, coast to coast.

Individuals and organizations have been encouraged to sign petitions and write letters and email to their Members of Parliament and various government officials, expressing their concerns about the situation, and requesting that steps be taken to allow public access to Historic Census Records.

Statistics Canada, the agency charged with the responsibility of collecting the Census of Canada every five years, has taken the position that NO public access will EVER be allowed to individual Census records taken after 1901.

This effort has not gone unnoticed. Private members bills were introduced to both the House of Commons and Senate to amend the National Archives of Canada and Statistics Acts. There were thousands of supporting signatures. On 5 November 1999, John Manley, then Industry Minister and Minister to Statistics Canada, appointed an "Expert Panel on Access to Historical Census Records" to report regarding the

legal, privacy and archival implications of providing access to historical census records.

Briefly, the Expert Panel found that a guarantee of perpetual confidentiality was not intended to apply to the census. The Report recommended allowing public access to all Census records, past, present and future, 92 years following collection. Unfortunately, Brian Tobin, the current Minister of Industry has called for "further broad based consultation with all Canadians."

With the call for a federal election in the fall of 2000, all outstanding Bills, Motions, and associated paperwork "died on the order paper". This means our lobbying must be renewed. Not only do we need assistance from our fellow Canadians but we would also gladly welcome support from our neighbors to the south! Many Americans have family roots in Canada.

What can you do?

- Download the appropriate petition from the URL listed. Sign it, circulate it and send it to the address listed on the first page.
- Send letters to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, Industry Minister Brian Tobin, Chief Statistician Dr. Ivan Fellegi, and Privacy Commissioner George Radwan-ski. Contact me directly for addresses.
- Enlist the aid of family and friends to sign and circulate pe-

titions, and write letters.

- Support our project by linking our web-site to yours. We can reciprocate by linking your web-site to ours.

For petitions, sample letters and more information please see the Post 1901 Canada Census web-site at www.globalgenealogy.com/Census (note that the 'C' in 'Census' is capitalized – the address is case-sensitive).

Chris Bukoski

(cbukoski@hotmail.com)

*Manitoba Representative,
Canada Census Committee*



Web Search Tip:

USGS

The *U.S. Geological Survey* (USGS) Geographic Names Information System can be searched for cemeteries by county. Just pick a state, enter the county, and under "Feature Type" choose "cemetery" at: http://geonames.usgs.gov/pls/gnis/web_query.gnis_web_query_form

Cemeteries in the database show the town or city that each cemetery is located in, and by clicking on a particular cemetery, you can get the exact location. maps, and sometimes aerial photographs, can also be brought up and zoomed in on.



Some Gravestone Rubbings Dos and Don'ts



From "Gravestone Rubbing for Beginners," a leaflet available from the Association for Gravestone Studies

Gravestone rubbing is fun. It is possible to collect some beautiful artwork that can be framed and displayed. A carver's skill can be preserved, or an ancestor's stone recorded and appreciated through this craft. However, gravestone rubbing is also controversial. Especially in cemeteries where a restoration project is in progress, rubbing is often banned. This is to enable the restorers to have an opportunity to preserve all the stones possible before more damage occurs. Even if a restoration project is not in progress, if the those who care for the cemetery have determined there are very fragile stones there which may be damaged if pressure is applied to the surface as happens in rubbing, there may be prohibitions in place. So be sure to check.

Below are some Do's and Don'ts that will make your experience in the cemetery a good one.

Please Do

Check (with cemetery superintendent, cemetery commissioners, town clerk, historical society, whoever is in charge) to see if rubbing is allowed in the cemetery.

Get permission and/or a permit as required.

Rub only solid stones in good condition. Check for any cracks, evidence of previous breaks and adhesive repairs, defoliating stone with air pockets behind the face of the stone that will collapse under pressure of rubbing, etc

Become educated; learn how to rub responsibly.

Use a soft brush and plain water to do any necessary stone cleaning.

Make certain that your paper covers the entire face of the stone; secure with masking tape.

Use the correct combination of paper and waxes or inks; avoid magic marker-type pens or other permanent color materials.

Test paper and color before working on

stone to be certain that no color bleeds through.

Rub gently, carefully. Leave the stone in better condition than you found it.

Take *all* trash with you; replace any grave site materials that you may have disturbed.

Please Don't

Don't attempt to rub deteriorating marble or sandstone, or any unsound or weakened stone (for example, a stone that sounds hollow when gently tapped or a stone that is flaking, splitting, blistered, cracked, or unstable on its base).

Don't use detergents, soaps, vinegar, bleach, or any other cleaning solutions on the stone, no matter how mild!

Don't use shaving cream, chalk, graphite, dirt, or other concoctions in an attempt to read worn inscriptions. Using a large mirror to direct bright sunlight diagonally across the face of a grave marker casts shadows in indentations and makes inscriptions more visible.

Don't use stiff-bristled or wire brushes, putty knives, nail files, or any metal object to clean or to remove lichen from the stone; Soft natural bristled brushes, whisk brooms, or wooden sticks are usually OK if used gently and carefully

Don't attempt to remove stubborn lichen. Soft lichen may be thoroughly soaked with plain water and then loosened with a gum eraser or a wooden popsicle stick. Be gentle. Stop if lichen does not come off easily.

Don't use spray adhesives, scotch tape, or duct tape. Use masking tape.

Don't use any rubbing method that you have not actually practiced under supervision.

Don't leave masking tape, wastepaper, colors, etc., at the grave site

*Leaflets are available from the AGS,
please contact: AGS Office:
278 Main Street, Suite 207
Greenfield, MA 01301*

From The Office of the City Clerk of Buffalo, NY

Vital Statistics

Presentation to the PGSNYS April Meeting of 2001

Birth, Death and Marriage certificates are NOT subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) and are NOT open to public inspection.

Fees and Searches: The fee for any record from our office is \$10.00 per copy with the exception of genealogy records which are \$11.00 each. It is necessary to know the given name(s) and the surname(s) of the individual(s). If you are unsure of the date of the event, we will search one year prior and one year ahead from the year you decide on for no additional fee. A \$1.00 fee will be charged for any additional years searched. Search fees are charged whether or not a record is found for genealogy.

Proper photo ID is required such as a State issued drivers license/Military ID card/Passport/Employee's photo ID or a Police/Fire report documenting the applicant's name, address and theft or loss due to fire.

Birth Records: Our office has records of individuals who were born within the City of Buffalo **only**. Our birth records start from **1878 to present**. Birth certificates for genealogy must be on file for **75 years**.

Types of Copies:

Certified Copy; A photographic reproduction of the actual certificate.

Certified Transcript; A computer-generated or other reproduction of information abstracted from the actual certificate.

Certification; A computer-generated or other reproduction of **only** the name of the person to whom the certificate relates, the date and place of the event, and the certificate filing date.

If a search for a record is made and the record cannot be located, a **No Record Certification** is issued.

Death Records: Our office has records of individuals who expired within the City of Buffalo **only**. Death records start at **1852 to the present**. Death certificates for genealogy must be on file for **50 years**.

A certified copy or a certified transcript of a Death Certificate may be issued:

To the spouse, parent or child of the deceased.

To a person with a Court Order.

To a lawful representative of the spouse, parent or child of the deceased.

Marriage Records: Our marriage records start at **1877 to present**. Marriage certificates for genealogy must be on file for at least **50 years** and the bride and groom are known by the applicant to be deceased.

Genealogy copies of birth, death and marriage certificates will be issued **uncertified** and stamped "**For genealogical purposes only**".

Census Records: Our office contains census records from **1850** and can be viewed by appointment only.

Adoption Records: All adoption records are sealed. For any information concerning adoption records you must contact the *New York State Department of Health in Albany*.

Acknowledgment of Paternity: An Acknowledgment of Paternity is registered and filed within our office. An Acknowledgment of Paternity signed by both the mother and father will legally establish who the child's father is.

Birth, Marriage and Death Requests:

Internet- Credit Card accepted / \$15.00 fee. **VitaChek Network-** Credit Card accepted / \$15.00 fee. **Mail-** \$10.00 Money Order with a copy of the individual's Photo ID and a letter containing the information necessary to obtain the record requested.



PGNYS 1/2 Year Events

January

Annual elections are held this month.
<http://www.pgsnys.org/about.html>

February

Joesph Macielag of "Pic-a -Polka " Orchestra spoke on "Origins of American Polka Music. Joe is President of the Polish American Congress: Western New York Chapter. His Polka CD was sold at the meeting. CD's are available for \$12.99 at: AM-Pol Eagle, 3620 Harlem Rd., Cheektowaga NY 14215-2042

March

Charles Michaux III, Buffalo City Clerk who presented "Buffalo City Records. Mr Michaux gave us a hand out entitled "City of Buffalo Vital Statistics"

April

Mary Blum from the Hamburg Family History Center spoke about the FHC's record holdings and procedures for obtaining microfilm.

May

Mr. Fred F. Jablonski, long time East Buffalo resident and author spoke about his book "*The Dynamics of an East Buffalo Ethnic Neighborhood*." Which highlights the history Buffalo's East Side and Stockyards and Meat-packing industries from 1875 to 1976. A time when names like Dold's, Klinck, Malecki, Wardynski, Szelagowski and Redlinski were household words. There will be a slide presentation, along with a display of memorabilia from a bygone era.

St. Mary's Church

Schenectady, NY. 1892

by Michael Drabik

Located in eastern New York State, the city of Schenectady is part of the tri-city cluster, Albany-Schenectady-Troy. An industrial city, Schenectady, was founded by the early Dutch settlers of New York (New Amsterdam) in the 1600s. This area along the Mohawk River was home to the Mohawk Indian tribe of the Iroquois Confederacy. Archeological sites found here verify this fact. Schenectady the main city in Schenectady County was once called the “city that lights and hauls the world.” This distinction was due to the fact that located here were a major railroad locomotive company and General Electric Company.

The Poles in the Mohawk Valley date back to the late 1860s, when small numbers began settling this area following their expulsion from their native land following the November Uprising. Having a varied industrial base, Schenectady was able to draw hard working laborers to its community, Poles being amongst them. These pioneers banded together and formed a benefit society called Tow. Bratnej Pomocy in the late 1880's. By 1891 their numbers had increased and they petitioned the bishop of Albany, Francis Mc Neirny, to send them a Polish speaking priest. Their prayers were answered when the Rev. Jozef Dereszewski, pastor of St. Stanislaus parish in Amsterdam, NY. was permanently assigned to organize a parish in Schenectady. Familiar with the situation and people, Fr

Dereszewski had visited Schenectady on occasion to hear confession and minister to the Poles. He had organized St. Stan's parish in Amsterdam and thus knew well the road ahead of him. Arriving on New Year's Eve 1891, Fr. Jozef celebrated the first Mass for his new congregation in St. Joseph's Church on New Year's Day 1892, followed by a meeting with the Poles in the parish hall. It was decided that the new parish would be named for the Patroness of Poland, St. Mary of Czestochowa. The benefit society declared a donation of one thousand dollars to be used toward the purchase of land and construction of a church.

Land was purchased for the construction of a church on Emmett Street, but shortly after its purchase a disagreement occurred about the location and it was sold and a Liberty Street lot was then purchased (now called Eastern Street). Here the parishioners began construction of the first church building made of red brick and measuring 110 feet in length and 53 feet wide. It was dedicated for use in July 1893. That same year the parish school was begun. Housed first in the basement of the newly constructed church, it very soon out grew its cramped space.

Within the first ten years of growth, St. Mary's parish witnessed a tremendous increase in membership. According to Rev. Wacław Kruska, by 1899, some 4,000 Poles were living in Schenectady. In 1903 the present church in Gothic style was constructed. The gray stone church measures 156 feet in length and is 75



Saint Mary's Church

feet wide and is adorned with three spires, the tallest measuring 212 feet high. The final cost for construction was placed at \$100,000 with additional \$25,000 for interior decoration and appointments. The growing parish purchased land for use as a parish cemetery and built a three-story schoolhouse as well as a modern rectory for the priests. Staffing the parochial school, Fr Dereszewski was fortunate in securing the services of the Sister's of the Resurrection, in 1907. At age 54, Fr. Dereszewski

(Continued on pg. 12)

(Continued from Page 11)

died at St. Mary's in Sept. 1911 and was laid to rest in the parish cemetery he founded.

His successor, Rev. Aleksander Kowalski served the parish until 1918, when he enlisted in the Polish Army, he was then followed by the Rev. Franciszek Gostomski, acting as administrator. In 1921, the Rev. Franciszek Ren was appointed the new pastor and would serve the parish for the next 48 years. During these many years, numerous improvements were made to the parish properties and the religious life of the parish flourished. For his devoted service to his parish and the Church, Fr. Ren was elevated to the rank of Monsignor in 1959. Due to his failing health, his long time assistant and confidant, Fr. Michael Zakens, was appointed administrator of St. Mary's. Msgr. Ren officially retired in 1969, followed shortly by the appointment of Fr Zakens as new pastor. Msgr. Ren, long time care giver of St. Mary's died in July 1970 with his burial taking place in the parish cemetery.

The 70s were years of change in St. Mary's neighborhood. As younger families were relocating to the suburbs, the older parishioners were departing this life. By the end of the decade, St. Mary's school was closed due to falling enrollment. The Sisters continued on in other forms of ministry. Despite the new challenges and economic conditions, the parish was able to renovate the church building completely prior to the centennial of the parish in 1992. St. Mary's was fortunate to achieve this and still be debt free.

St. Mary of Czestochowa Church is located at 828 Eastern Avenue, Schenectady, NY.

The Overlooked Cousin

by Ed Prabucki

As with any enterprise, so it is with Ancestral Research, one must approach it with all the means in order to reach its end with some success. In my grammar school days, I always had a penchant for History that gave birth in my later years with a similar penchant for Ancestral Research.

Fortunately my research had some enlightening disclosures, many productive on the paternal side of my ancestors and a few frustrating ones on the maternal side of the family.

As I uncovered the many long buried paternal ones of my ancestors that finally culminated well into the 16th Century, I made the attempt to seek the maternal side and unfortunately reached many dead-ends. Then one evening during use of my computer, I received an email message from an unfamiliar but determined party that also indulged in research.

The surname (***Konopa***) lacked the desired affect as well as my present wants in my research and even my plausible indifference to her research did not deter this person, however due to her stubbornness and a lengthy forbearance on my part, I decided to fulfill her wishes, so one reply of email led to another. One maternal surname led to another, from each generation of our past that finally culminated in the fact that we ended up with the same great-grandfather from the maternal side, so easily



Dolores Konopa and Ed Prabucki meeting for the first time on February 8th, 2001 at Villa Maria

we convinced each other to meet at the next gathering of the Polish Genealogical Society at Villa Maria College.

Needless to say, at that meeting as we reflected on our past and gave rebirth to our maternal side, we were completely delighted to finalize ourselves as Cousins. Dolores Konopa resides in Angola, NY and the surname of our Great-Grandfather on the maternal side is Rutkowski.



Searching NY Counties of:

Fulton, Hamilton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Otsego, Saratoga, Schenectady, and Schoharie??

We found an interesting Website. For those of you searching in the timeframe of 1917, though a "few" Poles are listed, these areas were covered by the Glen Telephone Company. The phone directories with surnames are listed online at the following website:

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~nymontgo/gift/countylist.html>

What Did My Grandparents Do In Their Spare Time ?



by Mike Drabik

“Hey Ma, did Grandma and Grandpa belong to the Senior Center ? Did Grandpa do any golfing ?” Boy are you out of touch! For the most part, our immigrant grandparents raised large families, eight or more, Grandma was too busy keeping house, cooking, baking and doing laundry for much relaxation. And Grandfather worked 10 hours days in the factory, plus Saturdays. Yes, this was not unusual for the newcomers to our shores. These hard working people made our country the mighty giant it is today by their hard work. Yet, they also knew how to enjoy the free time they had.

The Poles are always associated with their strong faith, mainly Roman Catholicism. The Church was the center of their universe. Here in the United States it not only was their House of God, but it also provided an environment for socialization. Religious organizations sprang up around the nearly one thousand Polish Roman Catholic parishes established in America. In the Polish community there also were formed local and branches of national fraternal. All these groups and societies gave the immigrant and his family a form of relaxation and entertainment. For those less fortunate not to have relative close by, this was an extension of their family.

Zjednoczenie Polsko Rzymsko-Katolickie aka Polish Roman Catholic Union, is the oldest national Polish fraternal benefit society founded in Chicago, Il., in 1873. In just about every Polish parish across this vast land, a

group or groups of this organization were established. It strongly adhered to the catholic faith and the maintenance of the local parish. It sponsored various functions for entertainment, fund raising, patriotic celebrations and later sponsored sport teams. Larger societies of this national organization could have also formed marching bands for the youth as well as camps. The official organ of Zjednoczenie is the paper, *Narody Polski*. This organization is still alive and well in the Buffalo area.

Founded in Philadelphia, Pa in 1886, the Związek Narodowy Polski aka Polish National Alliance, is the largest of all Polish fraternal organizations. Headquartered in Chicago, Il., Związek was founded as a rival to the Zjednoczenie, having a philosophy that any good Pole was eligible for membership in its ranks. A heated controversy flared up between the two groups, was a Pole considered first Polish and then Catholic? Many a community had difficult beginnings because of this question. The PNA is closely associated with the many Dom Polskis that sprang up across Polonia. Even though they were not owned by the Alliance, many of its lodges meet and held functions in these Polish Homes (Dom Polski). Like its counter part, the Alliance provided a variety of activities. It too sponsored youth groups, reading rooms, drama circles, marching bands, folk dance groups and later sports teams. The Alliance had a special interest in educating our youth and in 1911 founded a college at Cambridge Springs, Pa. The official organ of Związek is the paper, *Zgoda*. Many lodges of the Alliance are still active in our area.

Sokoly Polskie or the Polish Falcons is another in a litany of national Polish fraternal.

Founded in Austrian Poland, it was brought to the United States by immigrants in 1887, the first *Nest* was formed in Chicago. The German Turner Verein and the Czech Sokoly had similar purposes, physical fitness, thus the motto; ***“zdrowym ciele zdrowy duch in a healthy body a sound mind.”*** The Polish Falcons were very supportive of a Free Poland and strongly assisted in the formation of the Polish Army in France, the Hallar’s Blue Army. The organization eventually began a benefit program and like its fellow nationals, sponsored a variety of activities, but youth programming always chief. The Falcons for the most part owned their own building or Sokolnia, where the Nest would meet and hold functions. The official paper of the Falcons is called *Sokol Polski*. Buffalo still has an active Falcon Nest in Cheektowaga, NY, which hold sports programs for the youth.

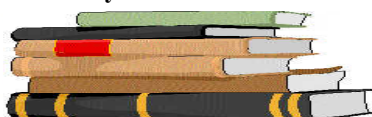
Unia Polska w Ameryce aka Polish Union of America, is the only national benefit fraternal that has a national headquarters in our area. Founded in 1890 as a splinter group of the Alliance, Unia also had difficult years. This group broke into two with each holding title to the name, one became the Polish Union of America (locally) and the other the Polish Union of North America (Scranton, Pa.). PUA like all the above mentioned fraternal sponsored society functions and publishes a newspaper, the *Unista*, now known as the *PUA Parade*.

(Continued on pg. 26)



Book Review

by Dave Newman



Book Title: *A Student's Guide to Polish American Genealogy* by Carl Sokolnicki Rollyson and Lisa Olson Paddock. *Oryx American Family Tree Series* Copyright: 1996 ISBN:0-89774-974-X

While doing a search on the giant on-line bookstore Amazon.com, I came across the title "A Student's Guide to Polish American Genealogy". I felt compelled to obtain this book for my genealogical library.

Before I continue with my review I want to point out that the Oryx American Family Tree Series has other similar titles: "A Student's Guide" to African, British, Chinese, German, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Jewish, Mexican, Native and Scandinavian and American genealogy. It's nice to see that Polish was considered important enough to publish. They're missing a few ethnic groups such as French, Portuguese, Spanish... I guess these are coming later:)

I had mixed emotions when reading this book. There are several good and bad points to make. I'll start with the good points:

Good Points

Just a small note: *Each chapter has a list of reference books for further study on a particular topic of interest such as Oral Histories.* The first two chapters or about one half of this book (90 Pages) focuses on having to understand the history, arts and literature of Poland and the history of Polish immigration in order to conduct genuine genealogical research. This is the best emphasis any book on genealogical research could start with.

Bad Points

The remaining 100 pages contains these chapters: Beginning your genealogical Search, Oral History, Creating a Family Tree, Making a Polish American Family History, Tracing Your Roots If you are

Adopted. This is where the book takes a left turn. Most of these chapters don't go into enough depth on each of the topics. For instance, on page 43 it says "Begin simply. Ask each member of your family to submit information for their subject file folder. Ask them also to specify their sources of information." While they say to ask each member of your family to submit information, to someone just starting their genealogical adventure it would help to know what essential questions to ask. We all know genealogists require some basic information.

On page 97 the book talks about how the origin and meaning of a surname can lead sometimes to a location of your ancestors. While this is a good point, I'm surprised that I don't see the marvelous work of William "Fred" Hoffman, "Polish Surnames: Origins and Meanings" listed in the Reference Section or at least brought up under the surname topic.

The biggest sin of this book was on page 101. It was mentioned that genealogical societies can help with genealogical research. In the reference section *only* the Polish Genealogical Society of America was mentioned. It should have been made known where all 9 Polish Genealogical Societies are located. They copped out by referring people to their local libraries. Since this is a book on Polish American Genealogy, you would logically think a listing of all Polish genealogical societies in America is in order.

Summary

While this book makes a great reference to other genealogical works and covers Polish history and Polish immigration history well, it lacks some basic essential substance. This book is a great start towards a guide. They should have consulted with a Polish Genealogical Society for better results.

Name Search



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

To submit listings for publication,

please send your name and address, the surnames your researching and location if known. Please keep limit to- six surnames of research. Non members please include \$3.00.

Bruno Syzdek

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Przybysz, Drzewiecki, Komsa
Niespodziana, Nispodziany

Letters To The Editor



derful. Thank you. **Arlene Summers**
5608 Dumfries Drive, Raleigh NC
27609
arsum@aol.com

Needs Help

My Great Grandfather, Frank **Polewicz**, was born 11 November 1883 in Poland and immigrated to America in approximately 1900. His parents were Joseph and Jagusia (nee: **Kaczyrska Polewicz**. Frank was a carpenter and died on 28 March 1927. Katarzyna **Pawlowska**, daughter of Andrew and Maryanna (nee: **Balczerak**) **Pawlowski**, was born 14 November 1885 in Poland and came to America in approximately 1894. She married Frank **Polewicz** circa 1901 and they had seven surviving children. They were members of Holy Trinity, Saint Adalberts and Transfiguration Churches and lived most of their life at 217 Fifteenth Street in Niagara Falls, N.Y. Since the trail goes cold at my Great Grandparents arrival in this county, I am most interested in learning how to trace things from this point. I welcome suggestions and directions to search vehicles. Thank You. **Colleen Carey, 186 Melrose Avenue, Tryon, NC 28782**
hellocarey@alltel.net

Have A Clue?

A friend of mine at work who knows I'm into genealogy found some old pictures in the home she purchased. They are from, she estimates, the late 1800's and early 1900's. Two names that can be determined are:

1) Liberyusz **Brzezowski**, who had a First Communion photo dated May 29, 1904, from St. John Kanty's RC Church in Buffalo.

2) Sophia **Brzezowski**, The family used to reside at 79 Moreland off of Bailey in the 14206 zip code also in Buffalo. There is also a reference to a Professor Stanislaw **Jurkowski**, followed by Rybnik, Gorny, Slasik, what looks like it might be a Polish street address, and then Poland, Europe.

Should you desire further information about the aforementioned, please email me, **Don Bartus**, at **Watkinsdude@aol.com**

Greetings From NJ

Dear PGSNYS, I found your web site very useful. I hope use it to find out more about when my grandparents got married and lived in Buffalo.
Thanks again.

John M. Kalinowski

Kudos To Mike Drabik on his Parish Web Page

Congratulations on your new series. I like the format and it is well written. May I suggest that you update St. Florian's in Buffalo? The current pastor is Fr. John Posiewala, S.A.C. And since Holy Trinity in Niagara Falls. will be celebrating its centennial next year, and already making preparations perhaps you could mention that. So as not to leave anything out, may I suggest that you next do a series on the Polish religious in the Western New York area? You could include the Franciscan Sisters of Hamburg (after the history include the Polish Room), the Franciscan Friars of Athol Springs (add their link), the Felician Sisters, and the Pallottines of North Tonawanda - and at that point you might mention that they serve the local community: Fr. John Posiewala is pastor at St. Florian's and Director of the Order, Fr. Seweryn Koszyk, pastor at St. George's, Fr. Richard Lukowski says Mass at Holy Trinity, Fr. George Maj says Mass at OL of Czestochowa in North Tonawanda, Fr. George Poltorak is the Vicar at Immaculate Conception in East Aurora. Other Pallottines serve downstate. Please remember to put SAC after their names. You can attach this list to your parish list or make it separate, as you see fit. I can provide additional information if you need it. Szczesc Boze! **Wanda Slawinska**

Thank You!

I would like to thank you for all the

information I have found on your web-site. The article about St. Stanislaus, with picture, was great, as this was the church my great-grandparents were married in in 1875, and my grandmother was baptized in in 1876. I started reading the census and was hoping to find cousins that my grandmother visited either in the late 1920's or early 30's. If you have a newsletter, could you please put in a note from me regarding a Michal (Michael) **Domagalski**. He and his wife, Maria **Ol-szewska**, were parishioners of St. Stanislaus and had seven children baptized there. Five of these children died as infants, according to the FHL microfilm. Two who might have survived to adulthood were Catherine and Frances. I did not find marriages for them in the St. Stanislaus records. In 1881 Michael lived at 149 Townsend, then at 1613 Drake and in 1914 at 2829 Drake. Perhaps someone would know what happened to this branch of the family. **Domagalski** was my great-grandmother's maiden name. She married Piotr **Paluszek**. Would living on Drake have had them change parishes? What wards were Townsend and Drake in? I am going to send an e-mail now to **dziennik** to see if someone can come up with an obituary for Michael or Maria. Thanks again for a great place to visit. Keep up the good work. **Armela Hammes**

Searching In The Rock

I am so excited to have found your web-site. I was born in 1946 and grew up in the Black Rock section of Buffalo but have been unsuccessful in most of my genealogical research. The names I am searching for to start are : **Wawrzyniec** (my mother's maiden name) and **Zywczynski** (my father's surname). Any help you can provide would be won-



Potpourri



Donations To PGSNYS

Thank You Louise Florek Manning for your donation of:
God's Playground: A History of Poland Volume 1 and God's Playground: A History of Poland Volume 2 By Norman Davies
 The inscription on the inside of each book read "Year 2001, Donated to Library of PGSNYS Louise Florek Manning, In Memory of Florence Witul"

Also a special thank you to member Jim Long and his company National Fuel for donating to the PGSNYS a large format scanner that is used in scanning large scale items such as maps, etc.

To The Rescue

At the last general meeting of the PGSNYS, Dan Kij announced that someone who had these Anniversary books of **St. Michael The Arch Angel in Lackawanna, NY, 75th Anniversary**, were going to throw them out Dan intercepted them. He donated 1 to the PGSNYS library and passed several out to our members. Dan also noted he can obtain more. If interested you can contact him via email at: danieljkij@aol.com Thank you Dan.

Radio Genealogy

The date was June 24th, when members of the PGSNYS were invited to be guests of Halina Jawor on her Polish radio show, "A Polish Sunday Afternoon With Halina" on WMNY-AM 1120 in Buffalo NY. Between the hours of 1-5 pm members answered various questions on genealogy, surname meanings, and location of towns in Poland. Halina said the PGSNYS

is welcome anytime on her show. ***Pictured***, Dan Kij, Ed Kornowski, Halina, Walter Kloc, Dave Newman and Andrzej Golebiowski.

Thank YOU!

Members Keith Kaszubik, Ed Prabucki, Jim Long, Alfred Karney, Dave Newman and the many others who volunteered their time during the weekend of the Polish Heritage Festival in Cheektowaga, NY in August. As usual it was a large crowd gathered around our information table. Job well done!

Appreciated

A special thank you to Helen Skarbek's daughter Catherine McKay, for donating to the society library 6 books from Helen's collection. They are: Skarby Jasnej Gory (C) 1991, Lancut (1993), An Illustrated History of Poland (1979), Zamek w Lancucie (1993), KL Auschwitz Seen by the SS (1991) Three documents written by SS-men from the concentration camp at Auschwitz Wroclaw Z Lotu Ptaka (1985)

Off The Beaten Path Websites

Polish Census

References to Polish census records for the southern part of Brazil may be found in: URL: <http://www.familysearch.org/Eng/Search/Rg/guide/Brazil.ASP>

Arquivos Para a História do Brasil Meridional (Archives of the History of Southern Brazil). Curitiba, Brazil: (Papellaria Requião Ltda.), 1971. (FHL book 981.6 B4b no.



14; computer number 0017504.) Information about Italian and Polish immigrants in southern Brazil can also be found in the *Arquivo dos Padres da Congregação de São Vicente de Paulo* (Archive of the Priests of the São Vincente de Paulo Parish) in Curitiba, Paraná.

Polish Archival Collections in the USA and Canada

<http://www.piasa.org/polisharchivesinamerica.html>

Polish Traditions in the U.K.

<http://www.parafialutondunstable.co.uk/english/traditions/intro.htm>

Polish Traditions

<http://www.polandcarolina.org/PolishTraditions.htm>

Preserving Your Past

<http://www.storypreservation.com/links-g.html>

Pol-Links

<http://www.3w3.net/polska/Info/englinks.html>

Polish History

http://lifestyleopportunity.org/index/Regional/Europe/Poland/Society_and_Culture/History/

Breaking Through Those Brickwalls



National Archives and Records Administration

1930 Federal Population Census

The 1930 census and all existing soundex indexes will become available on April 1, 2002 at the National Archives Building, 700 Pennsylvania Ave., N. W., Washington, DC 20408-0001, and at Regional Facilities in 13 major cities. The 1930 census will be issued as NARA microfilm publication T626, Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930. **New York State has 270 Rolls of microfilm.**

The 1930 census asked 32 questions about each person:

Place of Abode

1. Street, avenue, road, etc.
2. House number (in cities or towns)
3. Number of dwelling house in order of visitation [this number supplied by census taker].
4. Number of family in order of visitation [this number supplied by census taker].

Name

5. Name of each person whose place of abode on April 1, 1930, was in this family.

Relation

6. Relationship of this person to the head of the family.

Home Data

7. Home owned or rented.
8. Value of home, if owned, or monthly

rental, if rented.

9. Radio set.

10. Does this family live on a farm?

Personal Description

11. Sex.

12. Color or race

[White (W), Negro (Neg), Mexican (Mex), Indian (In), Chinese (Ch), Japanese (Jp), Filipino (Fil), Hindu (Hin), Korean (Kor), other races spelled out in full.]

13. Age at last birthday.

14. Marital condition.

[Single (S), married (M), widowed (Wd), divorced (D).]

15. Age at first marriage.

Education

16. Attended school or college any time since Sept. 1, 1929.

17. Whether able to read and write.

Place of birth

18. Place of birth--PERSON.

19. Place of birth--FATHER.

20. Place of birth--MOTHER.

Mother Tongue

(or Native Language) of Foreign Born

21. Language spoken in home before coming to the United States.

Here follows 3 columns of "CODE (For office use only. Do not write in these columns)" relating to "State or M.T. [mother tongue]," "Country," and "Nativity." These codes were entered to assist in statistical tabulation and do not provide any information beyond that found in columns 18-21.

Citizenship, etc.

22. Year of immigration to the United

States.

23. Naturalization.

24. Whether able to speak English.

Occupation & Industry

25. Trade, profession, or particular kind of work done, as spinner, salesman, riveter, teacher, etc.

26. Industry or business, as cotton mill, dry-goods store, shipyard, public school, etc.

27. Class of worker.

Employment

28. Whether actually at work yesterday (or the last regular working day)--Yes or No

29. If not, line number on Unemployment Schedule.

Veterans

30. Whether a veteran of U.S. military or naval force--Yes or No.

31. What war or expedition?

[World War (WW), Spanish-American War (Sp), Civil War (Civ), Philippine Insurrection (Phil), Boxer Rebellion (Box), Mexican Expedition (Mex)].

Farm Schedule

32. Number of farm schedule.

[Farm schedules no longer exist].

How to Get Information Before April 2002

If you need information about yourself or a deceased person from the 1930 or later censuses for legal or other purposes, get a Form BCC-600 from the Bureau of the Census Age Search Service and return the form with the required fee to that agency. Forms are also available by writing to:

U.S. Census Bureau,
National Processing Center,
1201 East 10th St.,
Jeffersonville, IN 47132.



Rest In Peace ?



by L. Mycek Rzepecki

Requiescat In Pace (R.I.P.) - But for how long? This might be a thought for genealogists to ponder as they record names in a cemetery, pay respects to a loved one, or just wonder where did that ancestor disappear to? And why?

It's a known fact that researching your Polish genealogy will take you in many different directions. Be it culture, history or various customs. Neighborhood history could be one path you might follow. In researching the neighborhood community of my grandparents who had lived in Black Rock in Buffalo since emigrating, I knew the general area was once inhabited by the German population previous to the Poles arrival. Truthfully, never really being interested in the German contributions of the area, I felt more compelled to search out the Polish aspect of my quest. But as someone interested in genealogy, something peaked my interest one day in April of this year, which related to the past German population of the area.

They say in your research, always write and record everything, you eventually come back to it later. Sometimes, those things you discover stick in your mind for some reason or another, not quite knowing why. Early on in my search for information about Black Rock, elderly neighbors and relations made mention to a cemetery on Hertel Avenue. I found this interesting because if you know the area of Black Rock, it's quite small. We not only had one cemetery but two in the area, both German, both old and non-Catholic.

One day this past April the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority was digging new sewer lines in the Jasper Parish housing project in Black Rock on Hertel Avenue. Construction came to a halt due

to workmen finding human bones as they dug deeper into the earth. Upon hearing this information on the local news, I called the president of our local community action association, Mark Brockmyer and discussed what I had remembered in my early research of the neighborhood. Of course a genealogist's enthusiasm is contagious and moved Brockmyer to investigate more thoroughly.

Finding a partial listing of the German M.E. Cemetery on the web that had been recorded in the 1940's by Gertrude Jones, we found it contained at least 9 members of the G.A.R. the Grand Army of the Republic, and the names of a Lincoln and a Cleveland. Channel 4 news was called to do a follow up story and genealogists began calling. The Lincoln was a descendent of old Abe and the Cleveland of Grover. At this point I had wished I was more complete in my research of the neighborhood, it would have saved some time. As genealogists, we are considered by some as semi-detectives, always being reminded that those we are researching were once living beings with a past, not just names on paper. Now remembering those words of wisdom, thoughts abounded of who were these people buried in this once cemetery? Did anyone care that the city was finding bones of someone's family members? Did the city care?

The curious calls began after the news report, a Plummer who had worked on the original construction of the housing projects in the early 1950's, confirmed stories I had been told on how appalling and haphazard the removal of bodies was done. Dogs running away with bones, children cutting through the cemetery on their way to school having to step over pieces of coffins, bones

and clothing. He stated, after the removal of the bodies, they were hired to dig the water lines for the new housing projects, they were still finding bones. A neighborhood resident called to say when she had purchased her home (a block away from the old cemetery), there was a cemetery headstone in her basement, and that it might have been from that old cemetery. Looking at the stone, which was in perfect condition, it was confirmed through paperwork that Mary Bartz, had been buried in the old German cemetery on Hertel Avenue. Residents of the Jasper Parish Housing Projects who had lived there for years came forward and spoke as to when they were children digging in the dirt, they too found bones. One woman whose mother was a nurse even identified what her daughter had found as a human bone. Though it was remedied by the BMHA when a dump truck showed up shortly after to deliver dirt in certain parts of the housing projects. Apparently this was a common practice for the BMHA when residents reported finding bones.

So many more questions with so few answers. The Buffalo Municipal Authority had no comment but were ever so busy, scrambling to get their permits to continue working at the site. In the meantime we then took a trip to the Elmlawn Cemetery outside the city limits, for more information on the original remains, being informed that was where the bodies were taken early in the 1950's. Upon arrival we were told by staff, the director had already had a meeting with the BMHA. As we stood there wondering what that comment was about, then realizing someone else was looking for the same information, we were given a map to the area where the bodies were re-interred. A woman was also standing in line ask-

ing for information and turned out to be Mary Hauenstein, a descendent of Abe Lincoln, and was inquiring about her ancestors that were buried on Hertel Avenue. Yes, a touch of serendipity. Together we went to look for this burial ground. One lonely stone marks the spot and reads "428 Souls Removed from the German M.E. Church Cemetery on Hertel Avenue, Bflo. NY in 1951 by the Ripley Memorial Methodist Church". Looking around the marker it was hard to tell how they buried 428 people there, as abutted to the memorial stone there were other grave markers of families who were not from the German M.E. cemetery. Doing some research we found that a total of 15 full plots were purchased at Elmlawn and 15 partial plots for the sum of four thousand and six hundred and eighty dollars, though not all plots were located together. Nor were there any military markers stating that members of the GAR were buried in that location. There was still the question of why, with a memorial to the GAR, and such an old cemetery, were these bodies not taken to Forest Lawn Cemetery in the City of Buffalo in 1951 or another German Cemetery? Another question came to mind as to why the city contacted the Wedekindt Funeral Parlor, outside of the city of Buffalo, located in Tonawanda, NY to remove the remains they had just recently found, when Swiek's Funeral Parlor is only two blocks away from the site they found the human remains?

We informed a member of the local American Legion post in regards to the GAR soldiers that were buried at the old cemetery, and they were not too pleased their graves remained unmarked. We heard from Dan Deck who is researching his mother's great-uncle, and informed us that William Boyer who was buried there, was a Civil War combat veteran who fought in the 1st and 2nd battles of Hatcher's Run in Virginia with Grant. We now thought, who will remember the other GAR soldiers stories?

Then we heard an interesting story from them related to the *other* old German cemetery in Black Rock. On the

site of the old St. John's Evangelical Cemetery, located on Military Rd near Lansing Dr. This particular cemetery was up for sale in the 1960's. The local American Legion Post was then located on Grant St. across from Polish Cadets and was looking for a location nearby to build their new Post. This particular site was shown to them, though there were conditions to the sale. The bodies had to be removed from the cemetery, with an archeologist on site to record each and every grave, which included the contents of each coffin. They opted not to build there, but the land was eventually sold, built on (of course no digging for a basement) and only a "token" number of graves were removed. These graves also (the token few we're told) were removed to Elmlawn cemetery and are located one section over from the German M.E. Cemetery remains. They too are marked by a lone stone, placed in a small plot, though in the inscription it conveniently omits the total number of remains that are buried there. We found a website that lists 541 souls originally buried at St. John's Evangelical Church Cemetery, with 74 bodies previously moved elsewhere. Hardly enough space given for all those people at Elmlawn.

Getting back to the German M.E. Cemetery, we found an old newspaper article quoting the Ripley Church's attorney, which they had to hire in 1951 to *find* their title to the land, a title they much needed when the BMHA had wanted to purchase that particular plot of land on Hertel Avenue. Ripley claimed they didn't know they had owned a cemetery. It took us a total of 60 minutes to find the history of the German M.E. Church which was originally located on East St. in Black Rock, stating that they owned a 6 acre cemetery, material kindly furnished by the United Church of Christ Archives, material that was turned over to them by the Ripley Church. The German M.E. Church which the Ripley Church merged with in 1939, but in 1951 forgot they owned a cemetery? The attorney in the newspaper article of 1951, more or less defined the neighborhood around the cemetery as a bunch of

hoodlums vandalizing and discarding whiskey and beer bottles in the cemetery. Though in a letter we found dated March 11th, 1929, the cemetery director resigned and was *never* replaced. Further the attorney comments that all remaining headstones were destroyed by law. What law is that? The land then was purchased quickly by the BMHA for about \$72,000, and the construction of Jasper Parish housing project started immediately. Leaving whatever remains were left, buried beneath their buildings.

Elmlawn Cemetery furnished us with all the names and location of plots for those who were buried there from the German M.E. Cemetery, to date we have compiled a listing of only 316 persons, though the memorial stone at Elmlawn reads 428 souls. In the church archives it was found; *Removal of bodies began on May 28 by workers employed by the Church and was completed on June 30th. A total of 561 graves were opened but only 428 remains were found.* Its a shame that over 100 souls to our counting are still unaccounted for and the BMHA has no interest in finding these dearly departed to rest in peace. With the funds the BMHA has to spare, they should with good conscience have hired a company like Geosphere from Michigan, who use ground-penetrating radar, a technology used on archaeological sites and was recently done at a old Civil War cemetery in Cheektowaga, NY to search out bodies. But then, what if they did find those remains?

You might think that something like this would never happen in this day and age, but think again. There are many circumstances surrounding these particular cemeteries, eventually the truth will come out, but once a city entity is involved and rules and regulations are unknown to the "little guy" its an uphill battle. If your fortunate enough to have an active group in your area whose common goal is to preserve these forgotten resting places, please support them.

**Note: The German M.E. Church Archives are also on microfilm at the Butler Library at Bflo. State College on Elmwood Ave.*

For The Records

Erie County New York seeks to save age-old papers

By CHARITY VOGEL, Buffalo News
Staff Reporter 4/28/01

Reprinted from the Buffalo News

Someday in Erie County's future, it maybe remembered as the Great Paper War of 2001. Whatever the label, the battle over the county's paper and ink - especially the oldest, rarest kind - has begun. Two things are fueling the debate:

The county's rapidly dwindling storage space for record books, documents and historic newspapers. The national controversy caused by a new book by former Rochester resident Nicholson Baker, which accuses the nation's libraries - including the Library of Congress - of destroying thousands of irreplaceable newspapers and paper records.

Sound a bit dry? It's not, when it hits closer to home. What the issue really comes down to, for Erie County residents, is questions like these:

What value would you put on the faded naturalization papers that made your ancestors United States citizens?

Do you care if your grandfather's original military discharge is trashed?

Should we preserve copies of old newspapers - such as the 150-year-old editions that Mark Twain edited while he lived in Buffalo?

Many people think old documents are ripe for destruction once they have been microfilmed, put on plastic reels and stored away in file cabinets. "There's only certain stuff you have to keep for certain lengths of time," said County Executive Joel A. Giambra. Nonetheless, he believes in preserving some types of documents for longer periods. But a few individuals are calling for ex-

traordinary measures to preserve the county's old documents.

An informal coalition of county leaders, led by County Clerk David J. Swarts, is calling for creation of a regional records center - a place where the county's old newspapers, documents and record books could be safely stored for future generations. "This is for the future," Swarts said. "This is a choice we have to make. Do we keep these documents and store them? Or

native Olivia Langdon.

"If you get lost, I'll leave a trail of bread crumbs," Elaine Barone, who is in charge of the library's special collections, joked to a visitor. She's not kidding. These shelves of old newspapers, books and periodicals take up space the size of a whole city block inside the Lafayette Square building. The sheer volume of the printed material is daunting.

Then again, the fact Erie County still possesses these newspapers at all is an interesting twist of fate. The library's collection was too large, and its funding too small, to convert much of its collection to microfilm when that was the rage during the past several decades. (The library now maintains only microfilm copies of local newspapers, but that is a very recent switch and does not affect the older editions.)

It was during the decades since the 1950s, Baker writes, that other large libraries around the country microfilmed their collections of old newspapers and historical records and then sold off, or destroyed, the originals. It's a case of Erie County being far enough behind the curve that - for once - it worked to the county's benefit. "It's one of the blessings and the curses of being a library as old as we are," said Ruth Collins, the library's assistant deputy director. "Ours has been a more gradual changeover."

But the Central Library is rapidly running out of space in its stacks, and now the future of the library's oldest documents hangs in the balance. Library officials said they would be interested in participating in a regional records center, if one is built. The idea of a regional records center is not exactly new. It was discussed a few years ago, but the talk never got anywhere. Now,

But the Central Library is rapidly running out of space in its stacks, and now the future of the library's oldest documents hangs in the balance.

do we discard them?" When it comes to its document history, many say, Erie County is at a crossroads.

Deep in the closed stacks of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library is a treasure trove of the county's oldest written history. First editions of the Buffalo Daily Star newspaper from 1834 are shelved next to the older Buffalo Patriot, which dates to 1821 - six years after the War of 1812 ended. The Buffalo Emporium from 1826 occupies shelf space next to the Buffalo Journal from 1828. In another aisle, there are runs of rare international papers - the London Graphic, the Illustrated London News, Le Monde, the Moscow News.

Another treasure: original copies of the Buffalo Express, the newspaper Twain edited shortly after his marriage to Elmira

with national concern growing about the preservation of historical documents, the time is ripe for the proposal to get off the ground, Swarts said. "We have to face it, as a county, what we do with these records," he said. "There's a whole combination of issues." Swarts should know. His office has two floors of County Hall for storage of records - the basement and the first floor - and the space is bulging at the seams. Under a new plan to reconfigure county offices, Swarts will have even less space than he does now. Add to that the complicating factor that the county's "remote records storage site" - actually a building near some gas tanks behind the Erie County Medical Center - also is full. "This is a potentially major problem," Swarts said.

One person who agrees with that assessment is Surrogate Judge Joseph S. Mattina, who also stores documents in the overflowing record rooms at County Hall. Mattina's records are court-related and sometimes personal in nature: adoption files, estate files, wills. Mattina estimates that the court's original documents, which go back to 1807, number more than 1 million files. And each file contains from 15 to 100 pieces of paper. How much paper? "God only knows. I'm loaded over here." Mattina said he supports Swarts' idea of a regional document storage center. "To destroy these records, or just dump them somewhere, is just not right," the judge said. "And microfilm is not that good. We need to do something."

In his new book, "Double Fold," Baker writes that libraries around the country are guilty of selling and destroying thousands of volumes of rare old newspapers and periodicals. Baker, a journalist and novelist who spent part of his youth in Rochester and now lives in Maine, points to the following cases:

The Library of Congress and the New York Public Library once owned complete runs of Joseph Pulitzer's New York World - the feisty city newspaper that gave rise to the term "yellow journalism." Both were scrapped. Complete original sets of the Chicago Trib-

une were thrown out by Harvard University, the University of Chicago, the Chicago Public Library and the Tribune Co. The British Library - which survived the Blitz pretty much unscathed - subsequently has sold or destroyed thousands of complete runs of papers from around the world, including France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, the United States and Eastern Europe. The British asked the Library of Congress if it wanted any of the papers and were turned down.

In most cases, Baker said, these libraries replaced their originals with microfilm. And he said that is a mistake. "Nobody objects to postcards of Durer woodcuts . . . because the existence of handy copies of these works of art, in reduced size, does not induce museum curators to slice up or

In his new book, "Double Fold," Baker writes that libraries around the country are guilty of selling and destroying thousands of volumes of rare old newspapers and periodicals.

throw away the originals," Baker writes. "But the microfilming of old newspapers has, right from the beginning, been intimately linked to their destruction."

In Erie County, microfilm of the records contained in County Hall exists. There also are microfilm versions of parts of the library's newspaper collection. With microfilm copies on hand, some county officials admit, it's sometimes hard to argue for keeping all the original documents.

Two things will complicate any talk of building a regional records center in Erie County: money and control.

First of all, the county would have to come up with enough funding to build a center that would house thousands of documents

in secure, climate-controlled conditions. That would be expensive, though some money might be available from other sources, including grants. Secondly, local municipalities would have to buy into the concept to make it work. "I think whenever you move to make a change in who does what, it's inevitable that you're going to have opposition," said Katherine Tarbell, a member of the League of Women Voters who in 1994 approached the County Legislature with a similar proposal. Tarbell said the league's effort collapsed after town clerks from around the county protested to legislators that it would be unfair to take their records - which bring in a modest revenue stream - away from the towns. "That was the end of it," Tarbell recalled.

But there are signs some of that sentiment may be shifting. In the Town of Amherst, Town Clerk Susan Jaros met with Swarts recently to talk about the proposal. As a genealogist, Jaros said she thinks the idea has some merit. "I go all over the county looking for records. If I could go to just one spot, it would certainly make things easier for me," she said. "If we did it properly, Buffalo could really be a wonderful place to come for genealogy." Jaros said she and Swarts, along with others on the county's records committee, will study the proposal and see if they can find a solution that will work for Erie County. Revenue-sharing back to the municipalities, so they don't lose money by cooperating, is just one possible option, she said.

"We don't want this to be a decision that's made overnight and then regretted," Jaros said. "We're going to try and pick what works best for Erie County."

(Susan Jaros is a member of the PGSNYS, and we're sure she will keep us updated on the progress of this positive project for all genealogists in the area)



The Myth of Ellis Island Name Changes

by Dick Eastman

I was involved with a series of e-mail exchanges this week with a reader of this newsletter. He claimed that his ancestor had her name changed at Ellis Island. I pointed out that such a change was unlikely, despite all the claims we hear of such name changes. The ensuing e-mail exchange got me thinking that perhaps others have the same misconceptions that "the family name was changed at Ellis Island." I decided to amplify a bit on the subject in this newsletter.

Immigrants' surnames were changed thousands of times, but professional researchers have found that name changes were rare at Ellis Island (or at Castle Island, which was the New York port of entry prior to Ellis Island's opening). The myth of name changes usually revolves around the concept that the immigrant was unable to communicate properly with the English-speaking officials at Ellis Island. However, this ignores the fact that Ellis Island employed hundreds of translators who could speak, read, and write the immigrants' native tongues. It also ignores all the documentation that an immigrant needed to have in order to be admitted into the U.S.

In order to be admitted into the United States as an immigrant in the late nineteenth century or later, one had to have paperwork. Each immigrant had to have proof of identity. This would be a piece of paperwork filled out in "the old country" by a clerk who knew the language, and the paperwork would be filled out in

the local language, not in English (unless the "old country" was an English-speaking country). The spelling of names on these documents generally conformed to local spellings within the immigrant's place of origin. Even if the person traveling was illiterate and did not know how to spell his or her own name, the clerks filling out the paperwork knew the spelling of that name in the local language or could sound it out properly according to the conventions of the language used. Also, in many countries one had to obtain an exit visa in order to leave. Again, exit visas had to be

The myth of name changes usually revolves around the concept that the immigrant was unable to communicate properly with the English-speaking officials at Ellis Island.

filled out by local clerks who knew the language, and exit visas were written in the local language.

A ship's passenger list had to be prepared by the captain of the ship or his representatives before the ship left the old country. This list was created from the travelers' documents. These documents were created when the immigrant purchased his or her ticket. It is unlikely that anyone at the local steamship office was unable to communicate with this man. Even when the clerk selling the ticket did not speak the language of the

would-be emigrant, someone had to be called in to interpret. Also, required exit visas and other paperwork had to be examined by ticket agents before a ticket would be sold. The name was most likely recorded with a high degree of accuracy at that time.

Next, the ship's captain or designated representative would examine each passenger's paperwork. The ship's officials might not know the immigrant's language, but they had to inspect the exit visa and the proof of identity. They knew that immigrants would not be accepted into Ellis Island without proper documentation and, if the paperwork wasn't there, the passengers would be sent back home at the shipping company's expense! You can believe that the ship's owners went to great lengths to insure the accuracy of the paperwork, including names, places of birth, and travel plans. It is believed that many more people were turned away at the point of embarkation than were ever turned away at Ellis Island. In other words, most of those without proper documentation never got on board the ship.

When the ship arrived at Ellis Island, the captain or his representative would disembark first with the passenger list. The Ellis Island officials would then bring in interpreters to handle the interrogations. These interpreters were usually earlier immigrants themselves or the children of immigrants, and they all knew how to speak, read, and write the language of the immigrants.

The usual immigrant processing time was one to three days. During

this time, each immigrant was questioned about his/her identity, and all the required documentation was examined in detail. Keep in mind that this was not a quick two or three-minute conversation such as we have today at international airports. In the days of steamships, the Ellis Island officials had the luxury of time. They could make leisurely examinations.

The questioning at Ellis Island would be done in the immigrant's native tongue. While the immigrant often was illiterate, the interpreter doing the questioning always could read and write the language involved. Ellis Island employed interpreters for Yiddish, Russian, Lithuanian, and all of the European languages. The immigration center in San Francisco did the same for all the Chinese dialects as well as Japanese, Korean, and many more Oriental languages. Other immigration centers in Boston, Philadelphia, New Orleans, Galveston, and elsewhere followed similar procedures.

Anyone who did not have proper paperwork (in the native language) showing the correct name and place of birth was sent back. Many thousands were sent back for identification reasons or for medical reasons or because they did not have sponsors in the U.S. Most of the people who came through Ellis Island did so with correct paperwork showing the correct or at least plausible spellings of their real names in their original language.

There were a very few exceptions, however. Occasionally war refugees were admitted without much documentation. This was especially true in 1945 and 1946. A few others succeeded in falsifying documents in order to gain admittance when they could not be admitted

under their true identities. Occasionally a child was admitted under the surname of a stepfather when the name of the natural father would have been more appropriate. Nobody can document the number of exceptions, but most professional researchers believe that the number of exceptions was very small.

Once settled into their new homes, however, anything could happen. Millions of immigrants had their names changed voluntarily or by clerks or by schoolteachers who couldn't pronounce or spell children's names. Some immigrants changed their names in order to obtain employment. Many immigrants found it easier to assimilate into American culture if they had American-sounding names, so they gladly went along with whatever their neighbors or schoolteachers called them.

However, the records at Ellis Island remained in the original language.

For more information about the myth that "the family name was changed at Ellis Island," look at the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization's Web page at: www.ins.usdoj.gov/graphics/aboutins/history/articles/NameEssay.html. For information from a genealogist's viewpoint, look at: www.rootsweb.com/~rwguide/lesson8.htm and at jewishwebindex.com/language1.htm (about a third of the way down the page).

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IT'S NOT FOR EVERYONE

It takes someone special
To research the family tree
I'm very happy
That person is me!

Genealogy is a way of life
An interest that keeps on giving
The story of our ancestor's lives
To be learned by the living

An escape from our troubles
A calm in the storm
A focused endeavor
At peace with the Lord

It's not for everyone
But no one can ignore
All the questions of life
We seek to understand more

Often we are mocked
Told we are wasting our time
By those apathetic of life
And narrow of mind

They care not where they go
Rushing to get there fast
For those with no future
Have no interest in their past

It's not for everyone
But it suits me just fine
Investing in my family history
Is how I will spend my time

Keith A. Kaszubik

"BURIED IN A CEMETERY?"



by *Michael John Neill*

As soon as it appeared on my screen, I started to chuckle. In the course of writing an article, I had typed the phrase, "If a person is buried in a cemetery." I immediately started to laugh. It was late and I was tired. "Where else would a person be buried?" I thought. Shouldn't I have written, "when a person is buried in a cemetery" instead of, "if a person is buried in a cemetery"? Before one writes my off as crazy and slightly daft, it was two o'clock in the morning and my sense of humor was slightly skewed. I quit laughing out loud (other members of my household tolerate many things, but loud laughing at two o'clock in the morning is not one of them). However, I got to thinking: not all of the dead ARE buried in a cemetery.

WHERE ARE "DEM" BONES?

My great-great-grandfather died in 1916 at an Illinois state hospital, over a hundred miles from where his three daughters lived. None of the family could afford the expense of transporting the body back for burial. My ancestor could easily have been put in a pauper's grave near the grounds of the hospital. He was not. In the burial location space on the death certificate it lists "Illinois Demonstrators Association." The body of my ancestor was donated to medical science. There is no cemetery plot for which to look. His death certificate is the last record documenting his existence. I was fortunate that he died after the state began recording deaths. Others are not as fortunate. Some burials may never be located.

Did a member of your ancestral family

die while the family was migrating from one point to another? The burial might have taken place at sea if the death occurred while on an ocean voyage. Steerage class was not always the healthiest place to be, especially during extended periods of inclement weather. Cross-county migrations were frequently long journeys and family members who got sick might have died and been buried en-route. Occasionally these burials "on the road" may be in established cemeteries, but many times the grave might have only been marked with a wooden cross or marker that has not stood the test of time. Passenger lists may list ship passengers who died on the ocean voyage, but if your ancestor died on a cross country trip in the back of their own horse-drawn wagon the chances drop significantly that you locate their final resting place.

ON-THE-ROAD BURIALS?

One can occasionally find these "on the road" burials, but it is extremely difficult. Researchers may eventually stumble on an ancestor in a published cemetery transcription, if the ancestor was buried in an established cemetery. Connecting the burial with your own family may be even more difficult as those who died while traveling might have left little in the way of records at the location where the death occurred. This is especially true if the death occurred before the registration of vital records. There might have been no need for a probate if the moving ancestor had sold all his property before the move and had yet to purchase property in his destination.

MIGRATORY DEATHS?

Even findings about these migratory deaths themselves may be difficult. Biographies in county histories or obituaries might mention a parent or sibling dying en route. Researchers fortunate to have diaries of their ances-

tors might find such mention in these records. Given the time period, the death might have been mentioned in the hometown paper of the deceased. However, most "hard-to-crack" migratory deaths took place before newspapers were "good" with including obituaries. However it still may be worth a look if you have an approximate idea of when the ancestor died. But if the newspaper appears to have few obituaries, don't expect to find your ancestor listed. And news of the death may have taken several months to reach the former "home" and is less likely to be included if your ancestor had not lived in the former "home" very long.

CEMETERY KNOWN, BUT NO MARKER?

My wife's ancestor checked into a county poor farm in the 1870s, pregnant and with no legal husband. Not quite a year later, she died. There is no record of her burial. She is most likely buried in the nearby area of unmarked graves of former poor farm residents. There is no death certificate, but her death is mentioned in the poor farm records and interestingly enough she warranted a two-line death notice in the local paper.

My own ancestor's second wife apparently never had a stone. Her death certificate indicates the cemetery where she was buried in the 1920s. An inventory of the stones done in the 1970s failed to list her stone and my own personal search in the 1980s was unsuccessful as well. The small, rural cemetery has no records of burials during this time period.

JUST A METAL MARKER?

My wife's ancestor in upstate New York has only a metal marker on his grave. A permanent stone was never erected. Given enough time, this grave

may too eventually become unmarked.

DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY DIED?

Another relative is dead (or else he's one hundred and thirty years old), but we'll likely never know exactly where or when he died. In the 1930s, this distance cousin adopted a vagabond lifestyle, after his divorce, and after his children were grown. He visited his children occasionally but infrequently. It is not known when or where he died. This relative's brother died in the 1940s, leaving no children. The probate judge, in settling the brother's estate, declared the nomadic cousin legally dead so the nomad's children could legally inherit from their deceased uncle's estate. This estate record is the only known mention of the individual after his divorce.

MOVED IN WITH THE KIDS?

Sometimes a while after the kids flee the nest, the mother or father bird comes home to roost for their retirement. If an ancestor seems to have disappeared (especially after their spouse dies) one excellent approach is to search for all their children. You might even find your ancestor buried in a cemetery next to one of her children and three states from her husband (at least I did).

STONE DIED TOO?

With enough time, some tombstones fall over and become buried. Others break from their mountings and, in falling over, are permanently damaged. Occasionally vandals inflict damage on tombstones. Other times entire cemeteries, especially smaller ones, virtually fade away into grass and timber and die from neglect. While it is a shame and a tragedy, it happens.

CEMETERY HAS NO RECORDS?

Your ancestor may have been buried in a cemetery and never had a stone. In some cases, the cemetery may have a record of burials that provides some information. In some cases, they may not. Many rural cemeteries have no such record, especially for older burials. I re-

member one researcher that I corresponded with who was indignant that a country cemetery had no old records. I therefore could not tell who owned the plots in the older section of the cemetery.

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*<http://www.rootdig.com/>
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St. Adalberts Database Search Engine

This index was compiled from the "Cemetery Daily Journal" at the rectory of Saint Adalbert Basilica, 212 Stanislaus St. Buffalo, NY 14212.

There are numerous misspellings contained in the original book. The person writing the names sometimes wrote the Polish names as he thought they sounded. Then he used the Latin versions for first names. When searching for an ancestor, try looking for misspelled names. If you know the actual death date you can search the rear section of the book which is arranged chronologically in order of burial dates. The index only covers the first ninety-three pages covering the years 1890 to 1903. Reason for this was these pages contained the location of graves. Listed were the section, line and grave numbers.

Sometimes there can be conflicting locations for grave locations. There are cases of two or more names for the same grave. I have tried to be as accurate as possible, but some errors can be found in original book. I have included the original page number so that you can always check original book to settle any discrepancies for spellings, dates, or locations.

This index only pertains to the *Old Cemetery* on Dale Road in Cheektowaga, NY.

There are three sections covered in this index.

Section "J" To date I have not been able to find the location of this section. According to the burial dates, this section appears to be the first or oldest section. Possibly it is the open field on the left before the row of trees.

Section "G" This section has a large number of burials. I believe it is the open field located to your left as you enter, unfortunately it appears only to have three grave markers within the 1890- 1903 era. G-25-17 Stephen Marchewka 16 Mar 1902 G-23-21 Sigmund Sadowski 16 Oct 1903 (Zygmunt) G-27-25 Ladislaus Krynski 11 Mar 1903 (Wladyslaw)

Section "K" This section contains the most grave markers. It is located on the left, just past the traffic circle. Just past the row of trees begins row one. Grave number one starts at the fence.

This index was compiled to aid researchers and genealogists in locating lost or forgotten ancestors. This index is subject to errors and omissions. For complete accuracy always check the original record book, page numbers are provided.

St. Adalberts Cemetery Database (1890 - 1903) was compiled by Ed Korowski and can be found at:

**[http://www.pgsnys.org/
adalberts/](http://www.pgsnys.org/adalberts/)**



(Continued from pg. 13)

*What Did My Grandparents Do In
Their Spare Time*

All of these fraternal had separate sections for women headed by a lady vice president. The *Zwiazek Polek w Ameryce* aka The Polish Women's Alliance, was founded in Chicago in 1898, exclusively for women. The focus of this organization was to foster and promote the role of women in Polonia. It supported various programs to educate the Polish housewife in domestic functions as well as in affairs of the day. The official organ for this fraternal is the *Glos Polek*.

Adherents to the Polish National Catholic Church, also have their own national benefit society. The founder of their Church, Bishop Franciszek Hodur, also saw a need to provide members of the Church with benefits, since many members of the PNCC were discriminated against because of their faith. In 1908, *Spojnica*, the Polish National Catholic Union was formed in Scranton, Pa., to provide insurance. *Spojnica* also sponsors a variety of functions to its membership including a Home for the Aged. The official organ of the society is *Straz*.

All of these groups helped the Polish immigrant adjust to the New World and also provided him with a place to go and something to do. It was not uncommon for someone to be an active member in more an one of these fraternal, but purchasing of insurance was required.

We can not forget about the dozens of political, charitable and social organizations that also existed in our local Polonia over the past 125 years. They also gave the immigrant and his children forms of entertainment and educational benefits. Sorry to say that the vast majority of these once bona fide organizations no longer exist, they have lost their purpose and out lived their usefulness.



BUFFALO GENEALOGICAL ASSISTANT KEEPING TABS ON YOUR RELATIVES

by Dave Newman

Wouldn't it be great if you were able to have someone helping you with your genealogy everyday of the week to include weekends? Well, this dream has become a reality for genealogists researching in Buffalo, New York and who use the Internet. By now readers of this article are wondering what the author is talking about.

The Buffalo Evening News has recently started providing a couple of free services to Internet patrons making a search for recent Buffalo News articles and genealogical information effortless.

One of these services which is called "Headlines by keyword", sends you free e-mail messages that contain web links to articles found in the current days edition of the Buffalo Evening News that have pre-described keywords.

For example, say you wanted all articles that contained the surname "Niewczyk" e-mailed to you:

- 1) Browse to the website <http://www.mybuffalo.com>.
- 2) At the bottom of the web page enter in you e-mail address and click the button labeled "Sign Up".
- 3) Click the word "Edit" next to Headlines by "keyword"
- 4) Follow the instructions and enter in up to five keywords to search for and click the button labeled "Submit". In this case enter "Niewczyk".
- 5) Every time the surname Niewczyk was found in any Buffalo

Evening News article, an e-mail with a link to the article would be sent.

Another service is called "Headlines by Category". This services sends you free e-mail everyday with links to all the headline of the Buffalo Evening News by the category you selected.

For example if you wanted to look at all the Bridal, 50 Plus and Golden Year Announcements:

- 1) Browse to the website <http://www.mybuffalo.com>.
- 2) At the bottom of the web page enter in you e-mail address and click the button labeled "Sign Up".
- 3) Click the word "Edit" next to Headlines by "Category"
- 4) Select the categories you would like e-mailed to you everyday. There are too many to list in this article but the categories that are definitely of genealogical interest is under the Lifestyles Section, called, Bridal News, 50 Plus and The Golden years.
- 5) Everyday an e-mail with a link to the Bridal 50 Plus and Golden Year Announcements.

There is also a Classified Watcher service which e-mails you on keywords you want to search on the Classified section of the paper. Nothing of genealogical significance to search for there but you can do it.

The only drawback to all of this is if you wanted to do a keyword search of more than 5 surnames. However, if you have a second e-mail address you can extend to search for another 5 surnames.

RELATIONSHIP MISCONCEPTIONS IN GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

by Keith Kaszubik

Relationships are important if they are either real or implied (e.g., a family friend referred to as "Uncle" who may have actually been a cousin in some way). We can choose our friends but not our family (keep searching until you find a relative you like!). Too often researchers take the long way home with complicated (often humorous) kinship terminology (e.g., my mother's other son by my father [*instead of brother*]). We refer to the siblings of our grandparents as either great-uncle or great-aunt. They may have been "great" and held in high esteem by the family but correct kinship terminology is granduncle and grandaunt unless you are referring to a sibling of a great-grandparent, then we have either great-granduncle or great-grandaunt. Those of you with grandchildren don't refer to them as "great-children" and we don't refer to our grandparents as "great-parents."

Another myth is that a child of our first cousin is our second cousin. A child of our first cousin is in a generation forward of us and is therefore a first cousin once removed (from the same generational plane). This works both ways in that a first cousin to my father is also my first cousin once removed. Sometimes I distinguish the two by using the term "positive" first cousin once removed for a forward generation and "negative" for a past generation. My father's first cousin, Ralph, is referred to by all as "Uncle Ralph" thereby showing how we sometimes imply relationships out of either affection (i.e., it's a little impersonal to refer to a man 35 years my senior as my "negative first cousin once removed Ralph!") or convenience (i.e., we need to dumb it down a little for those of us who are not genealogists otherwise all of our conversations would be so elaborate that only other analytical minds would appreciate a conversation with us).

Name matching is somewhat old fash-

ioned outdated genealogy unless you can identify your surname associated with one place name where it was derived from (such as my Chamier-Gliszczyński ancestors which was originally the Chamier family of Glisno in Kashubia) but even that doesn't always work.

For a well known surname like Dom-browski, it could be derived from any of the numerous places named Dąbrowa, oak grove. Modern genealogy doesn't mean getting a modem and placing a query on the internet (of which there are thousands that go unanswered). The ma-

Too often researchers take the long way home with complicated (often humorous) kinship terminology (e.g., my mother's other son by my father [instead of brother]).

ajority of real research is done with your "nose to the microfilm" extracting vital records at the library. The first thing I learned nine years ago at the Family History Center was that genealogy is essentially names, dates and places along with relationships either real or implied. In my opinion the place of research is often more important than the actual surname is research.

Take a moment to think how some people collect all information on a given surname worldwide without ever taking into consideration the place of research. Not to mention the fact that by the time parish records began to be kept in Poland that many of our surnames were already widely distributed over a vast area. I was once contacted by someone with a request for all information on the surname Kiedrowski (a very common

Kashubian surname). I replied that I could attach a file to my e-mail but not a file cabinet! Take for example patronymics such as Łukaszewicz (son of Lucas) and Danielewicz (son of Daniel). If one considers that everyone with the same name as these mentioned was related then I would have to consider my friend Daniel Kij's daughter and I related as well since my father's given name is Daniel too (both descended from someone named Daniel). Genealogy requires a little common sense.

For me to contact people with the same name is often a waste of time. In some cases there are people who don't know what their grandparent's first names were. They just called them *dzia* *dzia* or *babcia*. I have even met some men who don't even know what their mother's maiden name was. This isn't their fault, they aren't genealogists and could often care less about such matters. Remember how strange genealogical terms sounded on your first trip to a Family History Center? The point I'm trying to make is that name matching, and especially writing to people with the same name, is often just spinning your wheels unless you are sure that the person is already related and you are documenting the more current generations of the family through them. For serious research a person is better off writing to other genealogists, related or not (although it seems like they are always unrelated), doing research in the same place.

They will be far more aware of what information you are searching for along with what other resources are available that may help you. So maybe blood is thicker than water (actually we inherit DNA) but other family members may not give a hoot about genealogy. Sometimes we bark up the wrong tree and go out on a limb, but if the truth be known, the only people who don't make mistakes are those who don't do anything at all.

SOLVING THE PAPER TRAIL



This is an ongoing series of articles for membership to share and discuss with others their quest in genealogy. We encourage articles for submission to this series, answers to the authors questions, genealogical information you would like to share with others, or if you have a connection to one of our researchers.

This edition's guest is:

Robert Kilmer

robertkilmer@hotmail.com

It was almost by accident that I got interested in genealogy. Several years ago, the local newspaper published an article about the Ellis Island project about which we are all now very familiar. As a side note, the article mentioned that copies of passenger arrival records are available by mail from the National Archives and Records Administration (www.nara.gov) by submitting a Form 81. Dad had mentioned his father, Joseph Kiliszewski, was processed through Ellis Island when he came to America. Mildly curious, I called the National Archives and requested a few copies. I was quite surprised when they arrived in 3 days!

I filled out the form with my best estimate of the year that my grandfather arrived and sent it off. I had

practically forgotten about it, when it arrived about 8 weeks later. There, before me, was a full size copy of the ship's manifest in clear, typewritten text. My grandfather embarked from Danzig, Germany (now Gdańsk, Poland) on the SS New Rochelle on Christmas Eve 1920, with his sister Marianna and

I really hit the jackpot: there was my grandfather's original Certificate of Citizenship; his Polish passport dated 1920; his inspection card; several birth certificates from Poland; countless letters dating back to 1929; employment cards and of course, his death certificate

someone else who I had never heard of before: Stanisław Kiliszewski. I was hooked!

Having found the name of the vessel, I searched for a photograph of the ship. I stumbled on the web site of the Peabody Essex Museum (www.pem.org) and sent an e-mail request (pem@pem.org) asking if they had such a photograph. In about three weeks, they sent an order form and photocopies of 3 available photographs. I highly recommend the Peabody Essex Museum to anyone searching for ship

photographs. They do not charge a search fee and their prices for prints are very reasonable.

Next, I intended to obtain my grandfather's naturalization documents from the Department of Justice (DOJ) (www.ins.usdoj.gov) but I needed to provide a copy of his death certificate with the G-639 form to satisfy privacy laws. While searching for the document, my mother also found all the documents that were boxed up after my grandmother's death, the proverbial "box in the attic". I really hit the jackpot: there was my grandfather's original Certificate of Citizenship; his Polish passport dated 1920; his inspection card; several birth certificates from Poland; countless letters dating back to 1929; employment cards and of course, his death certificate. I submitted the G-639 anyway, thinking that I had exhausted that source, but there were a few surprises on his Petition for Citizenship that filled in a few more pieces of "the puzzle". Lesson learned: explore every avenue even if you expect no new information.

Every genealogy project needs a focus for research. I decided to attempt to find the family link to Aleksander Kiliszewski. As the family legend is told, "Uncle Alex" was responsible for rescuing my grandfather from war-torn Poland; he steamed back to Poland, found my grandfather, brought him to

America and supported him for several years until he got established in America. The ship's manifest debunked the myth that Alex went to Poland for my grandfather; Alex wasn't listed as a passenger on the manifest, although he did pay the fare, so that part of the legend was true. The difficulty of my quest was I didn't have any information about the family relationship with Alex.

To follow this path, I had to trace further back to my paternal great grandfather, Jan Kiliszewski, where I expected to find that Alex was indeed Jan's brother. This is where the power of the Internet was of tremendous help. I knew my great grandparents had also immigrated to America, but I didn't know when or where they had died, or if they had ever been naturalized. I inquired with my father, and he could only tell me where they had died: Coral Gables, Florida, but not *when* they had died. A quick search on the Internet returned two cemeteries and their phone numbers in Coral Gables. Calling each one, I discovered the dates of death for both of my great grandparents and my great aunt as well, all within 15 minutes of talking with my father! Another Internet search quickly revealed the agency that holds vital records in Florida. \$15 and a week later, I had three certified death certificates in hand.

My great grandfather's death certificate showed that he was a US citizen when he died, which was quite a big surprise to my father. My father believed that Jan had never been naturalized. With his death certificate in hand, I could submit a G-639 to the DOJ to get copies of his naturalization file. It took about 6 months for a reply; the Miami INS office is very busy. Because he was not educated and could not speak English, Jan

was denied citizenship year after year after year, until he finally passed the examination in 1953. While this was very unfortunate for him, it generated a wealth of documentation for me. I learned so much about him from this file, including his parents' names, place of birth and marriage date. I also learned that 6 of his 9 children died in infancy, the birth dates of all his living children, all the cities where he lived from 1909 through 1950 and a wealth of other details. All this information was free to me by courtesy of the US federal government!

I learned so much about him from this file, including his parents' names, place of birth and marriage date. I also learned that 6 of his 9 children died in infancy, the birth dates of all his living children, all the cities where he lived from 1909 through 1950 and a wealth of other details.

At this point, I joined the PGSNYS and David Newman advised my of the Dziennik database and requested a search of my surname. A query revealed two obituaries for the surname Kiliszewski: Aleksander and there's Stanisław again! Stanisław's obit showed that he was Alex's father. Since Jan and Alex had different fathers, "Uncle Alex" could not be my grandfather's uncle! I would have to go back at least one more generation to make the connection. I requested Stanisław's death certificate from the City of Buffalo, which showed that his father's name was Piotr.

Since Jan's father, Andrzej, did not immigrate to America, I would have to access Polish records to make the family connection. Perhaps Andrzej's father was the same Piotr Kiliszewski, in which case, Alex and I would be distant cousins.

Up until this point, I had had difficulty finding the LDS films for the town of Żyrardów, the town of my grandfather's birth. It was not a big problem because I had been busy enough accessing more recent records in the US. But now it was clear that I needed to find the right films to reach the goal. Ed Kornowski was kind enough to guide me with his experience and advise that LDS records are catalogued by parish name, not by town. So, even though my grandfather was born in the town of Żyrardów, the birth was most certainly recorded in a different town. The Słownik Geograficzny entry for Żyrardów revealed that the Żyrardów parish was created from the Wiskitki parish circa 1890. I performed a "Place" search on the online LDS catalog and easily found the film numbers for the parish of Wiskitki. I was elated that I finally found the path to the goal. At the same time, I was a little sad that the search was nearly over. I was sure it was just a matter of reading the films.

Genealogy is like life: it throws you a curve when you least expect it. As it turns out, the only trace I could find of any Kiliszewski's in the parish of Wiskitki was the birth record of Jan Kiliszewski in 1875. His father must have moved to Żyrardów from another town... but which one? The quest goes on!

(Continued on pg. 30)

Solving The Paper Trail

(Continued from pg. 29)

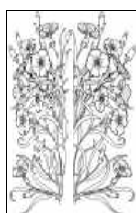
Serendipity and luck play a part in any endeavor, and genealogy is no different. In a query against the SSDI index for the surname "Kiliszewski", I got a hit for the death of a Stanisława Kiliszewski in Buffalo for the year 1993. I casually pursued this lead intermittently for about a year and contacted the funeral home when it finally occurred to me that Stanisława was my great uncle's wife. Imagine my surprise and delight when the funeral director informed me that my great uncle was alive and well, at the ripe old age of 97! I quickly arranged a visit with my uncle with the help of a translator. It was a special moment meeting my grandfather's brother again after all those years. Although time had taken its toll on him, I enjoyed the visit we had shortly before he passed away.

The funeral director was also able to supply me with addresses of his family in Poland. The addresses were 5 years old, but I sent letters in blind hope, and I was rewarded a few months later with a letter from my second cousin. Just by following a smallest of leads from the Internet, I was able to make contact with my family in Poland.

I still have not yet found the link to Aleksander Kiliszewski. I hope to make a breakthrough to the records in Poland soon. In the meantime, I would be very grateful if anyone who has information about Aleksander Kiliszewski or his family would contact me at robertkilmer@hotmail.com. Aleksander Kiliszewski was a prominent businessman in Buffalo from 1925 to 1955 when he passed away. He was the founder of the

Park Hotel on Union and Williams.

In closing, I would like to thank David Newman for his help with the local searches and databases, Michal Drabik for all his help with many translations and Ed Korowski for his guidance with the LDS catalog.



IN SYMPATHY

To the family and friends of long time member Helen Skarbek who passed on to her eternal reward, May 28th, 2001. Helen was

buried at St. Adalbert's Cemetery in Lancaster, NY.

Helen helped to initiate several fund raisers to benefit our society, donated her time to help with our library and pursued her genealogical research with family ties to Chopin's mother.

She will be sadly missed by all.



Some Helpful Tips on Passenger Arrival Lists

The federal government had passed four separate laws starting in 1819 with regards to immigration, but had little effect with the dealings of ship passenger lists. The Immigration and Passenger Acts in 1882 provided the basis for the keeping of these lists which called for the lists to include, name, age, sex and the occupation of passengers, the intended destination and their native country. Previous lists only recorded their country of allegiance which in some cases differs from their native country.

Those who later had called to restrict or regulate immigration forced a new act to be formed. The Immigration Act of 1891. This established that lists report the last residence of each alien. In 1893, another act designated that more than twice as much information be gathered from each passenger. The older Customs Lists which required only five or six columns of information now increased to twenty one columns with the act of 1893.

Some of the important additions in the act of 1893 included; the aliens last residence, if joining a relation or friend-that person's name, address, and relationship, if the immigrant had the ability to read and write, who paid for passage and the immigrant's state of health. These lists were usually filled out by the steamship lines (at the beginning of the voyage) with forms provided by the Bureau of Immigration then given to the inspectors at the receiving stations, such as Ellis Island or others.

Some of the significant ports of arrival are; Baltimore, MD, Boston, MA, New Orleans, LA, New York, NY, Philadelphia, PA, San Francisco, CA, Key West, FL, Providence, RI,

(Continued on pg. 33)

Reminiscences of the Boston Hills Polonia



by Keith A. Kaszubik

I am sure we all sometimes wonder whether or not we can ever return home. To get back to the lost innocence of our youth and the comfort and security we felt with our mother and father and extended family. After nearly 17 years away from the original home I returned last year to buy the old homestead which my father had built on a lot which was originally a part of my grandfather's farm. The following article is not a complete study of the Boston Hills Polonia -- located about 20 miles south of Buffalo, New York -- but rather more of a recollection of past events and stories passed down to me from others.

The Boston Hills Polonia was located on the west side of the Boston Valley approximately between the hamlets of North Boston, Patchin and East Eden. The Poles here primarily gravitated towards St. Mary's Church in East Eden (established by Germans in 1835) which is the oldest catholic church in the Diocese of Buffalo outside of Buffalo. A walkthrough the cemetery reveals numerous Polish surnames along with a few scattered tombstones written in the Polish language. In the past several Polish priests served the parish, among them: Rev. Alexander Jankowski (1945-

1953), Msgr. Stanislaus A. Kulpinski (1953-1955) and Rev. Thaddeus J. Zablotny (1955-1967 & 1970-1983).

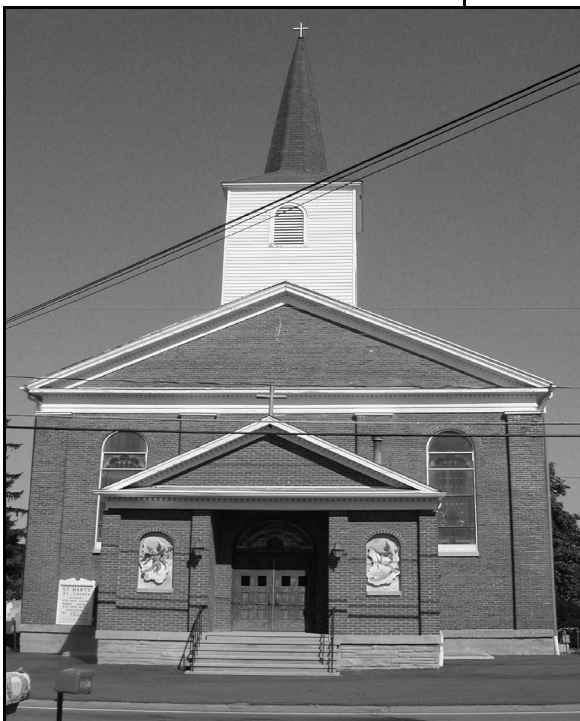
"Father Ted" was greatly respected by all. A few Poles also belonged to St. John's Church in Boston.

My own great-grandparents, Joseph Parysek and Anastasia nee Waligora, migrated from Buffalo to the Boston Hills Polonia in c. 1906 and took up residence on Zimmerman (then a dirt road). They had arrived in Buffalo in 1893 from the Wielkopolska region of Poland. About 30 families settled here between the



fork in the road at Zimmerman and Mayer heading south two or three miles to West Hill Drive (formerly known as Zientowski Road) near Rice Road. Between these two we also have Polish Hill Road as a symbol of our presence (the lower half has been renamed).

The following surnames are/were known in the Boston Hills Polonia: Blaszc (originally Blaszc on Keller Road), Buciur, Dubalski (old Mrs. Dubalska at the start of Zimmerman hill), Jazwiecki (immigrated c. 1910), Kaminski (some buried in the oldest section of St. Mary's Cemetery), Kaszubowski, Kobiolka



St. Mary's Church, East Eden, NY.

(immigrated c. 1908 [active in local politics]), Kowalski, Kukla (on Shero Road), Lutomski (immigrated c. 1880 from German Poland),



St. John's Church, Boston, NY

Mazur (on Shero Road), Nowak (on Feddick Road), Nowicki, Paciorek, Pijanowski, Polenkiewicz [sic] (immigrated c. 1909), Rachwal (still farming to this day), Rochowiak (my step-great-grandfather), Smolinski (immigrants from Malopolska in c. 1908 [a descendant runs the local trucking business]), Wierzbic (on Zimmerman), Witkowski (on Feddick Road), Wroblewski (on Zimmerman), Zienkowski (said to have been well read).

Stories suggest that there were advertisements in church bulletins in Buffalo for settling in the Boston Hills Polonia. Certainly many of the Poles were previously in the business of farming in the old country and the very attractive countryside of the Boston Hills must have been appealing to them although I am sure that hard work kept many of them too busy to totally enjoy it.

They were not all from any specific region of Poland either. What they would have found at the beginning of the 20th century was farmland with some woods, and those woods containing the massive American Chestnut trees (the blight killed off the chestnut trees in this area in the 1930s). My grandmother, Pelagia (Ella) Kaszubowska nee Parysek, related to her children how she would pick the chestnuts for market in Buffalo. These Poles would also have found wild blackberries, elderberries (great for pies!), currants, may apples (mandrake) and wild mushrooms. A few tapped the maple tress for sap to make syrup

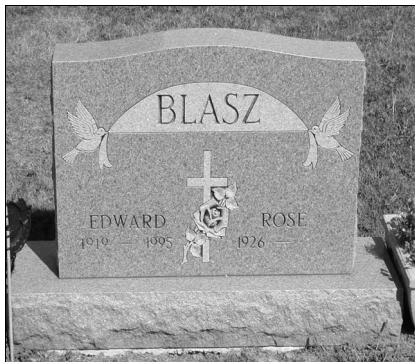
with and a few reputedly ran moonshine. Most of the farms had a cow and a few chickens and were basically self-sufficient for the most part. Generally speaking everyone helped out their neighbors in time of need and everyone knew one another. The old joke is that a hundred years ago people in the city would say, "I don't want to live out there in the country with all those wild animals!" Yet today out here we say, "I don't want to live there in the city with all those wild animals!" Often we would be referred to as "Hillbillies" but I assure you we were more sophisticated "Hillwilliams!" My own grandfather,

Michael Kaszubowski (1892-1964) bought property here in 1919 and married my grandmother (the girl next door) in 1923. The Kaszubowskis and Paryseks had known each other in Buffalo before any of them lived in the Boston Hills (both members of Transfiguration Church). Grandpa was referred to as "Tractor Mike" because it is said that he had the first tractor in the Township of Boston although another story suggests that he liked to talk tractor a bit to the excess. He also served as town assessor for two different terms. Grandpa's extended family in Buffalo (the Kaszubowskis, Kuczkowskis & Zyndas) would often visit on Sundays up until the post war period with some members of the family living at the farm for short periods of time, pulling their weight where they could, helping with the chores. The Kaszubowski boys were somewhat known for their field cars or "jitneys" and once a Mazur boy nicknamed the "corners" of Zimmerman, Keller and the Kaszubowski driveway as "Crazy Fords Cross Roads." The Jazwiecki family on Keller Road had one son along with three girls which all married Polish boys. One of them, John Bucior ("Mr. B." as we called



him), started off as a journalist for the local Dziennik dla Wszystkich [Everybody's Daily]. He once related to me how he walked the entire perimeter of Poland at one time when he was a young man. He then started in the poultry business and would take his produce to the famous Broadway Market in Buffalo beginning in 1941. In the 1970s I started working for him at the Broadway Market myself. At that time he was primarily buying wholesale at the Clinton & Bailey Farmer's Market and selling retail at the Broadway Market. My brothers and I all worked there, along with others, on Thursdays and Saturdays (getting up at about 3:30 a.m.). We all learned some basic Polish and overall it was a very good experience (not to mention the homemade dill pickles which we consumed in great quantities). John's son, Danny Bucior, was with the popular Polish music group, The Modernaires. Unfortunately he died in a car accident (he was a very talented young man who gave music lessons to my siblings and I). Danny's cousin, Ricky Pijanowski, is also a musician and has played in the Steel City Brass among other groups.

I wonder how many other isolated secondary Polish settlements exist, or have existed in the past, throughout New York State? It is our responsibility to document and share with others our stories of Polonia in days gone by for all to enjoy.



Some Helpful Tips on Passenger Arrival Lists (Continued from pg. 30)

Galveston, TX, Portland, ME and Seattle, WA. Do not limit yourself in searching just one port of arrival, as not all immigrants came through Ellis Island.

You might find a passenger list is missing for a ship known to have arrived at a specific port. These may have been lost before the Bureau of Immigration gave them to the National Archives, or the list may have never made it to the Bureau of Immigration. In some cases transcripts, or quarterly abstracts of the lists are used as substitutes on the microfilm copy. There is no way of knowing how complete the entire collection is.

Passenger lists are arranged chronologically by day, and each day by ship. A small amount of passengers traveled in first class and cabin class, those mostly being US citizens who were traveling as tourists or merchants returning to the US. Almost all immigrant aliens traveled steerage class whose names are listed in no particular order, though families are usually listed together.

Ship passenger lists contain information on each immigrant and stretches over two facing pages with about thirty lines to a page. Each page is given a group number, usually stamped with large numerals. Aliens who were detained at the receiving station or refused entry are listed on separate sheets, usually at the end of each manifest.

After the lists were microfilmed the original Immigration Passenger Lists were destroyed. The quality of the microfilm sometimes is a problem in reading as many of the films were done in the 1940's and interpreting different types of handwriting can also make reading difficult.

Almost all Immigrant Passenger Lists have been indexed with the exception of Seattle, WA, which were only located in the last 20 years. Indexes are card-style Soundex indexes created by the WPA projects. They work like the census Soundexes except Soundex cards are generally created for each individual immigrant, not just each family, as with the census Soundex. In most ports the card is preprinted, with blanks for the passenger's name, country ship name, date of arrival, etc. However, the cards for New York arrivals, after 1910 have less information: name, age, gender and reference numbers.

On all cards where the arrival date is not given, the card will have three numbers: the volume of the passenger list, the group (like a page number) and the list number. The list number is the line (usually 1-30) where the immigrant appears in a specific group (page). The Soundex cards are arranged by the code given to the surname, most cards are then arranged by the given name of the immigrant. When there is many same codes for those sharing the same name, they may be arranged chronological by date of arrival or age of immigrant. Or they could be arranged by spelling when similar names are filed together. Examine carefully the specific index your using and determine how the cards are arranged.

Some port indexes are alphabetical and filed strictly by surname then given name. It is important to keep in mind that the immigrant's surname could have been spelled differently than it is today. Be sure to check all possible spellings.

Note: Immigration at the port of Philadelphia was the most popular prior to 1840, then New York, where in 1855 Castle Garden was designated an immigration station. As the number of immigrants grew Ellis Island was built and opened in January of 1892 as an immigrant receiving station. Though these were popular ports, our immigrants did arrive at other ports in the United States.



by Michael John Neill

It is easy to spend hours on the Internet, hoping to find that elusive ancestor, hoping that somewhere, someone has converted that one vital clue to digital form.

It is easy to spend hours in the courthouse, hoping that somewhere an elusive relative has left some paper trail, a record or a case file that will bring our brick walls tumbling down.

It is easy to spend hours in libraries, hoping that a long-lost relative has already done our genealogy for us and published it in book form.

It is easy to spend hours in cemeteries, hoping that one of our relatives had the forethought to leave something on their tombstone other than the word "dead."

The "dead" are the apparent focus of genealogy.

Sometimes in our rush to find information on the dead we tend to forget an excellent genealogical source: the living. This "source" is sometimes not easy to read, not easy to interpret, and not easy to access.

And yet the living are our most direct connection to our past.

Living family members may hold information that is vital to our research, information that may be in no library, no courthouse, or no archive. History books may tell us what life was like in the 1930s, but living family members can provide us with a unique perspective. No one likes to completely "generalize" their family history from information obtained in history books.

The human brain is the most fragile of information repositories. Thousands of these wonderful repositories cease to exist every day. Some of these deaths are unexpected and surprise us--the source is gone before we ever expected it would be. We wait to visit the "source" like it is a far-off courthouse or archives that will be standing forever. How many courthouses and libraries are destroyed on a regular basis?

Regardless of your age, there might be other family members who have information you do not. When I began my family history research, I had six ancestors and numerous aunts and uncles living. Some are not so fortunate. Yet today, twenty some years later I have located more distant relatives than I ever

thought possible---many of whom have some information on my family history.

Do you have cousins or more distant relatives? They might know more about the family than you. Even younger relatives might be aware of family details you know nothing about. Their parents might have known more about the family than your parents did. Their parents might have talked more about their family than your parents did.

One of my ancestors had over fifty grandchildren. For a long time the oldest grandchild had the only framed copy of a picture of the grandparents. This grandchild gave this picture not to one of their own children, but to the youngest child of their grandparents' youngest child. The passing of information or heirlooms might not have taken place in a linear fashion.

What will happen to these items when the family member dies? Do their children or grandchildren even know or care? The potential loss of these items is greater when the family member has no descendants and lives a distance from other family members (although having children living next door does not guaran-

tee that they won't just put your stuff out on the curb along with that nasty carpet from the basement).

Some of these family members might not be online and might not be accessible with the click of a mouse. Some might even have difficulty having a phone conversation or writing a letter. An on-site visit might be the only way to interview the relative. There are many genealogists who are "offline" just as there are many genealogy records that are "offline."

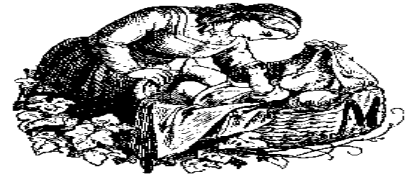
There's no guarantee the family member will talk with you or share what information they have, yet it still may be worth a chance. Your best resource may have hands and feet instead of brick and mortar. Don't neglect it.

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OUR POLISH TRADITIONS



By Mike Drabik

This article of traditions and customs will be devoted to childbirth. Here is some old Polish lore for those who have forgotten or looking to start a Polish tradition.

At the time of her wedding, the bride is adorned with symbolic "barwinek" or myrtle. It is woven into her headpiece and also a small piece is pinned to her shoulder. The myrtle is a symbol of fertility, so the young couple would be able to produce offspring. The wedding cake or bread, known as the "kolacz" was tastefully decorated with symbols as a rooster, nut, or intertwined branches; again these are signs of fertility and reproduction.

The young women who had difficulty conceiving made pilgrimages to local shrines to pray for a child. She was known to eat the meat of animals associated with fertility like rabbits and roosters to help her situation improve. The herb "bylica", or mugwort, was commonly used throughout Poland by women wishing to conceive.

Those lucky women who became pregnant had rules to follow for a healthy delivery. It was said never to look upon a crippled or deformed individual or this would occur to her child. One should never look upon mice, or one's child would be born with a mole on it. It was forbidden to gaze into the fire, as this caused a red birthmark to appear on the baby. Should a pregnant woman peep through a keyhole, her baby would be born cross-eyed. It was unhealthy for a woman to cross over a rope or piece of clothesline, as there would be difficulty with the umbilical cord during delivery. During her pregnancy it was never allowed to discuss her condition because this was unlucky. She quietly prepared

for her delivery making no announcements or fanfare. A midwife or "akuszerka" would attend her delivery. The bed was usually draped with sheets to provide privacy, as were not any windows. The woman was undressed and every knot from her clothing was unraveled so as to provide easy delivery. All locks in the house were opened fearing that if they were all closed, the delivery would be difficult. If she plaited her hair, it was undone as a way to ask the blessed Virgin to come to her aid. If the woman was having difficulty in labor, she was moved to the floor so that she could draw strength from Mother Earth. Garlic and onion were also used, so the pungent odors would help to chase away any evil spirits present.

Babies born in the morning were said to be lucky, and the Blessed Mother would protect those born on a Saturday, since this is a day dedicated to her. Fridays were unlucky days to be born and should a girl be born on Good Friday, it was said that she would bury three husbands! The afterbirth and umbilical cord had special powers. Once the cord fell off the baby's navel, it was taken to church and tossed behind the main altar, so that the infant would have a healthy childhood. (This was done by my mother in law after the birth our daughter Joanna-St. Casimir Church.)

Following the birth of the child, he or she was bathed by the midwife usually in a wooden bin, which was also used to make bread. Added to the water (drawn before sunset) were added dried herbs that were blessed on August 15, the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The water was never tossed away in an area where someone would walk, this could bring bad luck.

(Continued on next page)

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Polish Traditions *(Continued from pg. 35)*

The baptism of a new child was usually held 3 weeks after the birth, of course earlier if a health problem occurred. The child's parents decided on who would be godparents. There were rules here too. The godparents were picked mainly from married relatives. A woman who already had given live birth was preferred, but a pregnant woman was never chosen, even if she was the closest relative (again, this occurred when my wife was pregnant with Krystyna. Her sister picked another woman as godmother for her child.) The godfather was one chosen who was not likely to look into the bottle. The godmother was required to sew the infant's baptismal shirt, "koszulka", and cap. The godfather usually provided the "powijak" or swaddling band, on which the baby was placed for the christening. The parents chose a name for the baby revealing it just before the godparents took the infant to church to be baptized. The name was selected from the litany of saints, but from those whose feast

day had already past. This way the child would be under the protection of his or her saint immediately and would not have to wait for the feast day to arrive. It was not uncommon for a child to receive the name of the saint on whose day he or she was born. In some areas of Poland it was customary to pass the baby out the window to the godparents, as it was believed that the threshold was a place where the souls of those departed, both good and evil gathered. To disorient them (the spirits), the baby was slipped out the window. On the way to the church, both godparents were not allowed to look to either side or behind them, as this was bad luck. It was said if they passed a funeral procession on the way to church, the child would die. In the event a child would die, the godfather was responsible for providing the coffin and the godmother for sewing a shirt and preparing the body for burial. If the baby cried in church during the ceremony, it would grow up strong and loud, but should the baby sleep through the service, it would grow up lazy and in poor health.

When the godparents returned home with the child, he or she was placed under the main table of the house. The baby was retrieved by the father if a boy, and by the mother if a girl. The godparent would then say to the parent; "wzielem wam niewiernika a oddaje wam katolika" meaning, "I took from you a non-believer and in return give you a Catholic." The phrase rhymes nice in Polish. The underlining symbolism of placing the infant under the wooden table is so that a boy would grow up to be a good provider and the girl would be a model housewife.

A lot has changed over the centuries, but a few things have survived. If you study the traditions of other ethnic groups, you will find they too had some strange customs, traditions and superstitions.

