
Searchers

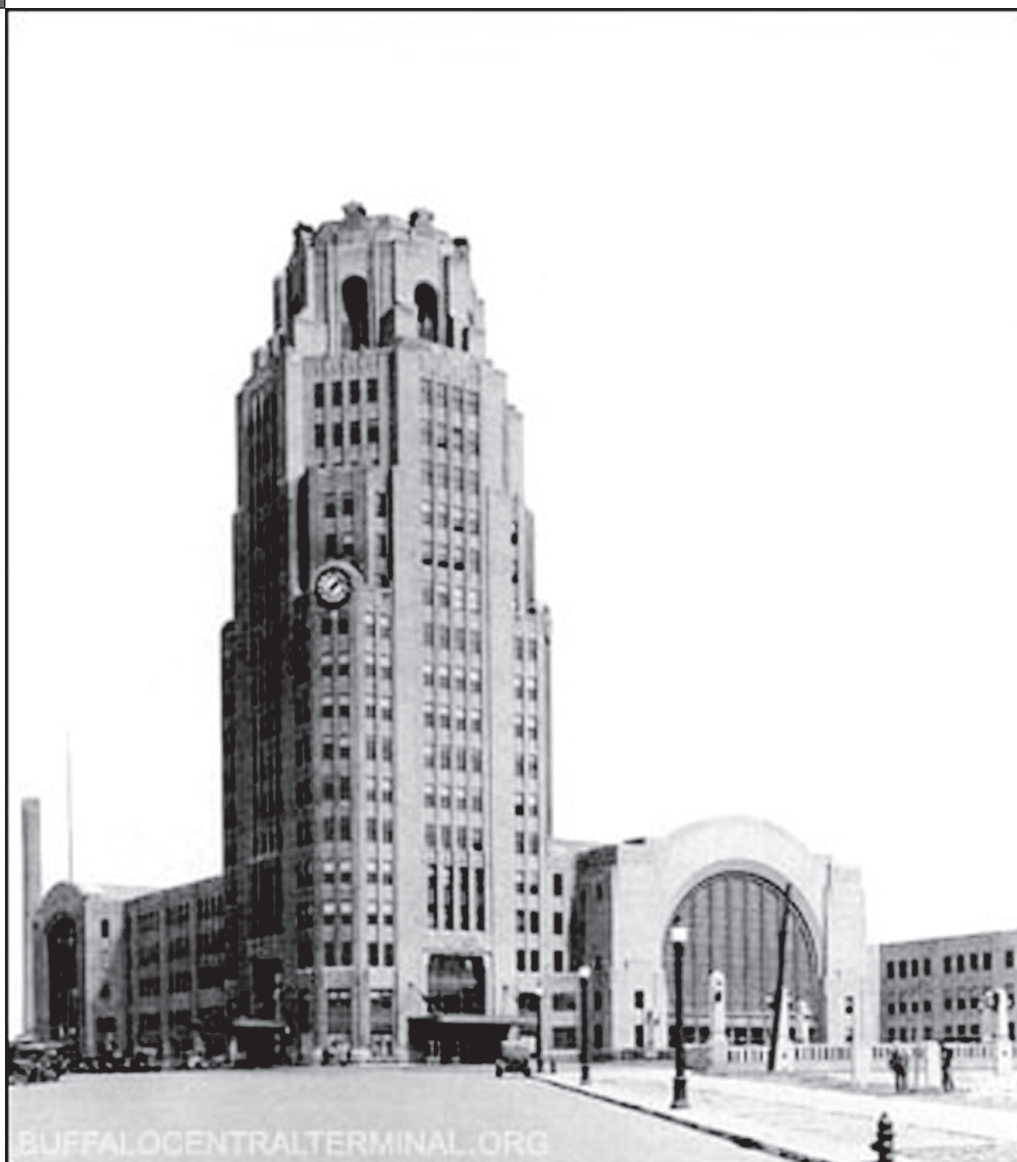
The Journal of the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State



Number 40

PRESERVING OUR PAST SINCE 1988

Issue 1, 2005



*Buffalo's New York Central Terminal
495 Paderewski Drive*

FOR YOUR INFORMATION ...

MEETINGS

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

All meeting cancellations due to bad weather will be announced on News Radio 930 AM, WBEN.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Dues are \$15.00 for the year. This entitles you to three editions of the Searchers. New members receive an information package to help get them started. **Please notify us of any change of address.**

ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

All articles concerning Polish Genealogy, history, and information are considered for publication in the Searchers.

Contact: James P. Harlos, Editor
harlos@adelphia.net

MAIL

Please note when writing us for assistance, that due to the large amount of mail received, 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

12645 Rte. 78

East Aurora, New York 14052

If you wish to contact one of our committees, please write the committee name on the front of the envelope. The committees are: General Correspondence, Searcher Editor, and Membership Chairman.

Please visit The Polish Genealogical Society of New York State's Web Site:

<http://www.pgsnys.org>

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Editor's Notes

Are we just birdcage liner?

Well, at long last we have an issue of the Searchers. I have made some changes to the labeling of the issue. I have dropped the seasonal designations, Spring, Summer, and Winter in favor of the numbering 1, 2, and 3. The reason for this is that it is too difficult to maintain a seasonal schedule. The reasons for the delay in publication is obvious; we need material. Surely there are more people in PGSNYS that have had experiences in doing their genealogical research that could be useful to others. Write it up and send it to me. If you know something about an area in Poland, write it up. Is your family from some other community in New York State other than Buffalo? Write it up. Church histories, family history, pictures, etc. are all good for the Searchers. I would also like feedback - what don't you like?, what do you like?, do you use a computer in your research?, do you dislike the use of computers?, how do you find out information? All of these, and more, are questions that I would like to have answers to. Please send me your feelings at

Harlos@adelphia.net

Or if you don't have a computer, send me your comments by mail to

**James P. Harlos
62 Jeffrey Dr.
Amherst, NY 14228**

I am going to start publishing meeting information in the Searchers. While many of our members are located in the Buffalo area, we do have many members who are not within driving distance to attend our meetings. We will therefore start including meeting descriptions. In this issue see the lead story about the talk we had on Buffalo's Central Terminal.

Till the next issue,

Jim Harlos

President's Message

A WORD OF THANKS

The PGSNYS is not a select few who do all the work in the society. We are a network of people who come together with common research goals. In this message I'd like to say thanks to the following individuals for their contributions to the society:

Vice President Ted Smardz

For the 1st quarter of 2005, our society kept active due in large part by our vice president Ted Smardz. At our January 13th Meeting, Ted Smardz took charge as Chairman of Guest Speakers Committee. For our February, March and April meetings, Ted found some very interesting and informative speakers to include Henry Muszynski, Father Joseph Klos and Russel Pawlak. More information about these speakers is found elsewhere in this issue.

Ted also spearheaded the idea for 15 members to travel to Erie, Pennsylvania and meet with local genealogy enthusiasts. Our goal was to encourage this group to start a Polish Genealogy Society there. On Saturday April 23rd we did just that. Three automobiles took the hour long journey. In attendance were Rita & Ed Prabucki, Daniel Kij, Lynn Mycek, Agnieszka & David Newman, Laural Keough, Ted Smardz, Laurie Bialoglowicz, Pat & Joe Neuland, Cindy Kloss, Glaydis & Norbert Surdyk. The group of people we met showed promise of starting a genealogical society. Due to Erie, PA ethnic make-up if a society was formed it may be more appropriate for them to start a Slovic society. We wish them the best.

Pat Neuland and Pierre La Joie

Thanks to these two individuals the Funeral Card Project now has all 1,200 funeral cards recorded. Pat Neuland is also a board member. Pierre La Joie became a member of the society as a result of his wife's Polish family line. For those who haven't donated copies of their funeral cards can do so by mailing them to:

(Continued on Page 14)

Buffalo's Central Terminal

At the March monthly meeting of the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State held at Villa Marie College, the members were treated to a very interesting talk by Mr. Russell Pawlak on Buffalo's Central Terminal. This building is a well-known landmark to anyone growing up on the East Side of Buffalo.

Construction on the building at 495 Paderewski Drive started in 1927. It was opened for business on the 22th of July 1929. While Buffalo had long needed a new terminal, the date of opening was unfortunate. Just 125 days later was Black Thursday the start of the Great Depression. Thus between 1929 and 1933 the New York Central Terminal lost an amazing amount of revenue.

Within 5 years of opening it was apparent that the terminal's capabilities were greater than the requirements of the age. At this point the railroads were entirely on their own in regards to construction, maintenance, and operating costs

On the other hand the railroad was heavily taxed by the Federal, State, and local governments. Some of this

money was used to support the the railroads competitors. Automobile, trucks, buses, and air travel were the new means of transportation.

However, the outbreak of World War II and the entrance of the United States into the War following the attack on Pearl Harbor led to an increase in freight and passenger travel. Many people in PGSNYS have memories of this time in the history of the terminal. However, this was just a bubble that burst after the war ended.

At the end of the war the people returned to their automobiles, buses, and airlines. The railroads returned the increasing declining revenues. On October 28, 1979 Amtrak, the owner at that time, abandoned the terminal in favor of its Exchange street terminal and the new Dick Road terminal.



Central Terminal Concourse

Since that time the terminal has suffered from the ravages of time, illegal use of the terminal by squatters, stripping of metals and ornamentation inside the terminal and the effects of weather and animals.

At the end of August 1997 the ownership of the terminal passed to the Central Terminal Restoration Corporation, lo-

cated at 1081 Broadway, Buffalo, NY 14212.. Their telephone number is (716) 893-7222 and they may be contacted there for additional information



Aerial view of the terminal and surroundings



Central Terminal Concourse
September 2, 1997



Central Terminal Waiting Room
September 2, 1997



Central Terminal
September 4, 2005

Mr. Pawlak gave us a very entertaining, reminiscences, and informative talk about the history of the terminal.. We heard about the neglect and destruction of the building and loss of some of its artifacts. We also heard about the progress of the restoration work. It will take a lot of money to do this. The benefits of this work really depend upon the community and our community leaders. In many cities in the United States restoration have lead to the reuse of the building in ways that enhance it usefulness to the commu-

tourism. One can easily find examples of this in cities such as Detroit, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore and others. One can only hope that restoration work in Buffalo can be inspired to follow in this direction.



Potpourri

History Department - Does Anything Change?

A newspaper article report:

\$200,000 For An Aquarium

Two proposals ... will come before the park board at its meeting tomorrow. One is the building of an aquarium...

William F. Kasting advocates the aquarium, and last month the board requested George H. Selkirk to ascertain from other cities the cost of building and equipping such places. His data will be before the board tomorrow.

Mr. Keating suggests The Front or Delaware Park as a site for the aquarium, and the suggestion that the Bird avenue pier near the foot of Ferry street be used. Mr. Keating does not think the aquarium could properly be built for much less than \$200,000. Detroit built one for \$100,000 but the park officials there are now sorry they did not put more money into it. New York city spent \$500,000 on its aquarium. An appropriation would have to be secured from the common council. Mr. Keating thinks the expense would be justified by the advantage the aquarium would be to school children.

Does this sound like recent news? It isn't! This comes from the December 11, 1911 issue of the **Buffalo Express**. Since I can not remember ever going to the Buffalo Aquarium I guess the topic never did get the support needed.



Witamy

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members of PGSNYS.

Thomas **Harrell-Sesniak**, Plantation,
FL

Teresa **Jarmuz**, Lancaster, NY

Maxine **Knisley**, Sebastian, FL

Alexandra **Lane**, Winter Haven, FL

Joan **Lus**, Buffalo, NY

Ruth **Madar**, Orchard Park, NY

Michael J. **Marcy**, West Melbourne, FL

Arlene **Nowak**, Buffalo, NY

Barbara **Odette**, Chicago, IL

Local History Division, **Rochester Public Library**.
Rochester, NY

Family in Polish

Rodzina po polsku

Parents - rodzice

Father - ojciec

Mother - matka

Children - dzieci

Son - syn

Daughter - córka

Siblings - rodzeństwo

Brother - brat

Sister - siostra

Grandparents - dziadkowie

Grandfather - dziadek

Grandmother - babcia

Great-grandparents - pradziadkowie

Great-grandfather - pradiadek

Great-grandmother - prababcia

Grandchildren - wnuki

Grandson - wnuk

Granddaughter - wnuczka

Great-grandchildren - prawnucki

Great-grandson - prawnuk

Great-granddaughter - prawnuczka

Uncle - wujek

Aunt - ciocia

Castle Garden

By James P. Harlos

From 1855 till 1892, immigrants coming to the United States through the Port of New York did not come through Ellis Island. Instead they came through a facility named Castle Garden. Now the records for Castle Garden are available on-line at <http://www.castlegarden.org>. The on-line records there consist of extractions of manifest data from pre-Castle Garden through the Castle Garden period and onto 1913.

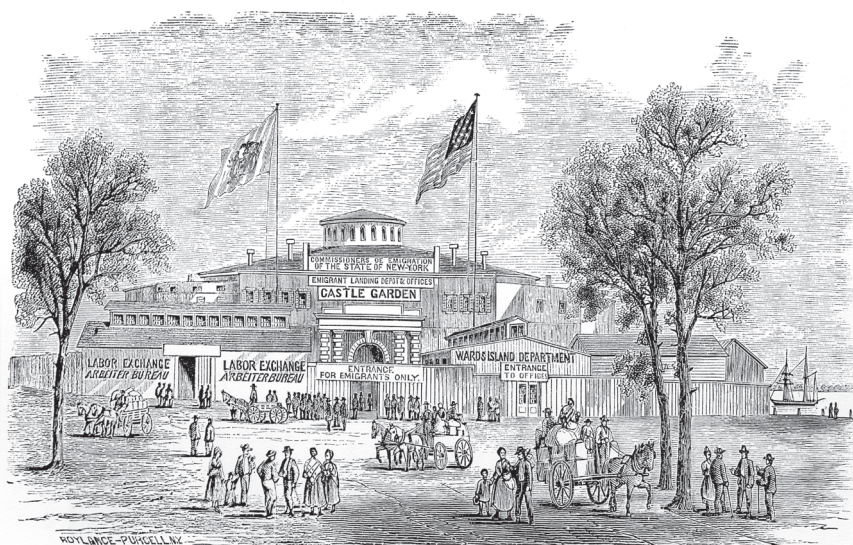
The detailed breakdown of immigration processing locations is as follows::

- ♦ up to July 31, 1855: No processing. Passengers simply walked off the ship.
- ♦ August 1, 1855 to April 18, 1890: Castle Garden
- ♦ April 19, 1890 to December 31, 1891: Barge Office
- ♦ January 1, 1892 to June 13, 1897: Ellis Island

- ♦ June 14, 1897 to December 16, 1900: Barge Office (Ellis Island closed due to fire)
- ♦ December 17, 1900 to December 31 1924: Ellis Island

As this list indicates, prior to the opening of the Castle Garden facility, passengers simply walked off the ship. This simple statement hides a great deal of heart-ache and trouble. Imagine yourself coming to this country at that time. You perhaps don't have a grasp of English, you certainly didn't have any ideas of what to expect or how to get temporary housing, convey your baggage or arrange transportation. You also might have had a noble idea of the helpfulness or honesty of your fellow man. This would rapidly be lost.

The details of this experience has been detailed in Friedrich Kapp's report *Immigration and the Commissioners of Emigration of the State of New York* originally published in 1870 and republished in 1969 by Arno Press and The New York Times. There he details the experiences of fresh immigrants who were preyed upon by boarding house operators, baggage storage and conveyance agents and transportation agents. The only possible item that the immigrants had was money and that was the ultimate goal of these predators. There are numerous cases of boarding house "runners", a class of people whose job it was to steer immigrants to certain boarding houses, often leading the immigrants to be overcharged for a



State Emigrant Landing Depot, Castle Garden, N. Y.

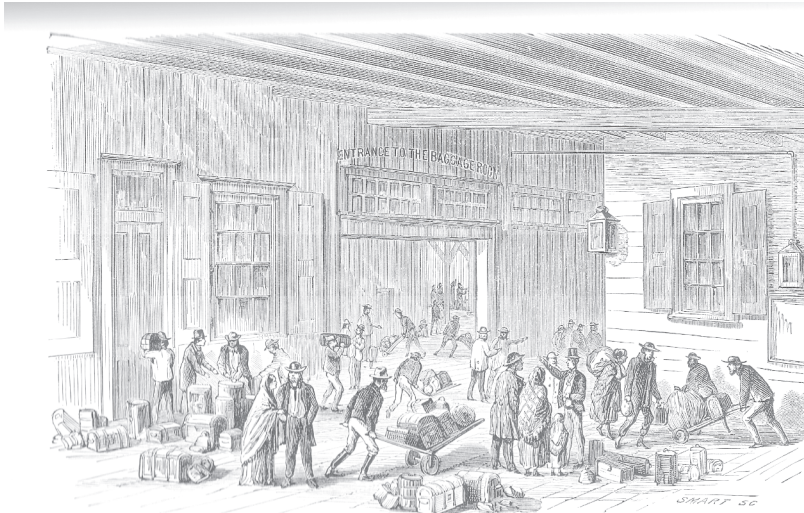
room. Baggage agents often overcharged and also did nothing to protect the goods entrusted to them. And transportation agents who overcharged for boat or train costs and did not issue tickets or didn't actually buy a full passage for their clients. In fact, reading these accounts indicate that it could be difficult for a newly arrived immigrant to avoid being cheated in some fashion.

The purpose for creating Castle Garden was in part to protect the newly arrived immigrant. This was achieved by preventing access to the newly arrived by the "runners" and others whose goal was to fleece them. It provided a safer and speedier landing of people and their effects by making predators of their effects limited to their fellow passengers and making those activities more difficult. It also arranged for transportation companies to have booking agents within the area giving access to the lowest rates. All in all it provided many protections and conveniences for the newly arrived immigrants.

Of course Castle Garden had other functions. It allowed examiners to ascertain whether the immigrant had the means to support himself and also to determined the extent of aid that would be required. It allowed for a medical exam to be given to try to control disease. It allowed for the collection of statistics on ages, countries of origin and other required data.

In the period from May 5, 1847 to January 1 1870 only 4,622 persons arrived whose nationality was Polish. This is out of a total of 4,297,980 persons or 0.1 %. This was before the great waves of

immigrants from Poland that occurred after the 1880's. There was a large number arriving in the early 1880's and most of them would have arrived in the Port of New York at Castle Garden. For this reason many people interested in locating immigration records will find the Castle Garden site to be very useful.



Castle Garden Baggage Room—L. Receiving and Storing Luggage of Arriving Emigrants.

While it is true that many of these manifests can be

accessed through <http://www.Ancestry.com> or <http://www.Genealogy.com>, there is an advantage in using the Castle Garden site. This advantage lies in the search engine.

When searching for an ancestor we tend to think of using a spelling of the name that we know or currently use. For example in my case I would use 'Harlos'. But in fact the name was not that but rather 'Harłos'. Or it could be written as it would be phonetically (and in fact was spelled at one time) as 'Harwos'. On most sites this would be no problem since we can use a 'wild card' search. For example, we could search for all names beginning with 'Har'. We would do this by searching for 'Har*', where the asterisk tells the search engine to collect all endings. This may work, but it doesn't take into account that these records are transcribed. Most engines require at least the first letters of the last name. If the transcriber made a bad judgment call on those vital three letters then you may have difficulty finding the name. This is where the Castle garden search engine can help you. There you can do a search on first name, the start of the first name, both with no last name or just part of the last name. This makes searching much easier.

However, there is even an easier way of searching. This is done by using Stephen

Morse's One Step site. To do this you must first access the site:

<http://www.stephenmorse.org>

So what advantage is there in using Stephen Morse's One Step site? Some of things you can do from the one-step site that you can't do from **<http://castlegarden.org>** directly are::

- You can specify all your parameters at one time.
- You can search on year of birth.
- You can search on the passengers' age.
- You can specify how you want your results sorted.
- You can display more than 10 hits per page.

I tried this site myself for a particular problem that I have. My great--grandparents obviously came to the U.S. because I'm in the U.S. I have the records to show when approximately they were in Prussia (Poland). This record is their Travel Pass that gives the date they obtained in in early 1883. I also have the death record of their youngest daughter, at that time, who died in mid-1884. Therefore, they must have arrived sometime in-between. I have spent years looking for the records, including doing research at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. with no luck. So I tried the Castle Garden site with my usual search of Har*. I found some but not the family. I then went to Stephen Morse's site. Playing around there I found that I could do a search using just the first name or part of it. I typed in Apol and sent off the request. I got a large number of hits, so I did another search limiting it the year 1883. Scanning through the returns I found an Apolonia Haulas. So I repeated the search but left the first name blank and searched the last name Haulas. This time I got 3 hits. Apolonia, Marianne, and Catharina respectively 32, 5, and 4 years old. Are these my ancestors? I honestly don't know. Even allowing for the possibility that Andrzej, my great-grandfather came over separately, there are still

two missing children. Also the ages are not quite correct since the correct ages would be 33, 6, and 4. The name spelling bothers me least since I looked at the image of the manifest and I could see my last name; but maybe not. As detailed in another article in this issue, I am extremely doubtful about trusting information that I can not collaborate or that has weaknesses in it. In this case, in addition to Andrzej, two children, one which was 2 years and the other under 1 year are also missing and can not be located by any of the searching techniques. So I am not sure that this Apolonia is my great-great-grandmother or not.

Nevertheless, these sites are very useful and may fill in those blank spaces you may have.

PGSNYS Meetings

PGSNYS has an active monthly meeting program that often has presentations delivered by local experts. We are starting a policy of including a description of those meetings in the Searchers.

January 13, 2005

Because of Villa Marie College's need of the cafeteria for their class registrations, the meeting was held at the Anna M. Reinstein Memorial Library in Cheektowaga.. The speaker was Mr. Keith Koszubik, who is a regular collummist in the *Am-Pol Eagle*. He discussed a new database that is composed of listings of names of Buffalo Poles who registered during WWI for the Selective Service. The source of this information was the Polish newspaper *Polak w Amerika*. After his presentation, Mr. Kaszubik presented the database to the PGSNYS.

February 10, 2005

The meeting was held at the Villa Marie College cafeteria. The speaker for this meeting was Mr. Henry Muszynski. The meeting proceed in a informal question and answer format with the topic being the Broadway Market. This was a market that served much of Polonia in its heyday

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My Start in Genealogy

Part II - Whom do you trust?

By James P. Harlos

In the last issue I gave some of the interesting facts that I found out about my Harlos family line. The primary goal I had there was indicating some of the ways of getting information. My goal in this article will be: "Can you trust what you find out?" I will again state that my start in genealogy was with only the minimum of information. I didn't have relatives who had information earlier than about 1914 (the date of my Dad's birth) and my Dad was the only information source. Unfortunately, I needed information about incidents before his birth that he did not know about.

An excellent example is my great-grandmother Apolonia Harlos. Among the first bits of information I had was from the baptismal records I

discussed last time; namely that her maiden name was Apolonia Staszak and she was born in Srodka, Posen, Poland. The next bit I got (at the same time that I got her husband's Death Certificate) was her Death Certificate. (Fig. 1) Here was a treasure trove!

My grandmother was: White and a widow. She was born Feb 9, 1852 and was was 59 years, 11 months and 1 day old. She did housework, was born in Poland, and lived in the US and Buffalo for 30 years. Her father's name was Thomas and her mother's name was Victoria. Apolonia died on Dec 10, 1911 at 4:30 A.M. as a result of burns sustained from an accidental explosion of benzine during blacking of a stove. She was buried on December 13, 1911 in St. Adalbert's Cemetery. This information had been given by her son, my grandfather, Stanislaus Harlos.

With this official record it looked like I had a lot of information – but did I? At the time I thought I did and entered the information into my Genealogy program database. One day I was at the Buffalo Historical Society Museum Library and I decide to see if I would be able to find a Death announcement. *Dziennik dla Wszystkich* didn't have a record so I decided to try some of the other newspapers in existence at that time. I didn't have high hopes because I had learned by that time that the early newspapers tend to be selective with regards to recording deaths. This may be due to the fact that an announcement is considered to be like advertising and so must be paid for. Interestingly enough an obituary is news and is not paid for. In any event I started paging through the December 10, 1911 issue of the **Buffalo Express**. This was a Sunday issue

348 (U. S. and New York State Standard Certificate of Death.)
City of Buffalo—Bureau of Vital Statistics. (Filing Vol. and No. of Certificate.)

OF ERIE, NEW YORK. **CERTIFICATE AND RECORD OF DEATH** VOLUME 237
OF REGISTERED No. 237

Full Name Apolonia Harlos (If death occurred in a Hospital or Institution give its NAME instead of street and number.)
Death (No.) 36 Polish Ave St. Ward

BUFFALO, N. Y.

GENERAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS		MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH	
COLOR or RACE <u>White</u>	SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED, or DIVORCED <u>Widow</u>	DATE OF DEATH <u>Dec 10</u> 19 <u>11</u>	
BIRTH <u>July 9</u> 18 <u>52</u>	IF LESS than 1 day, how many <u>hrs. 45</u> min. 1	I HEREBY CERTIFY, that I attended deceased from	
Profession, or occupation, or work <u>Housework</u>		that I last saw him alive on	
Place of Industry, establishment in which he worked		and that death occurred on the date stated above, at <u>4:30</u> M.	
AGE <u>59</u> yrs. <u>11</u> mos. <u>1</u> day		The CAUSE OF DEATH was as follows:	
NAME OF FATHER <u>Thomas</u>		<u>Burns</u>	
PLACE OF BIRTH <u>Poland</u>		<u>Accidental</u>	
MOTHER'S NAME <u>Victoria</u>			
PLACE OF BIRTH <u>Poland</u>			
I AM TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE			
<u>Stanislaus Harlos</u>			
<u>36 Polish Ave</u>			
		(Signature) <u>Joseph Kazmierczak</u> M. D. (Address) <u>159 Stanislaus St.</u> PLACE OF BURIAL OR REMOVAL <u>St. Adalbert's</u> DATE OF BURIAL <u>Dec 13</u> 19 <u>11</u> UNDERTAKER <u>Joseph Kazmierczak</u> ADDRESS <u>159 Stanislaus St.</u>	

Figure 1 - Death Certificate - Apolonia Harlos

and was a large issue but there on one of the inner front pages was the headline "Woman in death agony saves home from destruction" Well, that grabbed my interest! As I read the article (Fig.2), I felt a strange sensation. Here I was reading about the death of my great-grandmother, a person I had never known, nor had my father known her. All of a sudden my genealogical research become more real to me – it was not just a collection of names and dates. These were real people.

My next sensation was to notice the differences between this account and the simple statement of a benzine explosion. In this account she caught fire from the stove taking out some kindling out of the stove which ignited and set the sleeves of her dress on fire. As she was beating out the flames the wood fell on the floor setting it on fire. She knocked over a kettle of water in her agony and this put out the fire. She was found unconscious by people who entered the house after seeing smoke coming from the windows.

I then found the same event described in *The Buffalo Courier* (Fig. 3). Here her name was misspelled as "Atolonia". In brief the description seems the same. She opened the stove taking out some wood she was drying and a burst of flame enveloped her face and upper body. But in this account she ran screaming into her backyard where a

WOMAN IN DEATH AGONY SAVES HOME FROM DESTRUCTION

Upsets Kettle of Water on Fire on Floor in Attempting to Beat Out Flames Which Sweep Through Her Clothing.

FIRE ENGINE UPSETS BUT CREW JUMP CLEAR UNHURT

Catching fire from the cook stove in her kitchen yesterday afternoon, Mrs. Apolonia Harlos in her death agony knocked over a kettle of water which extinguished an incipient blaze on the floor and saved the house. She was found unconscious by people who entered on seeing the smoke issuing from the windows.

The clothing was burned from her body. Dr. B. Burczynski of No. 1018 Sycamore street said last night that she could not live.

Fire Engine Spills.

Responding to the alarm Engine No. 22, stationed in Broadway near Wick street, overturned at the New York Central-Wick street crossing. Capt. William Frank, Lieut. Charles Schroeder, Engineer Michael Griffin and Driver Frank Brunner jumped clear. They were uninjured. The engine was not seriously damaged.

As Mrs. Harlos opened the oven door to take out some kindling the overheated wood burst into flame. The sleeves of her dress caught fire.

While she tried to beat out the flame the kindling fell from the oven and set the floor covering afire.

The hole burned in the floor and the upset kettle told the story.

The woman's head and body are roasted. She was sixty years old. No damage was done to the house.

Fig. 2 - Buffalo Express

BURNS MAY BE FATAL

Blazing Wood in Oven Sets Fire to Mrs. Harlos's Clothing.

A BURST OF FLAME

Woman Says She Would Rather Die in Home Than at Hospital.

FIRE ENGINE TIPS OVER

Responding to Alarm Steamer No. 22 Is Capsized in Broadway.

Mrs. Atolonia Harlos, 60 years old, was probably fatally burned in the kitchen of her home at No. 36 Rother avenue at 2.30 o'clock yesterday afternoon. She had opened an oven door to take out wood that she had placed there to dry. A burst of flame enveloped her head and upper part of her body. She ran screaming into her backyard.

Neighbors came to the rescue. One woman threw a blanket over her and another sent a boy to turn in an alarm at Broadway and Rother avenue, though there was no fire in the house.

Mrs. Harlos was put to bed suffering from terrible burns. When the physicians came she said she preferred to die at home in her own bed than in a hospital.

While responding to the alarm engine No. 22 upset in the tracks in front of its house at Broadway and Wick street. Fred Brunner, the driver, jumped safely. The engine was badly damaged.

Figure 3 - Buffalo Courier

woman threw a blanket over her. Also in this account she is supposed to say that she would prefer to die at home rather than in a hospital. It is difficult to see how a person whose "head and upper body were roasted" could say this but it is what happened – she did die at home.

I now had two slightly different accounts. The *Buffalo Times* of December 10th added still another (fig. 4) The basic statement remains the same, but here she collapsed on the floor, all ablaze. She was

found by a peddler who just happened to be passing through the yard and found her on the floor with the fire spreading to the woodwork. Here it is stated the the fire was put out using 'the chemical'.

Let us put some of this together. 'Blacking' is a term used to refer to a cleaning of a cast iron stove with a compound used to blacken the surface. Benzine, not to be confused with benzene, was a petroleum distillate used as a solvent to dissolve fats and oils. It is very highly inflammable and also carcinogenic. I find it hard to believe that anybody would use such a substance to clean a hot stove. However she could have been using a benzine cleaning solution and have the fumes in her clothes. Opening the stove to

FATALLY BURNED WHEN SHE OPENS DOOR OF OVEN

Fire Engine, Answering Call, Upsets and Two Firemen Are Injured—Blaze Itself Does Little Damage.

Mrs. Apolonia Harlos, 60 years old, of No. 36 Rother Avenue, was fatally burned about the hands, face and head, late yesterday afternoon when she opened the oven door of her stove, where she had placed some kindling wood to dry. The wood had become ignited and flames burst into the woman's face when she opened the door. She fell on the floor where she was found several minutes later, with her clothes ablaze. Dr. B. Bunzinski, of No. 1018 Sycamore Street, who was called, said that her chances for recovery were slight.

In responding to the alarm sent in for the fire in the house, Steamer No. 22 in Broadway, skidded over the car tracks in front of the fire house and tipped over. Sub-driver John Goss of No. 537 Montrose Street and Engineer Michael Crimmins narrowly escaped being killed. The engine was damaged. Goss and Crimmins escaped with slight bruises about the body. The horses were not injured.

It was a peddler who happened to pass through the yard and found Mrs. Harlos lying on the floor. Flames had spread to the woodwork about the kitchen and the fire was all about the prostrated woman.

Only the chemical was used to extinguish the fire. The damage done to the building is estimated at \$25.

Figure 4 - Buffalo Times

take out some drying logs which would be hot, could ignite the fumes and then the clothes. Two of her daughters were in the house at the time and a follow-up story on the accident, they said they could not reach her before she had been fatally burnt.

However, this was not the end of the errors in the Death Certificate. In it she is listed as having been born on February 9th 1852. Unfortunately, the 1900 Federal Census lists her as being born in February 1850. Further research in the baptismal records of Tulce indicates that Apolonia was born on January 28, 1850 and baptized on the 3rd of February 1850. Furthermore, while her father was name Thomas, the baptismal record had her mother's name as Constantia.

So the question remains: "Whom or what do you trust?". The answer is really quite simple and logical. You believe documentary information the deals exactly and specifically with what is to be documented. Let me explain this by examples. In the case of a Death Certificate the essential information is the name, date of death, and cause of death. The Undertakers name, doctor's name and burial location are also valid. Other information is secondary. By 'secondary' I mean that it is hearsay, I.e. It is based on somebody else's understanding of the facts. Even when the person supplying those facts is a close relative, they may not be right. This is not to say that they are always wrong, but they should be confirmed by a primary source, if possible. By this same guideline, baptismal records, birth records, and marriage records are good for providing the dates of the event, and the name of the person(s) involved. Even then the primary record may be in error. I have the church microfilm record of the marriage record of my great-great-grandfather Józef Harłos where his name is given as Josephum Harwozinski. The Josephum is not the problem; it's just the Latin form of Józef. But the name Harwozinski is definitely an error. How do I know this is my great-great-grandfather? Because of the bride's name and the fact they are given correctly in the baptismal records of their children. How do I

know that this wasn't another form of the name. I know this because it appears in no other record of his, or anybody else in the family.

Census records are the most unreliable. This is very sad, since often this may be the only source of information. Remember the purpose of the census was to enumerate the population, that is, to count it. At various times other information was also counted: place of birth, education, procession of a radio, etc. Age was recorded to the year it was tabulated in census summaries in decades. In fact it is known that the information to the census taker was provided by somebody other than the people involved, e.g. neighbors. If this is the only source you have then it is the best you can do, but always try to confirm it whenever possible by other information.

Newspaper accounts of events are probably the least reliable except when the newspaper is functioning as a primary legal record. This is mostly the case for court records.

So the final answer is trust the record that records information that would be required to prove the event happened. If information was supplied then that information is suspect. Now this could mean that we could wind up having little or no reliable information, we can supplement this by the rule stating 'the more important the event is, the more detailed the proof has to be'. If you're trying to prove you are descended from a king of Poland, your proofs have got to be pretty substantial!

*Co ludzie radzi słyszq,
temu łacno wierzq.*

People believe what they want to hear.

How to Make a Freedom of Information Request for Alien Registration Records

By Daniel A. Domino

In 1940, before the United States became involved in World War II, Congress was suspicious of the millions of aliens living in the United States. Hence, on June 29, 1940, Congress passed the Alien Registration Act. This law made it illegal for anyone living in the United States to advocate the overthrowing of the government. All resident aliens over the age of 14 had to register at their local post office. They were fingerprinted and were required to fill out a two page form. The form was then sent to the Immigration and Naturalization Service where it was indexed and filed, and each registrant was assigned an alien number. An Alien Registration Receipt Card was then sent to the individual who was required to carry it at all times. Within four months almost 5,000,000 aliens had been registered.

My grandfather, Peter Janczylik, was one of these individuals. Although he arrived in the United States in 1901, he never became a citizen and thus he had alien status.

I was on the internet one day on a site from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service. <http://uscis.gov/graphics/aboutus/foia/request.htm>. I discovered that from that site it was possible to download Form G-639, which is the Freedom of Information Request. This form allowed me to request a copy of the Alien Registration Form that was filled out by my grandfather. Form G-639 was five pages long; however, three of those pages were instructions. I had to include a copy of my grandfather's death certificate when I sent out the request. The instructions stated, "Most requests do not require any fees: however, if fees exceed \$25, we will notify you beforehand." I filled out the form and

mailed it to USCIS, 130 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, New York 14202 on November 26, 2004.

Just one week later, on December 1, 2004, I received a letter from USCIS informing me that "each request is on a first in, first out and multi track system. With this system, we consider each request according to the complexity and volume so that requesters with a simple and quick response do not wait for extended periods of time while we review complex, voluminous requests. Because of the nature of your request, we have placed your request on the simple track."

I was impressed by their prompt reply and felt that these people are really good and know what they are doing. I expected to receive a copy of my grandfather's alien registration record shortly. Then I waited and waited. Finally, on June 9, 2005 (6 months after mailing my request), I received the information that I requested. It's a good thing that I was on the simple track! At least there was no charge for the information that was mailed me.

The Information contained on the Alien Registration Form is as follows:

Name

Name used upon entry to the United States

Other names used

Residence Address

Post Office Address

Date of Birth

Place of Birth

Citizenship

Sex

Marital Status

Race

Physical Description

Date, Port and Vessel/Carrier of Last Arrival in the US
Arrived as
Class of Admission
Date of First Arrival in the US
Number of Years in the US
Usual Occupation
Present Occupation
Employer
Employer's Address
Employer's type of business
Activities and/or memberships in clubs, organizations, societies
Military Service- country, branch, dates
Declaration of Intention-date, number, city, state
Petition for Naturalization-date, number, city, state
Number of relatives living in the US Arrests- parents, spouse, children
Whether worked for a foreign government in the past 5 years
Signature
Fingerprint

In addition to the above information about my grandfather, I also found out that Peter was arrested in Buffalo for Intoxication in 1915 and paid a \$5.00 fine. I'll bet that was a lot of money in 1915.

(Continued from Page 9)

PGSNYS Meetings continued.

and remains in existence. Mr. Muszynski lead the discussion with descriptions of growing up in the Broadway Market area in the period of 1930 - 1950. Many of the members also have fond memories of this period.

March 10, 2005

Meeting was held at Villa Marie College cafeteria. Mr. Russell Pawlak gave a presentation about the Buffalo Central Terminal. See the lead article on Page 4 for details.

(Continued from Page 4)

PGSNYS Funeral Card Project
C/o 12645 Rt 78
East Aurora, NY 14052

You may also contact me by e-mail at

akdave@pgsnys.org

It is without a dedicate group of like minded people as we have that makes the PGSNYS function. If any member is interested in helping with projects that involve computer entry please contact me.

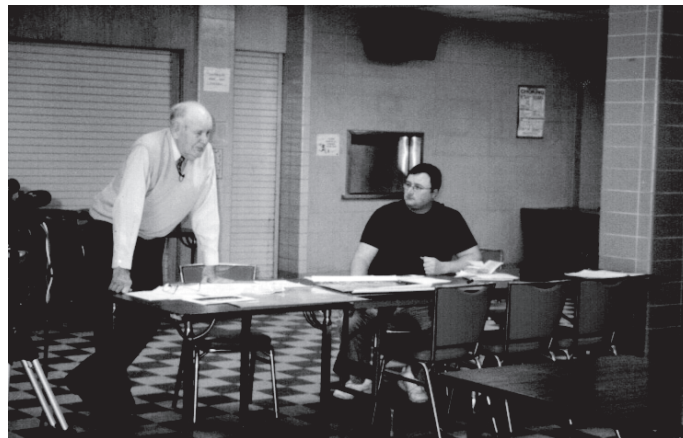
Sincerely,

David E. Newman
President PGSNYS

Meetings continued

April 14, 2005

The meeting was held at Villa Marie College cafeteria. The speaker tonight was Father Joseph Klos, of St. Stephen's and St. Jude's, gave a slide presentation of his 2004 trip to Poland. He also showed slides of his meetings with Pope John Paul II.



Mr. Muszynski and PGSNYS President David Newman

The Old Photo Album

In this section we hope to print old photographs that our members have. In many cases the contributors have questions about their photographs and hope for help from our membership. In this issue we start off with Dolores Konopa's <szal@webtv..net>. Thank you Dolores for your contributions.



My sister, Lori Walas Bakowski and I have no idea what this young woman's first name was or how she was connected to either our mother Bronislawa Przybysz or her first husband Wojciech Walas. She may have been in their wedding party.... September 5, 1925.

This was received from a member of the Michael Glinski & Elizabeth Konopa family – she thinks the woman may be the daughter Ann but is not sure and has no idea who the man is. He has appeared in several pictures with other family members. Also we have no idea who the baby is... It looks like the picture was taken in the 40's but we're not sure.



The Polish Genealogical Society of New York State
12645 Route 78
East Aurora, New York 14052



I believe my grandfather Ignatz Szalasny is in this work-group but don't know who the others are. He was employed by the NY Central working at the Harlem Rd yards as a laborer... I had thought perhaps they may be relatives... but the other cousins don't know them either.