
Searchers

The Journal of the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State



Volume 41

PRESERVING OUR PAST SINCE 1988

Issues 2 and 3, 2005



WARSZAWA. Widok na Komendę Miasta i Plac Piłsudskiego.

Fot. J. Wolyński

Postcard from 1932 - The title below states:

WARSAW View toward the town headquarters and Piłsudski Square.

Photographer J. Wolyński

FOR YOUR INFORMATION ...

MEETINGS

The PGSNYS meets on the second Thursday of each month in the Villa Maria College cafeteria, 240 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>

PGSNYS OFFICERS

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City of Buffalo Inactive Records & Research Facility	4
Searchers goes to the Facility	7
Roadblocks	9
Potpourri	10
Castle Garden. Barge Office, Ellis Island, or What?	11
A Polish 50th Wedding Anniversary	13
Trip to Poland Report	15
PGSNYS Meetings	16
Summer Picnic	17
My Grandfather's Heritage	19
Book Review	21
Areas of Poland - Podkarpackie	22

Editor's Notes

"The road to hell is paved with good intentions"

"The best laid plans of mice and men oft' gang awry"

-Robert Burns

Once again circumstances and lack of material leads to another delay in publishing Searchers. The circumstances were a series of surgeries that I underwent on my arm and leg. The result of this is that my leg is stable again due to a successful implantation of a cadaver tendon to replace the cruciform ligament that was ripped off. The results for the arm are still uncertain but promising. I had a half prosthetic installed. The surgery consisted of having the end of my left humerus cut off and a titanium end installed. Nerves and tendons were rearranged and reattached. So far, so good.

The second circumstance was the sudden death of my dad, Henry M. Harlos, on December 2, 2005. Dad was 91 years old and in all honesty I thought he would out-live me. Unfortunately he had a sudden heart attack. Dad was an invaluable source of information for life and people contemporaneous with him. I miss him already.

Jim Harlos
Harlos@adelphia.net

"Please be advised that members who have not remitted their annual dues in more than two years - prior to 2004 - will be removed from the membership roster and will no longer receive future issues of the Searchers. Please remit your annual dues (USA \$15, Canada \$17, Overseas \$25) to

PGSNYS
c/o Chuck Pyrak
12 Grant Road
Snyder, NY 14226

Please include an e-mail address if possible. Inquiries may be made to Chuck by e-mail at cpyrak@adelphia.net

President's Message

It's been brought to my attention that except for a few messages on our mailing list at groups.yahoo.com/group/pgsnys/, our Newsletter "Searchers" is the only communication between geographically distant members and the society. Also, a member without an e-mail address sole communication from the society is the "Searchers".

Communication is very important in a genealogical society. The "Searchers" is a very important tool for the society. Our website at www.pgsnys.org is another very important tool. I hope we are doing as much as we can to help support your genealogical goals and aspirations.

I'd like to call upon all our members to help identify what we could be doing better in communicating to you. If there something you would like to see in the Searchers or on the Web Site? Is there anything we can do to make your membership with PGSNYS more enjoyable for your genealogical needs? We'd like to hear from you.

Please send your comments to editor@pgsnys.org or send us your comments to

PGSNYS
c/o 12645 Rt 78
East Aurora, New York 14052

We will compile all responses and share them in the next edition of the Searchers. We will also highly consider each idea and if feasible implement them.

Sincerely,

David Newman

City of Buffalo

Inactive Records & Research Facility

At the October 13th meeting of the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State, held in the Villa Marie cafeteria, we heard a very interesting presentation. President David Newman introduced Linda L. Anderson, Legislative Records Management Supervisor for the City of Buffalo, and her colleague Mr. Russell Bayne.

Ms. Anderson introduced us to the new City of Buffalo Interactive Records & Research Facility. It is located at 85 River Rock Dr., Suite 301, Buffalo, NY 14207. The telephone numbers for the facility are (716) 874-6401 and a FAX number (716) 874-6405. The hours of operation for the facility are Monday - Friday: 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. The facility is closed Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays.

This facility is one of a series of steps to preserve and make accessible records whose legal life or usefulness has expired. Many of us have seen the results of lack of attention that these records exhibit. This includes water damage, lack of indexes, oxidation of paper, misfiling, and non-accessible storage. Look at figures 1-3 for examples of record storage before the work of Ms Anderson and her colleagues. Yes, that is a haz-mat suit in figure 2. These area were cleaned up and resulted in storage conditions such as shown in figures 4 and 5.

The new site provides public access to several classes of records. At this time there are no fees associated with research of records at the facility. There are fees however associated with obtaining copies of records. The records available at the Inactive Records & Research Facility are summarized as follows:

DEATH INDEXES

The Inactive Records & Research Facility has death indexes covering the years 1852 - 1944 for

the City of Buffalo only. The records are accessible via CD-ROM's at the facility. You would need to have the last name of the deceased and at least a year of death to search the indexes. The records are recorded alphabetically and chronologically.

Deaths must be at least 50 (Fifty) years old in order for the public to conduct a search of the indexes and or to obtain a copy of the record. If you are successful in finding a relative, you can obtain a copy of the record in one of two ways. 1.) By taking the volume and registration numbers you found in the index to City Hall, Room 1302 and requesting a copy, paying via cash, master card or visa or 2.) You can purchase the record via a credit card order while at the Records Center. To utilize the second option you will have to have a current driver's license on you at the time of your order and the record can only be mailed to the address shown on your license. Also, the address on your license must match the address given on the credit card. If they do not match the card will be declined. The fee for a copy paid with cash is \$10.00 each. Credit card orders are \$15.00 each.

Please keep in mind that New York State did not require individuals to notify the government of a family member's death until the year 1914 and forward. I have been told that the State relied on family members to inform the State of any deaths. Therefore, records created prior to 1914 may be incomplete.

Individuals who passed away in a Veterans Hospital will not appear in our records. Veterans Hospital deaths are held by that agency. The City does however have some records for individuals

who passed away in the State Hospital located on Forest & Elmwood Ave. These records are recorded separately from Buffalo deaths and must be requested via the City Clerk's Office.

BIRTH INDEXES

The Inactive Records & Research Facility has birth indexes covering the years 1878 -1915 for the City of Buffalo only. The records are accessible via the original hard copies at the facility. You would need to have the last name of the child and at least a year of birth to search the indexes. The records are recorded alphabetically and chronologically. Certain volumes show the actual record. The information shown in this type of volume is all that the City has on record for that certain birth. Many entries for children born in the late 1800's to mid 1900's do not show the first name of child. The only way to identify that the record you found is the one you want is by purchasing the record. City Hall will not confirm information ahead of time. They will however, look at the record for you to confirm it is in fact the one you seek if you can give them more detailed information on the child (i.e. fathers name, mothers name, where child was born)

Births must be at least 75 (Seventy-five) years old in order for the public to conduct a search of the indexes and or to obtain a copy of the record. Also, the individual for whom you are researching the birth record of must be deceased for the record to be considered "open" to the public. If you are successful in finding a relative, you can obtain a copy of the record in one of two ways. 1.) By taking the volume and registration numbers you-found in the index to City Hall, Room 1302 and requesting a copy, paying via cash, master card or visa or 2.) You can purchase the record via a credit card order while at the Records Center. To utilize the second option you will have to have a current driver's license on you at the time of your order and the record can only be mailed to the address shown on your license. Also, the address on your license must match the address given on the credit card. If they do not match the card will be declined. The fee for a copy paid with cash is \$10.00 each. Credit card orders are \$15.00

each.

Please keep in mind that New York State did not require individuals to notify the government of a family member's birth until the year 1914 and forward. I have been told that the State relied on family members to inform the State of any births. Therefore, records created prior to 1914 may be incomplete.

The City of Buffalo also has some birth records for individuals born at the State Hospital located on Forest & Elmwood Ave. These records are recorded separately from Buffalo births and must be requested via the City Clerk's Office.

MARRIAGE INDEXES

The Inactive Records & Research Facility has marriage indexes covering the years 1877 - 1907 for the City of Buffalo only. The records are accessible via microfilm at the facility. For the years 1877 - 1893 you would need to have the maiden name of the bride to search the indexes. For the years 1894 – 1907 you would need the grooms last name. The records are recorded alphabetically and chronologically.

Marriages must be at least 50 (fifty) years old in order for the public to conduct a search of the indexes and or to obtain a copy of the record. Also, both individuals named on the marriage record you are researching must be deceased for the record to be considered "open" to the public. If you are successful in finding a relative, you can obtain a copy of the record in one of two ways. 1.) By taking the volume and registration numbers you found in the index to City Hall, Room 1302 and requesting a copy, paying via cash, master card or visa or 2.) You can purchase the record via a credit card order while at the Records Center. To utilize the second option you will have to have a current driver's license on you at the time of your order and the record can only be mailed to the address shown on your license. Also, the address on your license must match the address given on the credit card. If they do not match the card will be declined. The fee for a copy paid with cash is \$10.00 each. Credit card orders are \$15.00 each.

Please keep in mind that New York State did not require individuals to notify the government of a marriage until the year 1914 and forward. I have been told that the State relied on family members to inform the State of any marriages. Therefore, records created prior to 1914 may be incomplete.

COMMON COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

The Inactive Records & Research Facility has the original records for the Common Council Proceedings for the years 1832 - 2003 for the City of Buffalo. The only way to access these records is by having an Item number and the date of the meeting you seek information for.

The facility also has the bound volumes of Common Council Proceedings. Although we do not have a complete set, we do house a majority of the years. Individuals could utilize the bound volumes to search for information put before the Common Council for approval. Such records might include city business, resolutions, appointments, etc.

The meetings as well as the bound volumes are categorized by date of meeting and item numbers.

POLK DIRECTORIES

The Inactive Records & Research Facility has polk directories dating from 1856 - 1985. Although it is not a complete set, the facility has a good amount of years available for research. The polk directories would be used by individuals hoping to verify a relatives home address, occupation, business name (if applicable) etc. They are essentially a telephone book without phone numbers. Many individuals utilize these books to trace the movement of a particular family member throughout the City of Buffalo.

ERIE COUNTY CENSUS RECORDS

The Inactive Records & Research Facility has copies of the Erie County Census records for the years 1850 - 1925. The City of Buffalo purchased a copy of this information from the County for our use.

The records are on microfilm for easy access. Please note that a census was not conducted each year therefore the census records reflect such.

If you have gone to the County or to the Central Library downtown, then you have seen the records we house, as they are the same in nature. In order to access information from the census records you would need, first and foremost, the address of the family you are researching. Next you would need to know the ward or district where the property address is located. With this information you can search family history via the family homestead.

TAX & ASSESSMENT RECORDS

The Inactive Records & Research Facility has Tax & Assessment records covering the years 1814 - 1997 on microfilm. The records can be accessed by either the property address or by the bill number associated with the address.

Individuals utilize these records to verify ownership of family property. Information contained in the Tax & Assessment records is name(s) of owners, address of property, tax costs, government-assessed value, size of lot etc.

ASSESSORS LAND MAPS

The Inactive Records & Research Facility has Assessors Land Maps covering the years 1855, 1870, 1912. The records are wards and show the layout of land for the City of Buffalo during the years listed above. Therefore, you would need to know what ward the property address was located in for the year you seek. Some individuals may be interested in searching to see if there was an address or building in place during the years outlined and can then use that information in conjunction with the Polk directories to verify/identify ownership of the property.

Searchers Goes to the City of Buffalo

Inactive Records & Research Facility

By James P. Harlos

The preceding article gives the content of the October meeting of the PGSNYS when we were introduced to the Inactive Records & Research Facility. Even though the vital records part of the holdings of the facility is limited to indexes, the holdings may still be of use. The problem that I have experienced with obtaining records at City Hall is the proper identification of the record.

Say, for example, you are looking for the death record of an ancestor and don't know the exact date of death. Those times that I have gone to City Hall with such a request always led to failure. One time I even had an approximate date of death, I still could not get the record because, as I just found out, I had give the Polish first name and the record was indexed under the English version of that name. I am not blaming the clerks since they are not there to do genealogical research. Nevertheless I was interested in seeing if the offerings of the IR&R facility could help me.

GETTING THERE

The facility is not difficult to find. River Rock Road is off of Hertel Avenue between Elmwood and Tonawanda Street. If you are coming down Hertel from the west, i.e. Tonawanda Street, then River Rock Road will be on your left hand side. On the right hand side of River Rock Rd. There is a low curved brick wall with the letters CBFT. If you're coming from the east, i.e. Elmwood, This wall is not as easily seen until you've gone by it. However, before coming to River Rock Rd., you will go under two railroad viaducts. Right after passing these the first road on your right is River Rock Rd. This is a large light industrial complex, so locating the facility could be tough. Fortunately

all you have to remember is to turn into the fourth driveway on your right. The facility is clearly labeled.

Going through the entrance door leads you to a vestibule where there is a second door which is locked for security. To the right of the door there is a door bell that will call the clerk to open the door. The day that I was there the clerk was Russell.

DOING WORK

Once in you will have to tell the clerk what you are looking for. Remember, vital records such as Birth, Marriage and Death are not in the facility, just the indexes. These will be original indexes for a few, microfilm or on a CD disk. The records on the CD's are in Adobes PDF format. If you have not worked with these before ask the clerk to give you some instruction on how to use these files. This simple step will save you from being frustrated. It is not just a matter of typing in a name that you are searching for.

As I have stated the records are not at the facility, just the indexes. You may wonder, "Is this of any use?" In my case it was. Here's the story.

On my mother's side I have a great-grandfather named Jan (John) Majchrzak. My guess based on census work and relations names suggested that his father, my great-great-grandfather was Franciszek Majchrzak. Everything fit - but I had no documentary proof. Those who have read any of my writings know that I have a real problem with research that can not be documented. Previous attempts to get Death Certificates at City Hall floundered on the rock of not having a date of

death. Newspapers were of no use since death would have been before 1920, but after 1910, and publishing death notices at that period was a little "hit or miss". So being able to look at the indexes myself seemed like a great idea. Now there is the problem of multiple people with the same name being indexed in the same time frame. If they were the index would not tell me which was the one I was interested in, but it was worth the chance. I did find several but a John Majchrzak in 1917 and a Franciszek Majchrzak also indexed in 1917 looked like good bets. Actually I was pretty certain about John and less so about Frank.

The next step was to obtain copies of the records. Russell called downtown for them. The cost was, as usual \$10 per record. If you pay by credit card there is an extra \$5 surcharge for the order. In this case it was worth it for me since I was not planning on going downtown soon. So the order was placed and I was told that the office would send the records to me by mail.

THE RESULTS

Two days later the post brought me the two records. The results were more than I hoped for. John's Death Certificate was indeed my great-grandfather. It documented for the first time that his father was Frank Majchrzak and his mother Rozalia Kraczek, as I hoped and expected. I now was able to confirm his date of birth and knew his date of death as Oct. 6, 1917. I also found out that he died of pulmonary tuberculosis of three months duration. Furthermore, the record indicated that he lived in Buffalo for 37 years. Since he died at 43 years of age this means that he came as a child.

Franciszek Majchrzak was even more of a treat. I learned that he was the right one from both the address that he died at and the fact that it was one of his married daughters that provided the information. I obtained his date of birth and his date of death (Dec. 8, 1917). The DOB will of course require some further investigation since it was given by someone other than the person themselves. The same is true of his parents names though the fact that the maiden name of his mother

is given suggests it may be correct. I also obtained the details of his date of death. Both father and son were buried in St. Adelbert's Cemetery.

All together this was an extraordinary result and I couldn't be more pleased. I also obtained a couple of leads for more people. For me, the Inactive Records & Research Facility was an excellent source of information and resulted in me getting my hands on information that I have been searching for for years.

Death Certificate for Franczek Majchrzak - One half of the results of a productive afternoon.

Roadblocks

I am sure we have all had this problem ROAD BLOCK or HITTING A BRICK WALL Well I have had this problem for my paternal grandfather, John Mazurczyk, born June 23, 1885 in Kudrawka, Poland for 10 years

I never remember him speaking of his parents, siblings etc and there was no family that we visited or visited us. I remember asking how he immigrated here and I think he said from Canada. After many years when we had sold the family home I found Citizen papers from Detroit, Michigan and a 1910 Census showed that my father had a sister, Anna, born about 1906 in Michigan.

Finally I had something - So I went to the library and ordered many films from Detroit and finally I found the record of Intention to become naturalized. This showed that he emigrated from Russia

at age 8 and was now applying for citizenship at age 24. Of course another ROAD BLOCK as it did not list the ship or what port he immigrated on. I wondered if his family immigrated to Canada and then my grandfather crossed the border to Detroit. Did he marry there and have this child. So I ordered more films from the Detroit area and have found no marriage or birth records. I wanted to research the Border Crossing Records but they don't start until 1906 and his citizenship papers are dated 1905. It seems that this side of the family will always be a mystery. Anna died between 1910 and 1913 here in Buffalo and there is no death certificate and so far I have found no record at churches or cemeteries

Rita Hider
ritahider@adelphia.net



Do you recognize anyone in this photo? If so contact: DonnaLee Fleming at donnalee.fleming@cox.net

Potpourri

Poznan Indexing Project

PGSNYS member Karen Lawson has reminded us about the Poznań Indexing project started by Lukasz Bielecki. The web page to access this project is www.polishroots.org/posen_indexing.htm.

You will find there the background and purposes of the project. In brief the project hopes to set up a database of marriage records for the Prussian Province of Poznań. The area covered including the area of Bydgoszcz [Bromberg] which was no more part of the Polish voivodship (province) of Poznan after 1924; still the 'Posen' label obviously pertained to it in the 19th century records. For completeness it adds the 5 districts of Eastern Greater Poland which were under Russian domination in the 19th century to the project. This region of Konin and Kalisz is also traditionally tightly bound with Poznan so this makes sense.

The time frame for the project is the 19th century, specifically the years 1835 - 1884 because this time frame coincides with the largest wave of emigration from Poland for this region. The records to be indexed will be the marriage records. The information to be extracted and transcribed for each parish and year is :

- 1 Sequential number of the marriage entry within the year
- 2 First and second names of spouses
- 3 Ages of spouses
- 4 Names of parents (if recorded).

At present a test version of the database is on the site, containing about 40,000 transcribed records. While this is a very large number, it is only a fraction of the estimated 500,000 Catholic and 150,000 Lutheran marriage records that could be included. Details about searching the database and/or volunteering to do transcribing the data are available on the site. Transcription would

require renting the LDS microfilms at your local FHC.

Genealogical Researcher

I'm a historian and archivist. I offer professional help in library and archive research. My research concern is genealogy, regardless of origin, status, nationality, place of residence, or religion of your ancestors. I will visit the churches, public archives and registry offices.

I can also research the different problems with family estates and related archive documents. For example: catalogued goods, acts of inspection, iconographic roots or technical documents.

If you lost contact with your relatives and they are still living then I can help you to find them, even arrange a family meeting. I will be glad to plan your trip to the places where your ancestors lived in times past as well as to make a photo documentation of chosen places. I can also prepare a complex study of the history of a family, as well as the places connected with the family.

My work also involves the translation of archive documents and files in Latin, Russian and German. I'm also able to conduct various library searches regarding heraldry and genealogical data.

Artur Badkowski

I can be reached via the following methods:

Web site: www.avus.boo.pl

E-mail: arturbad@op.pl

My adress: 60-647 Poznan,
ul. Urbanowska 26/6

Castle Garden - Barge Office - Ellis Island Or What?

By James P. Harlos
Harlos@adelphia.net

Last issue I presented an article concerning Castle Garden and the web site castlegarden.org. I received in response a very interesting e-mail from PGSNYS member Ted Pacocha...

“[Regarding] Castle Garden - They may have kept Castle Garden open to some extent even after Ellis Island opened. I believe my Grandfather Jan Pacocha came through Castle Garden in 1912. His Naturalization papers say Castle Garden was the point where he ‘paid head tax and was inspected for admission’, and I’m quite sure the National Archives in Pittsfield, Mass. also told me Castle Garden as the point of entry when I finally obtained his Passenger List. Prior to knowing about Castle Garden, I had gone crazy trying to find him on the Ellis Island website.”

This is an example of the frustration that we as genealogists face when examining records and trying to understand the past that our ancestors experienced. Let me recapitulate. Prior to 1855 immigrants coming to the Port of New York entry arrived at the port. There were no requirements for record keeping. However, the ships did have passenger manifests and many, but not all, of those manifests have been microfilmed and are

available. From August 1, 1855 to April 18, 1892 immigrants were processed through the Castle Garden facility. In the period of April 19, 1890 to December 31, 1891 immigrants were processed through the Barge Office. From January 1, 1892 to June 13, 1897 immigrants were processed through the new Ellis Island facility. On June 14th the Ellis Island facility was destroyed by a fire. Some sources state that immigration records were not destroyed since they were stored in a different location. Other sources, including the Ellis Island



Barge Office around 1900

site, claim records were lost from the years 1855 - 1890. To accommodate the daily influx of immigrants the processing center was moved back to

the Barge Office for the time period of June 14, 1897 to December 16, 1900. On December 17, 1900 the newly constructed building was opened and continued in use till December 31, 1924. After this date immigrants were preprocessed at overseas U.S. Embassies and were inspected again before leaving ship at the port of entry.

This time-line seems just as clear and straightforward as Ted's report on his grandfather. Both can not be correct, can they? The problem is that Castle Garden was converted to the New York Aquarium on December 10, 1896. What are we to make of this?

Since we do not have a time machine and can not travel back to the appropriate time and to weigh the evidence. It is apparent that the existence of the New York Aquarium precludes the possible use of Castle Garden as the entry point. The date of Ted's grandfather arrival in 1912 seems to eliminate the Barge Office. This would have been attractive since the Barge Office was located at the other end of Manhattan's tip and therefore be easily be mistaken for the other. Such does not seem to be the case therefore we are left with a explanation of faulty memory. I don't like this explanation but without ant other evidence it seems to be the only choice.

By the way, Ted assures me that his Grandfather was **not** a fish and did not swim across the Atlantic to arrive at the Aquarium.

New Member Name List

A new member has requested that we publish a list of family names that he is researching. If you have information, contact the member directly at his mail or e-mail address.

Thomas W. Sesniak
10921 NW 6 Ct
Plantation, FL 33324
954-424-4018
comptom@aol.com

Seeking information on Simon Szczesniak and Constancia Banaszak and Martin/Marcin & Josephine Banaszak. Banaszaks appear on the 1900, 1910 and 1920 Buffalo census, in city directories and attended St. Adalberts. Known children: Victoria, Balvina, Frank, Stanislaus, Anastasia, Constandia w/o Simon Szczesniak, Mary, Secrepan, Ladyslawa (died yg), and Rose w/o Walter hahin. Would like vitals, marriages, to know where the Banaszak family came from and who were the parents of Simon Szczesniak who came from Dobra Woda, near Kazimierz. Simon & Constance had children Eva, Henry, Florence & Helen.

If any other members have similar name lists please forward them to me at

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

You can also send by e-mail at

Harlos@adelphia.net

A Polish 50th Wedding Anniversary

By Dolores (Szalasna) Konopa

This past September 3rd, our family got together to join in the 50th Wedding Anniversary for my half-sister Lori (Leokadya WALAS) and her husband Al (Alexander BAKOWSKI Jr). Our cousin Barbara (BUKOLT) POLOWY was her maid of honor, Al's brother Leonard BAKOWSKI was his best man and Al's sister Sandra (Alexandra BAKOWSKA) KLIMA and I, Dolores (SZALASNA) KONOPA were her flower girls.

Part of the 50th celebration was the dinner and 'parental' blessing that was given by Fr Dan. After dinner, we gathered for the OCZEPINY (Chapee na).

Normally this is after the dinner and midway through the dancing. A row chairs is placed in the middle of the dance floor. The bride and groom are seated with their parents at their side. Attendants are behind the wedding couple. The guests form a semi-circle in front of the wedding couple.

Everyone joins in song, starting with "Serdeczna Matko" (Dearest Mother), a hymn to the Blessed Virgin Mary, invoking blessings over the newly married couple.

The next song is the "Oczepiny Song". This song is about the 12 heavenly angels who come down with their gifts to bless the newlyweds. Halfway through the song, the maid or matron of honor remove's the bride's veil and a czepek (lacy cap) is placed on the bride's head. This polish custom symbolizes the end of the bride's maidenhood and the start of her married life. Then a hat, usually adorned with fun items (small fish, carrots, etc) is placed on the groom's head signifying that he now has to provide for his bride.

The next song is "Tatusiu" (Daddy's song). The bride dances with her father. The groom dances with his mother to a song of their choice. The father of the bride then gives her back to the groom to dance to "I Love You Truly" and "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" all the while the guests are singing.

Finally, the ceremony ends with the "Grand March" led by the newlyweds, weaving through the tables, hall and comes to a halt in front of the bar where everyone has a drink.

I only have the words for Serdeczna Matko and the Oczepiny Songs....

Serdeczna Matko

Serdeczna Matko, opiekunko ludzi,
Niech cię płacz sierót do litości wzbudzi,
|:Wygnańcy Ewy do Ciebie wołamy,
Zmiłuj się, zmiłuj, niech się nie tułamy.:|

Beloved Mother

Beloved Mother, guardian of the nation,
Hearken, oh hearken, to our supplication.
|: Your loyal children from the plain and city
We kneel beseeching your great love and pity.:|

Oczepiny (English version)

As lovely green grass grows,
throughout the promised land,

Before the main altar, you've given (groom) your hand.

You've given (groom) your hand, he gave a golden band,
Your eyes swelled up with tears, before your friends on hand.

The first angel has brought, a white candle's brilliance,
The second angel brought a lily's full fragrance

The third angel has brought, a lovely bouquet to hold,
The fourth angel has brought, your wedding band of gold.

The fifth angel has come, with blessings from the Lord,
The sixth angel has come, with matrimonial accord.

The remaining six angels, come with a crown to keen,
They'll place it on you head, as if upon a queen.

You promised to be true, love, honor, and obey,
In all your days ahead, uphold your vows made today.

Remember to be good, and live in wedded bliss,
And in our presence now, honor him with a kiss.

Oh, wedding gown and crown, somehow you make me sad,
You make me feel that I'm, losing my mom and dad.

And yet with mom and dad, no longer shall you live,
But only with (groom) to whom your life you give.

Remember to be good, and live a life of prayer,
And in a year or two, present him with an heir.

(Continued from page 24)

interesting landscape and are rarely visited by tourists. Visitors can find here mountain hostels, shepherds' huts, horse-riding centres, and hiking trails.

The old town of Krosno, which at one time was compared with Krakow, is particularly attractive. Visitors can enjoy picturesque nooks and old buildings, and one of the largest collections of oil lamps in Europe in the museum, which is hardly surprising, as in the village of Bóbrek not far from Krosno is the oldest oil well in the world, founded by a Pole- Ignacy Łukasiewicz in 1854, and now an Oil Industry Museum. Not far from here are the health resort centres of Iwonicz Zdrój and Rymanów Zdrój, picturesquely situated among mountains. North of Krosno amidst numerous rocks are the ruins of Kamieniec Castle, featured in many legends, and located in a national park.

Lesko and Ustrzyki Dolne are picturesque towns, located in the foothills of the Bieszczady. Not only do they make good bases for visiting the area, they are also centres for hiking, skiing, and cycling. Lesko has the Kmit Castle and a synagogue, whereas Ustrzyki Dolne has a Natural History Museum. The Bieszczady is a fascinating area, rich in legends. Apart from its many legends, the history of these lands was no less turbulent. After ethnic Ukrainians, the Lemks and the Bojks, were moved out of the area following the Second World War, for many years this area was entirely uninhabited. Later on came the first settlers, the so-called Bieszczadniks, who had to start from scratch in cultivating the land. Nowadays, there are numerous abandoned Orthodox churches and the remains of houses, a reminder of the villages which used to exist here. The Bieszczady Mountains, with their characteristic mountain meadows, known here as połoniny, are part of the Bieszczady National Park, which means that all activities here take second place to environmental protection. Here can be found bears, wolves, wildcats, and eagles, all living in the wild. There are over 700 species of plants
(Continued on page 20, column 2)

Trip to Poland Report

By Armelia Hammes
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Dear All,

Dave and I recently returned from our third trip to Poland, our second with a group from Buffalo, NY with Daniel Kij as our tour director. Daniel is noted for getting groups into non-touristy areas. This time Dave and I revisited the cities of Krakow, Czestochowa, Auschwitz, Zakopane, Chopin's home in Zelazowa Wola, where we caught the end of a beautiful recital. We also revisited Wawel and the Wieliczka salt mines where we saw new statues that had been carved out of salt by the miners. The ballroom is still as interesting as ever, with its chandeliers made out of salt crystals. Our young Polish guide said that her prom had been held here, in the ballroom of the salt mines so many feet underground! The primitive art of the miners still amazes me. Last, but not least, we again stayed in and toured Warsaw. Modernization of Warsaw--more cell phones and McDonald's.

New on the itinerary this year was a stop in Prague, a city filled with history. Also new was a visit to the home of Mazowsze, the first-class Polish folk song and dance group that Dave and I have seen three times in the States. They are due to come to the States next year. Daniel had given a lot of effort in getting our group to visit Karolin, the home of Mazowsze, but it was well worth it.

Dave and I had a great raft ride on the Dunajec, the river that separates Slovakia and Poland. The area was reminiscent of Colorado. We also took a tour of Niedzica and Lancut Castles and stayed overnight in Sienawa Palace. Another new highlight was a visit to Wadowice and the boyhood apartment of Pope John Paul II. His kayak paddle and ski boots are on display reminding us of what an athlete he had once been. Another new stop for us was Niepokalanow, the monastery founded by St. Maximilian Kolbe, the martyr from Auschwitz.

Dave and I also had two days on our own in Poland. I had prearranged a visit to my father's town, Dlutowo, with Magda Smolka, a Polish researcher. When Dave and I had walked around the Dlutowo cemetery in 2001, I located a grave-stone with the name of a correspondent of my father's from the early 1900's. I had contacted Magda asking her if she could locate any descendants of this man. She was able to locate the daughter and niece of Waclaw Ploskonski. They still lived in Dlutowo, right next door to one another, and right across the road from the church where my father had been baptized and made his First Communion. I gathered together 28 letters from the Ploskonski family, the first dated 15 August 1911, the second to the last dated 21 June 1926, in which the family congratulated my father on his marriage to my mother. The last letter was dated 2 November 1932 informing my father of the death of his father in Dzialdowo.

Magda picked us up at our hotel in Warsaw and drove us to Dlutowo. We were welcomed warmly with a delicious meal and Polish hospitality. Alicja, the niece of Waclaw and our hostess, then proceeded to read the letters to Barbara, the daughter of Waclaw, and to Magda, Alicja's husband, Dave and me. I had had the letters translated into English about ten years ago by a Polish friend, so Dave and I could just follow along. Barbara was amazed that my parents had kept the letters for so many years. She kept saying we were better than family. We shared an opiatek sent to my father in a letter dated 5 November 1923. Barbara couldn't get over how fresh it still tasted. I had taken along some old photos of my father, and Barbara said she remembered seeing those photos in her home.

I think Alicja most enjoyed the letters from her aunt, Marianna. Apparently, my father had writ-

PGSNYS Meetings

ten to Marianna, asking her to come to America with the intention of marrying her. She declined, more than once, and said that if she was ever to marry, my father would have been the first one. I was told by Alicja and Barbara that Marianna never did marry, that she remained in Dlutowo and because she was an excellent seamstress, she had taught all the girls in town how to sew. Alicja and Barbara most enjoyed the postscripts of Marianna, for she told my father not to tell anyone about her letters nor that she had declined his marriage proposal. And here we were, 80 years later, reading her letters and discovering her big secret. It was a wonderful experience to be able to share my father's old letters with the Ploskonski family. I think Alicja and Barbara enjoyed the visit as well.

From these old letters, I had discovered that after the death of my grandmother, my grandfather had remarried in the town of Kuczbork. The next day Magda drove us to Kuczbork, and within five minutes of looking through the town records, we found the marriage record of my grandfather's second marriage. Two fruitful genealogy days!!!

From Kuczbork, Magda fulfilled Dave's wish to go to Pruszkowo and the Clematis Center. Dave thought he was in heaven---acres and acres of world-famous clematis. We had the good fortune to be shown around by one of the owners and found out that he exports his famous clematis flowers to Avon, OH. So you know where Dave is going next spring.

All in all, it was a marvelous third trip to Poland. There is always something new to see and something new to discover about my ancestors.

Best regards,
Armela

June 9, 2005

Brick Walls: A society discussion of going around, over, under and through those tough barriers to find relatives.

July 23, 2005

Picnic - David Newman's House.

August 11, 2005

Brick Walls: A society discussion of going around, over, under and through those tough barriers to find relatives.

September 8, 2005

October 13, 2005

Linda L. Andersen, Legislative Records Management Supervisor for the City of Buffalo, gave a history of how the Inactive Records and Research Facility got started, explained what records are available to search and how to obtain copies of them. A handout was given at the meeting. See the story in this issue of Searchers

November 10, 2005

David Newman showed his pictures and some DVD Video from his wedding in Poland on September 17th, 2005.

December 8, 2005

Christmas Dinner

Summer Picnic

Well this summer we again held the Annual PGS-NYS summer picnic, the 2005 edition. Again our President offered us the hospitality of his home and a very pleasant time was had by all.

The food was delicious and the company was talkative and very social. Here are a few pictures of our summer treat.



The scene of our picnic - President David Newman's house.

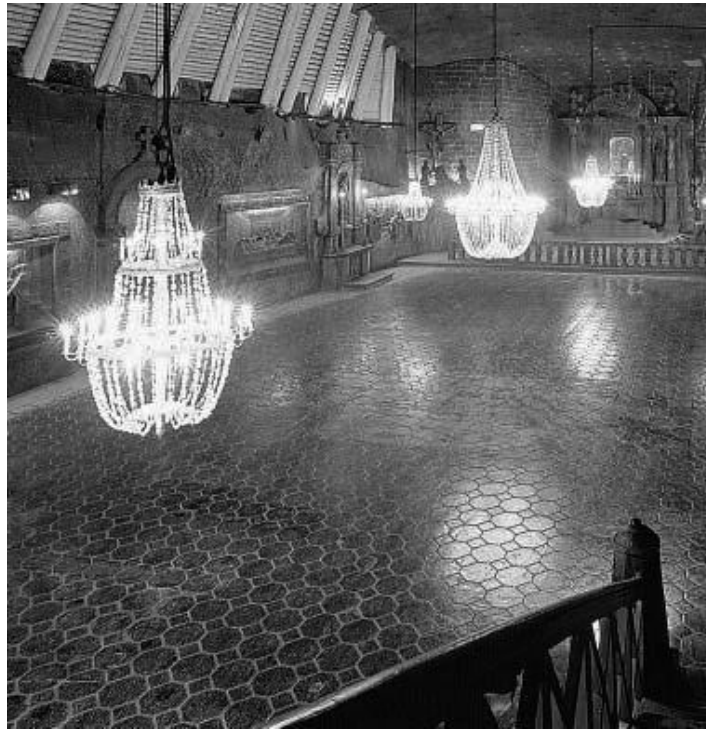


David's wife Agnieszka checks the food set-up.





Group shot of part of the festive gathering.



A hall in salt. Everything in this picture of the Main Hall in the Welniczka Salt Mines is salt! The only exception is the salt encrusted support near the ceiling. The crystals in the chandeliers are also salt.

My Grandfather's Heritage

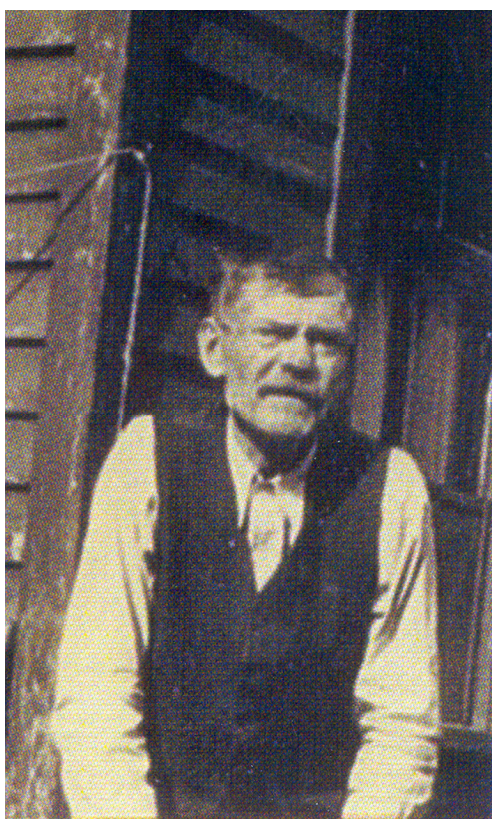
By Edward Prabucki

My beloved mother, after much thought, at times willingly and other times reluctantly revealed her youthful life during her years prior to and after migrating to America. This was a period of time that went from tension and tears to one of relief and comfort. I was fortunate in one way, as mother in her disclosures included my grandfather's youthful and turbulent life which I consider to be very interesting with a satisfying ending.

This is the story of my grandfather. It had its beginnings around 1900 in Poland. This was not the country of Poland as we know it now, nor even the communist controlled country of recent memory, but a partition of Poland controlled by Tsarist Russia. At this time, as was common in most European states, the individual had no say in whether he could or could not be conscripted into military service. My grandfather, Michael Petyk, was conscripted by the Russian Military to serve an unspecified number of years.

In 1904 Russia's imperialistic policy entangled her in a War with Japan. A reluctant Grandpa Petyk, was dispatched to the borders of Manchuria, where he was involved in the hostilities and subsequently wounded. He received temporary medical treatment and sent to his hometown, Lupkowice, to recuperate. At home, he assumed that upon recovery, he would be returned to the Far Eastern War; to him this was not a pleas-

ant thought. Rather than doing this his brother, Joseph, and he were determined to stowaway on any available ship leaving Poland, regardless of its destination. The ship they had picked, finally docked at a port of Brazil after a lengthy sea voyage.



Michael Petyk - My Grandfather taken in 1942 - a year before he passed away.

Within a year or so he was corresponding with his relatives and his wife, Josephine Petyk, to discuss and plan their future. Many months later, my future Grandmother and her eldest daughter, Cecelia, left for America, leaving her son, John, and daughter, Mary (my future mother) to relatives in Lupkowice.

Grandma's sister, Antonina, was married to Walter Przybysz and lived in Buffalo. Therefore Grandma Petyk newly arrived to the shores of America also decided to live in Buffalo, feeling more comfortable in proximity to her married sister, Antonina. Grandpa Petyk,

with brother, Joseph, left Brazil to be reunited, after an unwanted separation from his ever-loving family, on Buffalo's East Side at 20 Lombard St.

Within a year, Grandma Petyk, left for Poland to complete the sale of the family's property. Grandpa didn't travel with her since he

feared that the Russian Military would apprehend him and charge him with desertion. Grandma planned to return with her son, John, and leave her daughter, Mary to relatives. This was not to be. Mary, a youngster of 5 years, with many heart-rending tears finally convinced Grandma to take her also to America. Sad to add in March of 1913, her son, John, was seriously hurt in a playground accident resulting in a hemorrhage and premature death.

As time marched on, it became obvious to my mother why Grandpa Petyk settled at 20 Lombard St. It was only a five minute walk to Dold's Packing Co. his employer, and another five minutes to Corpus Christi Church and the expanding Broadway Market. A year or so later, it was a fortunate fate that my future father, John Prabucki, also employed at Dold's Packing Co., heard through the grapevine that Grandpa Petyk was in search of Boarders. A verbal agreement was reached with Grandpa Petyk, and my future father moved from Wick St to board with the Petyk Family.

As my Grandparent's daughters grew up to become teen-age girls and inclined to marriage, my docile father, John Prabucki, didn't need any prompting from Grandpa Petyk, to become engaged and soon afterwards marry, Mary Petyk, in the summer of 1919 at Corpus Christi Church.

In ending this narrative, I am immensely grateful to Grandpa Petyk for accepting my future father as a Boarder. However, I do suspect one of his aims was to seek a future husband for his daughter.

(Continued from page 14)

growing here. The management of the park aims to develop kinds of tourism which do not impose a burden on the environment, such as agro-tourism, eco-tourism, and adventure tourism. The Bieszczady are ideal for those who enjoy long hikes or mountain bike tours, and they are also perfect for horse riding. Tourist facilities of the region include small guesthouses, farm-stays, mountain huts, youth hostels, and horse-riding centres. Deep in the mountains, there are no large towns. Here, larger villages such as Baligród, Wetlina, Ustrzyki Górne and Lutowiska, as well as Komańcza at the meeting point of the Bieszczady and the Beskid Nisky, perform the functions of urban and tourist centres. A special attraction of the Bieszczady is the tourist train. The Bieszczady Mountains are an area for young people and for those who have managed to stay young thanks to mountain hikes. Tourists carrying rucksacks and equipment on their backs are an everyday sight here.

An attraction of the northern Bieszczady are two reservoirs on the San-Myczkowce and Solina Rivers. In the scenic mountain countryside, surrounded by forests, the sparkling waters of these lakes attract visitors in search of relaxation and fans of water sports. In Myczków, Solina, and Polańczyk, which are also health resorts, there are numerous resorts, marinas, and places where you can hire equipment. You can go for a cruise on the Solina reservoir. A trip to the reservoirs in the Bieszczady mountains allows you to undertake many tourist activities, such as water sports, cycling, hiking, and horse riding.

Book Review

Detroit's Polonia by Cecile Wendt Jensen

Images of America Series

Publisher: Arcadia Publishing , <http://www.arcadiapublishing.com>

Copyright © 2005 ISBN 0-7385-3999-6 Price: \$19.99

Reviewed by James P. Harlos

In 1994 Arcadia Publishing launched its Images of America Series. This series shares the local history of a town or city using on the order of two hundred historical photographs. Western New York has been blessed with several volumes in this series, all of which are interesting.

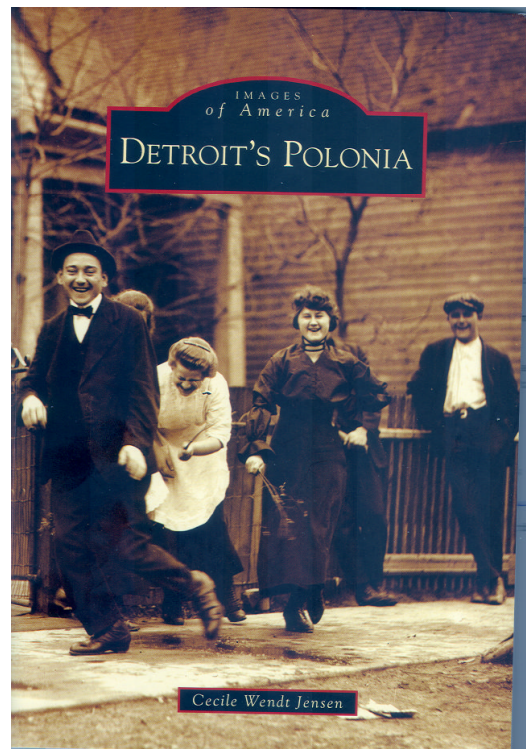
This attractive volume, *Detroit's Polonia* by Cecile Wendt Jensen, is a new addition treating not just a city, but an ethnic population in that city, Polonia. The chapter headings give an indication of the scope of this book:

- 1 Pioneers - Priests, Nuns, and Families
- 2 Building the Family - Courting and Marriage
- 3 First Generation - Jobs, Businesses and Military Duty
- 4 Growing Up .- Sacraments, Parishes and Schools
- 5 Growing Old - Busia, Dziadziu, and Family Parties

The question is 'What interest would a photographic history of *Detroit's Polonia* have for a Western New York reader?' The answer is a little complicated. If you buy a book like this to see pictures of your friends, family, streets, schools, churches, etc. Then there is little here for you. However, Detroit is close to Buffalo and the structure and behavior of its Polonia is very much like ours. Sort of like the old radio announcement that "only the names and places have been changed to protect the innocent." I read this book in much the same way that I look at some of the old family photographs that I have. I don't know the people

and I have nobody to tell me who the people are, yet I enjoy looking at past moments of history. This volume with its pictures and captions allows us to experience the development of a Polonia community and the lives of members of that community from birth to death. If you enjoy this type of thing, as I do, then this is a book for you. If you have family that lived in Detroit you have the added bonus of perhaps finding a picture of them or their community.

Author Ceile Wendt Jensen is a native of Detroit. She taught high school for 30 years and has extensive activity in K-12 multimedia intergration. She is now a certified genealogist working as a lecturer, researcher, and writer. She has documented her ancestry back to the 1600's in Poland.



Areas of Poland - Part 1

The Podkarpackie Regions

By James P. Harlos
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More and more of our members are taking the plunge and visiting Poland. I myself have gone twice spending 6 weeks traveling parts of it. It is a beautiful country full of pleasant surprises. The people are friendly and mostly very accomadating to a incomplete or lack of the Polish language. The language difficulty is less in the cities as opposed to the country-side, but patience and a friendly non-patronizing attitude will get you far.

In this segment I would like to present two areas in the southeast part of Poland; the Poldkarpackie province

The Podkarpackie (Sub-Carpathian) Province is the most southeastern part of Poland. Its southern boundary is Slovakia and its eastern border is the

Ukraine. It is a semi-industrial area with its capital Rzeszów forming being the hub of a transportation network connecting those countries and others to northern and western Poland. The roads show on the map are the major roads (highways) but there are many more smaller roads. If you are going to drive yourself, I would strongly recommend buying a good road atlas.

* Province in the south-east of Poland.

* Borders with Ukraine, Slovakia and the provinces of Małopolska, Łódź, Świętokrzyski, and Lublin.

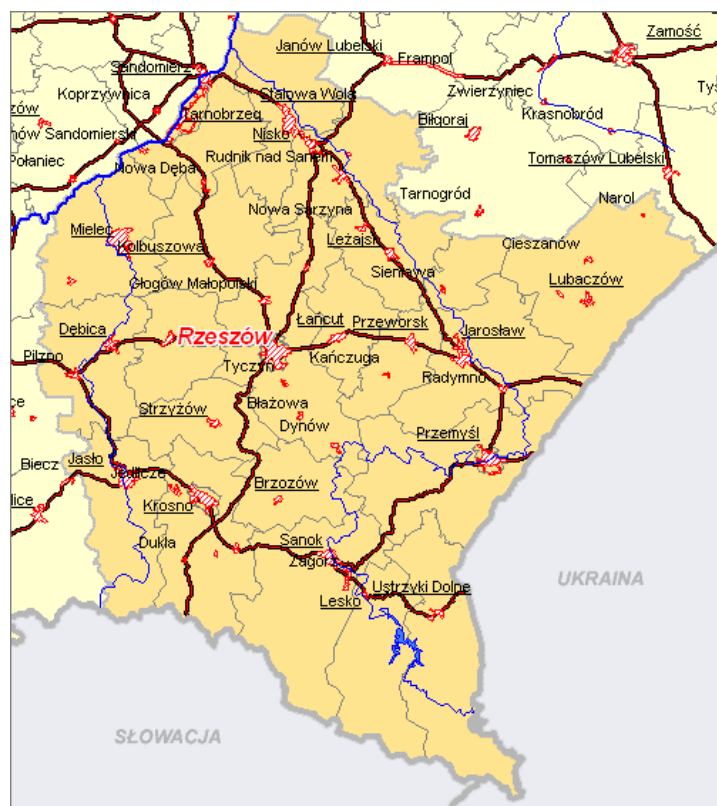
* Area: 17926 km2 (5.73% of the land area of Poland).

* Population: 2117 thousand (5.48% of the population of Poland).

* Divided into 20 districts, 4 district towns, and 160 municipalities.

* In the province there are 45 towns. Provincial capital: the administrative center of the province is Rzeszów.

* The main towns are: Rzeszów, Stalowa-Wola, Przemyśl, Mielec and Krosno.



This is a province with many varied aspects. We can find here attractive towns with a busy modern life which at the same time have managed to preserve important historical monuments and a particular historic atmosphere. We can also see unusual villages, which were formerly inhabited by groups such as the Lemks and the Bojks, and nowadays also by Pogórzans and Lasowiaks.

There are fast road and rail connections to the province, with roads running parallel to the Carpathian mountain range, in the direction of Ukraine. There are also roads to Hungary and

Slovakia over the mountain passes, which have been in use for centuries. Rzeszów, the provincial capital, has convenient flight connections. The region has a very wide variety of tourist attractions, both for those in search of rest in forested backwaters and quiet mountains, and for those in favour of more energetic activities, such as hiking, cycling, kayaking and skiing, as well as those in search of health resorts. Sub-Carpathia has exceptionally good facilities for horse-riding. The cultural landscape of the region, which is an unusual blend of traditions, is fascinating. Austrian influences and Russian influences still remain from the period of occupation. It should be remembered that until not long after the end of the Second World War the south of this region was inhabited by a large group of ethnic Ukrainians, the Lemks and the Bojks, who were resettled in the northern provinces of Poland and in the Ukraine.

One attraction of Sub-Carpathia is its very varied topography, consisting of plains, foothills, and mountains. In the north of the province is the extensive Sandomierz Plain, which for centuries has been densely forested. . A visit to the open air museum of wooden buildings in the small town of Kolbuszow is a must. The Sandomierz Forest is bordered to the north by the Tarnobrzeg Sulphur Fields, or rather, the former sulphur fields. Tarnobrzeg is the ancestral seat of the Tarnowski Family, and an academic centre with long traditions. Not far from Tarnobrzeg is the little town of Sandomierz with its castle and park, known as the "Little Wawel", which now contains a museum of interiors and an attractive congress centre. The nearby town of Ulanów, which is picturesquely situated on the River Tanev, is a centre of traditional rafting. The city of Stalowa Wola is of entirely modern origin; it was built from its foundations in the 1930's in the midst of extensive forests, and is one of the crowning achievements of Polish town planning, which is well worth considering as a tourist destination. The town of Leżajsk is popular with tourists and pilgrims, many of whom come to visit the famous basilica with its wonderful organ concerts. Sieniawa has an attractive mansion and park, which was formerly the ancestral seat of the Sienawski family, and nowadays is a hotel with considerable historic

character, used for many conferences and congresses.

The area where the Sandomierz Plain and the Carpathian Mountains meet, along the ancient Sub-Carpathian Road connecting Krakow to Lvov, is where Sub-Carpathia's most ancient cities are located, including Rzeszów, Łańcut, Przeworsk, Jarosław and Przemyśl. Although all of them are very different, each one has a long history. Rzeszów, the ancestral town of the Ligęza family, is both the largest city and the provincial capital of the province of Sub-Carpathia, picturesquely situated on the Wisłok River. Its attractions include the old town, with the town hall, the Regional Museum, and a recently opened underground tourist trail. Not far from Rzeszów, in the Wisłok Valley, are some attractive locations which are popular both for summer holidays and winter sports, such as Strzyżów and Frysztak. One of the most beautiful palaces which belonged to various famous Polish families, including most recently to the Potocki family, can be seen in Łańcut. The rooms of the house are in period style, such as the Ballroom, and the coach collection is also a major attraction. In Łańcut you can also find a Distillery Museum, and in the nearby village of Marków there is a small open-air museum. An attraction of Przeworsk is "Pastewnik", a unique place which functions both as an inn, camping site, and open-air museum. From this town, visitors can take a trip on the historic narrow-gauge railway to the town of Dyny, through the picturesque area of Pogórz and through the only narrow-gauge tunnel in Poland. The history of nearby Jarosław, one of the oldest cities of the region, goes back a very long way. The attractions of the town include a fortified church and monastery complex, an Orthodox church, museum, and an underground tourist trail leading under the oldest area of the town. For those who are interested in wooden buildings, there is the nearby town of Pruchnik, which contains several arcaded 19th Century buildings.

The most interesting town in Sub-Carpathia is Przemyśl, which is picturesquely located in the hills neighbouring the San valley, not far from the Ukrainian border. This town is perfect for painters

and other artists, as it can offer many encounters with history: picturesque nooks, in which nothing has changed for centuries, and spacious panoramas. Some of the most interesting sights are to be found concealed among the winding, narrow lanes, such as the Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic cathedrals, a palace (base of the long-standing Fredreum Theatre), churches from various historical periods, and attractive town houses. Przemyśl is a center of science and culture. There are some interesting collections in the National Museum of Przemyśl and the Diocesan Museum (a marvelous collection of icons). Those who are interested in military architecture can go by bike or on foot to the fortifications of Przemyśl, built by the Austrians, and famous on account of the brave soldier Szwejk. Kayak trips along the river San are very popular. Not far from Przemyśl are Krasieczyn, the location of the ancestral seat of the Krasicki family, which is now a museum, and the picturesquely located Kalwaria Pałacowska with its Bernardine monastery and chapels, a significant pilgrimage center. The arboretum with its exotic plants in Bolestraszyca is worth a visit.

Ancient roads lead along the valleys from Rzeszów, Jarosław, Przemyśl, and other towns, to

the highest mountains of Sub-Carpathia Province. The road from Przemyśl, via Krasieczyn, the village of Bircz, and scenic hairpin bends in the Salt Mountains, is particularly beautiful. The road leads to Sanok, the largest town in the south of the province. This historic stronghold on the River San has the largest open-air museum in Poland, the Museum of Folk architecture, which has numerous examples of buildings in folk styles of the Lemks, Bojks, Pogórzans, and Rzeszowians, including some exquisite wooden churches, which are a symbol of this region. The castle of Sanok has a historical museum with a large collection of icons.

Along the borderlands between Pogórz and the mountain ranges of the Beskid Nisky and the Bieszczady there are some interesting towns, accessible along scenic roads and railway lines. Train travel along this route is slow, but offers an exceptional aesthetic experience. Besides Sanok, other interesting towns along this route are Jasło, Krosno, Lesko and Ustrzyki Dolne. Jasło is an old town, and an ideal base for visiting the Magurski National Park, in the Beskid Niski. These hills, which are not particularly high, have an
(Continued on page 14, column 2)