



SEARCHERS



Number 47

POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK STATE

Issue 1, 2008

Preserving Our Past Since 1988

The Gardener and the Maid



Ferdinand Kloss & Mathilde Steinfeld Kloss

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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

Annual dues are \$15 (\$18 Canada, \$25 other countries). Your membership entitles you to three editions of the Searchers and participation in the PGSNYS Yahoo Group. New members receive an information packet to help you get started. The expiration date of your membership is on the mailing label.

Please remit your membership by check or money order to:

PGSNYS

c/o Chuck Pyrak

12 Grant Road

Snyder, NY 14226



Please remember to send any changes in mailing or e-mail addresses to the above address or to cpyrak@roadrunner.com

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

1st Edition - February 15th for April mailing

2nd Edition - June 15th for August mailing

3rd Edition - September 15th for November mailing

Submissions to the Searchers can be made by postal mail (**c/o Searcher Editor**) or via e-mail to

editor@pgsnys.org or g.smokowski@verizon.net

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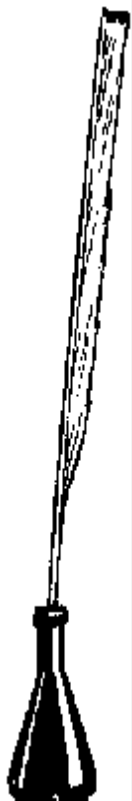
Founder Michael A. Drabik 1950-2001

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Frank Martin



Presidents Message

It is with great pleasure that I inform the membership that The Michael Drabik Collection of the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State is now a reality! As of February, most of our books are now on the shelves in the Grosvenor Room of the Downtown Buffalo and Erie County Public Library. Signage with our library's name identifies the location of our collection. An opening ceremony is scheduled for Saturday August 9th at 3PM in the Grosvenor Room. All are welcome to attend.

Denise Oliansky has accepted responsibilities as our first librarian for the collection. She will be working on a paper finder's index for library patrons to locate materials. Plans are being made to make available a searchable index on our website.

It is interesting to note that the ceremony also marks the 20th Anniversary of the PGSNYS. The Board of Directors is working to sponsor a small genealogical

event to celebrate for our 20 years of existence. Stay tuned.

Later this year we plan on doing something to celebrate the arrival of the first Poles to arrive in America 400 year ago in October 1608 in Jamestown, Virginia. More details will be forthcoming.

Sincerely,

David Newman
President, PGSNYS



The Gardener and the Maid

By Cynthia Kloss

When I was growing up, my Uncle Bob (Robert Kloss) told me the story of his mother (Alma Zahnke Kloss) sitting him down one day in his wild youth to have a 'little talk' with him. She began by asking whether he thought his father's (Walter Martin Kloss) life had been easy. Alma then said that her mother-in-law (Mathilde Steinfeld Kloss) had told her she got pregnant by the gardener where she worked as a maid for a family in the Children's Hospital area of Buffalo, NY, and gave birth to an illegitimate son (Walter Martin Kloss) on May 16, 1901. Our family never asked my grandfather (Walter Martin) if he knew names or more information to add to the story and, as in most families, the people who could tell us took the secrets to their graves. My grandfather's sister (Esther Kloss Morrison) once told her brother (Walter Martin Kloss) that he should tell his children what he knew of

his birth father. In response, my grandfather got mad and would not talk to his sister for months. Having a child out of wedlock is not something talked about when a man is raised in a German/Lutheran home in the early 1900s.

When I began working at the University at Buffalo Libraries, I became friends with a secretary who taught genealogy classes with her husband. I took a class and decided to try to research the gardener/maid story for my family. I started my search by finding the ward number for the area where Children's Hospital stands and began looking through the 1900 census line by line for my great-grandmother (Mathilde Steinfeld). I found Mathilde working on Hodge Avenue employed by the Norton Rosewell Family, where John Jones was listed as a laborer. As anyone searching for information on his or her family knows, I was very excited with my discovery, but with such a common name and the years that had passed I knew my search was probably at an end. I did try to search the name Jones but had no luck.

I do not know if John Jones stayed in the Buffalo, NY area and, if he did, whether he lived a long life or died during the flu epidemic of the early 1900s. I also do not know if he even knew he had a son.

Mathilde did marry Ferdinand Kloss on November 25, 1902, and together they had one daughter – my great-aunt Esther. Whenever we looked at old pictures, my grandfather would point out Ferdinand and say that was his father. Any paperwork my Dad (Walter James), Uncle Bob and I came across on my grandfather listed Ferdinand as his father.

I've realized that some mysteries may never be solved but because of this research I was bitten by the genealogy bug and continue to drive my family nuts with my questions and research.

This article is dedicated to my Uncle Bob who passed away on December 29, 2007. He was the one in our family who remembered names, dates and family stories. Everyone should be so lucky to have an "Uncle Bob" in their family – I know I was blessed.

The Gardener and the Maid



*The Shock Therapy**800 Days that Transformed the Polish Economy By Leszek Murat*

In January 1989, Poland found herself on the brink of an economic catastrophe. Four-decade-long central planning made the Polish economy virtually bankrupt, with an astonishing forty billion dollars in debt, as well as the low productivity, empty stores, social apathy and the ossified state bureaucracy thwarting private initiative. For the communists, it became obvious that after several failed attempts of reform, the Polish economy needed a total transformation toward a capitalist model. No one in the world, however, ever attempted such a reform before.

Leszek Balcerowicz, a young economist from the Warsaw School of Economics (SGPiS), suggested a bold solution: to immediately release the economic natural self-healing powers by exposing the communist mode of production to a market economy. After an initial shock, Balcerowicz believed, the economy will adapt itself to the new reality. Soon, he was appointed the first non-communist Minister of Finance in fifty years, with a daunting task of saving the state from approaching bankruptcy.

Although his bold plan appeared to be risky, the Pol-

ish parliament enthusiastically approved it before the magic January 1, 1990 - the targeted first day for the Poles to awaken in a capitalist state. As many feared, the inflation surged to monumental proportions, reaching 100% a month. The unemployment, a phenomenon unknown in communist regimes, reached 12%. Hundreds of state companies bankrupted. Although in the same time stores filled with goods, the overall gross domestic product lost almost 20%. Balcerowicz found himself in a bitter crossfire. Accused of misjudgments, he was asked to step down or to substantially ease the draconic therapy.

Yet he was not willing to compromise.

"It is time," he said, "to end the situation where people pretend they work and the state pretends it pays them."

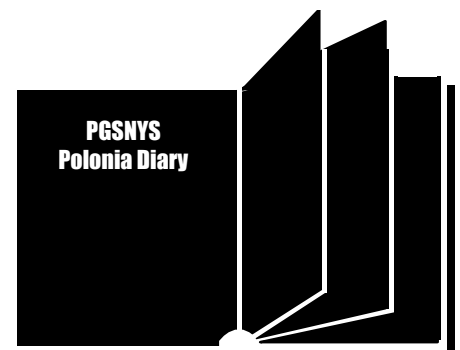
Unlike politicians, who were scared of popular dissatisfaction, Balcerowicz stubbornly continued his stabilization plan without much change. It earned him admirers abroad, especially George Bush and Margaret Thatcher. Thanks to Western assistance, Polish foreign debt was substantially reduced and the Polish Central Bank received some support from the IMF. Finally, after two painful years, the plan started to

work: inflation was in check and newly emerged private sector grew to unprecedented dimensions. The foreign trade, which before 1990 depended mostly on relations with the Soviet Union, within just two years redirected itself toward Western Europe. During the Balcerowicz's 800 days in office, the Polish economy was substantially healed from its persistent ailments: weak currency, lack of modern technology and supplies. It laid the foundation for the modern Polish economy.

Based on the book:

Leszek Balcerowicz, *Szok kontrolowany*, Polska Oficyna Wydawnicza BGW, Warsaw, 1992.

Leszek Murat is a doctoral student at SUNY specializing in Central European history, and a doctoral student at the Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland, where he specializes in theory of law.





Economist appealing to Polish Parliament over the state of the economy

A Day Frozen in Time

By Edward Prabucki

Tuesday, brisk and wintry, commenced on January 18, 1944 as one more normal, (War-Time) morning. It began before daylight as mother at 6:00 a. m. preceded all of us from our slumber to prepare breakfast and father minutes later gently stirred us up—setting our chairs at the table for a breakfast of warm oatmeal, eggs and coffee.

As 7:00 a.m. approached—it was time to leave so I chauffeured my sister and two co-employees down Humboldt Parkway and up Elmwood Avenue to Bell Aircraft at 2050 Elmwood Avenue in North Buffalo with the car radio tuned to WBEN to enjoy popular tunes of that time, by Glen Miller and Tom Dorsey.

At Bell Aircraft plant with Patriotic temper and intense energy, we continued with dedication to improve if not increase the required production of our government's need to assemble the P-39—so essential on all War Fronts.

At 5:00 p.m., our shift ended—well pleased with our work effort, I chauffeured the girls home, to a pacific atmosphere and a war-rationed meal prepared by our devoted mother. Afterwards we relaxed to listen to 6:00 p.m. news and later to the tunes of my favorite musical bands of the time.

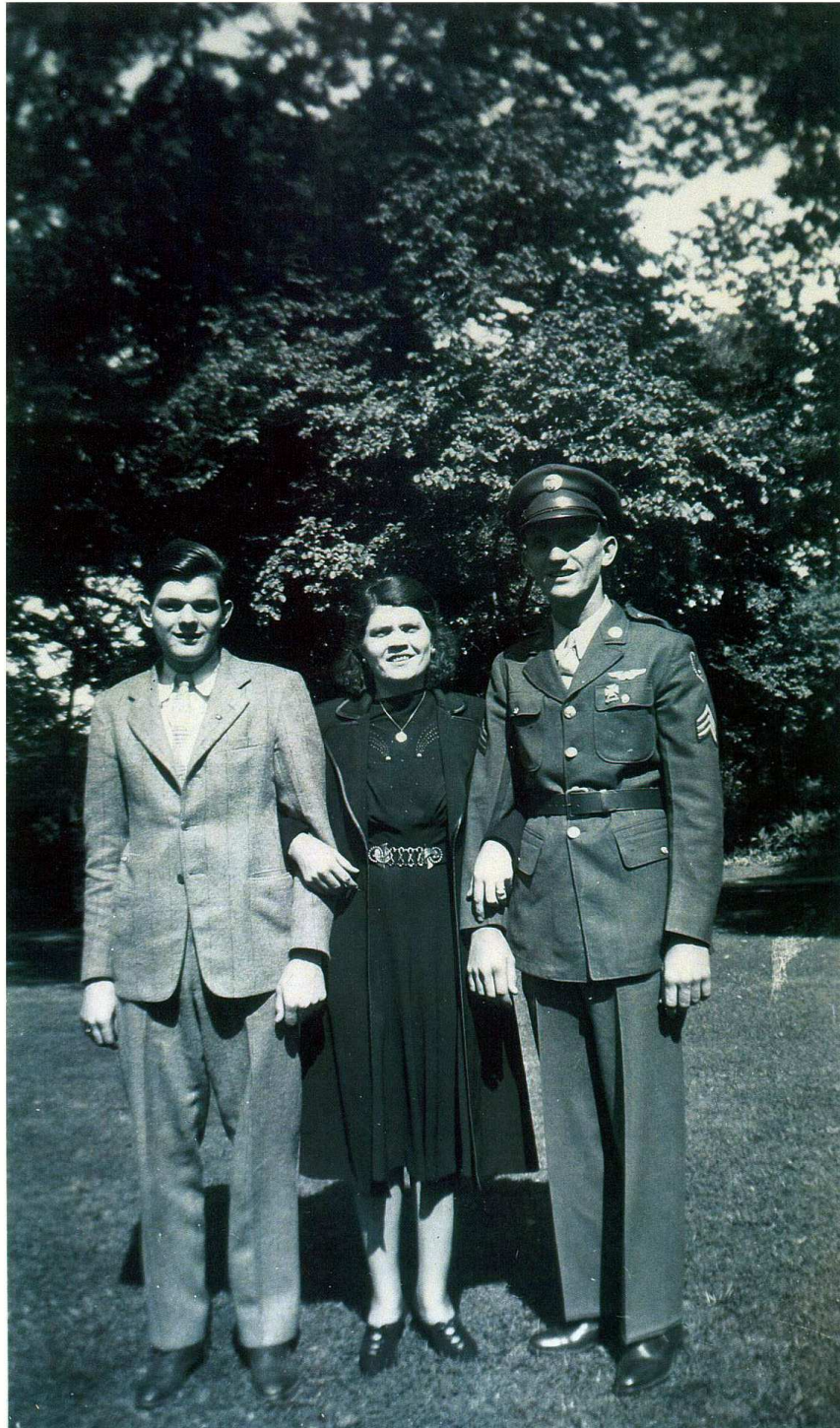
Soon after—I heard the Hallway door open and a youthful voice shouting “Western Union”—opening the door, I was handed a telegram. In my naïve mood, I thanked him and I was certain it was of little import.

I handed it to my mother—she opened this supposedly innocuous telegram, so I thought—and then I watched her stand up, stunned and in tears, to reveal that her son, Sergeant Bernard, is listed as Missing-in-Action from a mission over Keil, Germany. From that moment life at home begged description to normalcy—still very vivid to me—a day frozen in time.

For weeks we moved about in a very solemn mood—corresponding with the Defense Department—offering us hope that parachutes were seen as his B-24 was shot down; however, the time came when my mother was notified that my brother was Killed-in-Action—no remains were recovered from his B-24.

I wasn't concerned much less aware that to my father this was the third family tragedy. Our cousin, Frank Prabucki, who arrived with my father to America from Europe in 1913—served in France with the Allies in World War I—after he volunteered to serve in the Polish-Russian War in 1920 was lost in combat. Also our father's cousin's son, Private Walter Prabucki, was also lost in combat on Guadacanal Island in World War II—in January of 1943. Moments engraved in our memory for all time.





Taken on August 15, 1943 in Humboldt Park
Bronislaw, -My Mother, Mary, and Bernard Prabucki on Furlough

The Poles Arrival at Jamestown, Virginia

By Jadwiga Domino - jdomino@medaille.edu and Daniel Domino - dandomino@verizon.net

In May 2007, Jamestown, Virginia held a big celebration to commemorate the founding of the first English settlement in America four hundred years ago. Many Americans are aware of the Jamestown Colony but sadly, very few people are aware of the Polish role at Jamestown. At the January 10, 2008 meeting of the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State, Daniel Kij suggested that our Society should do something to celebrate the arrival of the first Poles in America in October 1608. His remarks inspired us to write this article.

On a vacation last July in Virginia, we visited Historic Jamestown and the Historic Jamestown Visitors Center. At the 22.5 acre site, archeologists have exposed ruins and the original foundations of 17th century buildings. We were able to view the foundations of the original triangular fort and some of the houses that were in the fort. The original brick church was still

standing and we were able to go inside to view it. Nearby, we were able to see the ruins of Jamestown's first glass furnace, which was built by the first Poles in America. In 1608 the colonists hoped that they would have a productive trade with England by selling glassware. The glass furnace that we saw was a replica of the original glass furnace. Next to the furnace costumed in-



Jamestown Glasshouse furnace built in 1608 with river boulders

terpreters demonstrated early glass blowing techniques.

Since we were aware of the role that the Poles played in Jamestown in 1608, we looked for any mention of the contribution of the first Poles on display plaques at the Visitors Center, but we did not find any. When we visited the working replica of the original glass

furnace, we found a plaque on the outside of the furnace, but there was no mention that it was originally constructed by the Poles. When we looked up Jamestown in our encyclopedia we learned that "in the first seven months they were nearly wiped out by disease and famine, but Capt. John Smith revived the settlement in 1608. Again, there was no mention that the Poles helped to rescue the colony. Therefore, we agreed with Daniel Kij, that we should try to spread the news of what really happened at Jamestown.

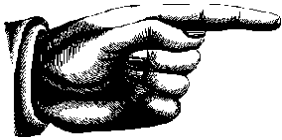
Just one year after its founding, Jamestown was on the brink of disaster. The passengers on the first ship that arrived in Virginia were comprised of gentlemen adventurers who had no job skills and had to be cajoled by Captain John Smith to work. Captain John Smith, one of the first governors of the colony, asked the Virginia Company of London to send him a relief ship with some carpenters, blacksmiths and ma-

colony, asked the Virginia Company of London to send him a relief ship with some carpenters, blacksmiths and masons. He specifically asked for Poles because when he visited Poland he was impressed with the ingenuity and work ethic of the Polish people.

On October 1, 1608 the supply ship, Mary and Margaret, arrived at Jamestown. Among the passengers on board the ship were six men from Poland. Their names were Michal Lowicki, Zbigniew Stefanski, Jurek Mats, Jan Bogdan, Karol Zrenica and Stanislaw Sadowski. The Polish workers were among the very few foreigners who were welcomed into the colony. The English intended the Virginia Colony to be guided by the teachings of the Church of England and they forbade Catholics to join the colony. Even though the first Poles invited to America were probably Roman Catholic, they were accepted by the English Protestants because of their superior skills, which the English immigrants lacked. Was this the beginning of Religious Freedom in America?

The following passage is from the book *True Heroes of Jamestown* by Arthur L. Waldo p 101. This passage is a first hand account written by Stanislaw Sadowski. "Seldom has one seen such lack of resourcefulness as we found in Virginia. Not even a spoonful of drinking water was to be found in the fort. The people there marveled when within four days we dug a well and presented it to them complete with a shadoof, so they would stop drinking the river water. Utter destitution, which prevailed because of the indolence of the colonists, nearly destroyed the settlement. That first year must have been unbelievably difficult for the Englishmen. They did not deliver enough lumber for building houses, they did not produce any pitch, flock or glass; however, quarreling and fighting among themselves was prevalent. First of all we set up a sawmill, cutting beams and planks without respite. Also without wasting any time, we built a glass house. Under my personal supervision several glass furnaces were built for the production of glass, and four of us began blowing glasses, bottles, jugs, as

well as beads, for which the practically naked Virginia female savages brought us grain and fish in their baskets, picking up every chip of glass from the ground to decorate their strange attire. " By building the glass furnaces, the Poles were responsible for the first factory in America and glass products were our first export to England. The Poles were also pioneers in American Liberty. In 1619, during the administration of Governor Sir George Yeardley, the London Company gave the men of English descent in the Virginia Colony the right to vote in the assembly. The Poles, however, were denied this privilege. The Polish workers were upset and staged a protest at the first Virginia Assembly. They also refused to work until they were given the same voting rights as the English. They suspended operations in the glass factory, the tar distillery and the soap factory. Governor Yeardley was quick to correct the injustice and gave the same rights to the Poles as to the Englishmen. Therefore, the first strike in America was not for higher wages or better working conditions, but for democratic rights.



Potpourri



The recent edition of *Głos Polek*, the monthly publication of the Polish Women's Alliance of America, had an interesting article entitled, *The First Products "Made in America" Were Manufactured by Poles*. Immediately after reaching Jamestown on October 1, 1608, aboard the English vessel, the *Mary and Margaret*, the Poles began producing goods needed to develop the settlement, like pitch and soap. Soon they also started operating the first glassworks, which they built one mile outside of Jamestown and which was to become the first official factory in America. Historians confirm that the factory created by Polish craftsmen in 1608 was the first one ever built in America, and their glass products were the first goods manufactured in the future United States of America. Polish glass was famous all over Europe and soon the exports from America were being sold there as well. To this day there is a company in Jamestown called *Jamestown Glasshouse* which is a successor of the glassworks built by Poles in 1608. Artistic glass products are produced there with the use of the traditional methods and designs which go back 400 years.

Armela Hammes

Thanks to all who have contributed to this issue of *Searchers*. One word about article submissions: submitting articles is a preferable way to contribute to *Searchers*. If you submit an idea about an article, but then expect me to do the writing of the article, it may take much longer to become published because of my limited amount of time to write and edit. The surest way to get your topic of interest published is to submit an article, however rough, to me and I will edit it as necessary. Writing the article ideas myself takes more time. So if you submitted an article idea and did not write out an article yourself, please look for it in a future issue, if not contained in this issue. Please continue to submit articles and article ideas to me as you can. Thanks again for your interest in writing for *Searchers*.

Sincerely,

Grace Smokowski, Editor



FUNERAL CARD

PROJECT

Our society has been indexing funeral cards for the past few years. If you would like to submit copies of your funeral cards for indexing send your copies to the project coordinator Pauline Gebura using one of the methods below:

1) Mail copies to:

Pauline Gebura

6471 Deerview Ct.

Clearance Center,
New York 14032

2) E-Mail scanned copies to pagebura@aol.com

(Put In Subject:
PGSNYS Funeral
Card Project)



POINT and CLICK!

Laurel Keough presents ideas and links for web research

Without a doubt, the Internet has changed the face of genealogy radically. Each and everyday more searchable records are being placed online making the research process faster, less costly, and easier than before. Today, your fingers can do the walking to a treasure trove of information that presents itself with a click of your computer mouse.

You probably have perused some of these web sites before but I strongly suggest you visit again, as new data is continuously added.

Polish Research

Poznan Marriage Indexing Project by Lukasz Bielecki
<http://bindweed.man.poznan.pl/posen/project.php>

This is the largest online database of this type available for Polish genealogy.

If your ancestors came to America from the former Prussian province of Posen, now Poznan, Poland, this site is not to be overlooked.

The marriage indexing covers 1835 to 1884. Those years were chosen because that was the period of greatest emigration. This is a work in progress and **as of April 2008, there are 238,576 marriages to search.** The search engine is deftly constructed and allows numerous options for searching either the groom or the bride. A helpful feature is the pull down menu that lists given (first) names in

Latin, Polish and German.

If you are lucky enough to find your ancestor in this index, the information may provide you with the elusive name of the village in Poland that shores up many proverbial "brick walls". While you may already know the birth village of your male ancestor, you may not know where he was married if it was in the bride's parish. Again, this index may provide the answer.

If you have found your names, the next step is to check the Family History Library Catalog to see if the the parish church records have been microfilmed and can be ordered for your use at the LDS library nearest you.

Another great feature of the database is you may easily add a comment (just click the comment button) to your ancestor's record and enter birth and death places and dates, parent's names, or whatever else you may choose to add. Your e-mail address will be included in the comment and will provide the possibility of connecting with other people researching your ancestral name.

At the top of the main page, note the links to additional indexing projects in other parts of Poland. These also include births and deaths in addition to marriages.

This project deserves a 5 star rating and much praise and thanks to Lukasz Bielecki and his dedicated team of volunteers

working on the project.

Polish Interest

Gen Dobry by William F. "Fred" Hoffman

<http://www.polishroots.org/gendobry/gendobry>

This monthly e-zine is part of the Polish Roots website. Mr. Hoffman's considerable talent as author and surname expert results in a publication that covers any and every subject relevant to Poland and Polish genealogical research. The varied subjects include upcoming events, book reviews, useful web addresses and his specialty, the meaning of surnames. You may subscribe and have this publication delivered in your e-mail at the end of every month or go directly to the site where the current issue is available along with a complete archive of back issues.

Checking out some of his suggested sites, I found a few "gems" to pass along. These particular sites will not add names and dates to your family tree but will add to your enjoyment.



POINT and CLICK! Continued

Laurel Keough presents ideas and links for web research

Photos of Polish Villages Online

(Debbie's Photos of Poland)

You may link to this in the August 2006 issue or go directly to:

<http://www.polishfamily.com/p4e/index.html>

A massive collection of beautiful photographs taken in hundreds of Polish villages and cities. Formatted so that you just click on the place of interest. Very well done.

Hamburg to America Immigration Video

This ten-minute video depicts the immigration experience of a young couple traveling to the port of Hamburg to begin their voyage to America. With the use of still photographs, artistic sketches and actors to portray the young couple, the film-makers will transport you in time. You will find this video on the personal genealogy home page of the Janice Family. <http://www.janicefamily.net/>

Scroll about 2/3rds down the main page and look for a small paragraph that mentions the video and says [click here](#).

Legal Name Changes 1847 – 1947

New Jersey State Searchable Archives

<http://www.state.nj.us/state/dorm/links/databases.html>

I had never viewed a site that listed name changes that were legally processed by a state. So if you are curious and even if you have no ancestors in New Jersey, take a look at this interesting site. Of course, you will find many Polish names that were changed. If you search only your ancestral names, you may not get any results. Instead, just enter any single letter of the alphabet, then under name type, choose the original name option, and your results will be the complete list of names that start with that letter.

If you have any problems accessing these sites, e-mail me and I will try to help. laukeo@aol.com



Poznan Project

Page 1 of 1

Poznań Project: Search the marriages database

Catholic parish in Nowe Miasto [Neustadt a/Warthe], entry # 11 in 1875
Joseph Kolpinski? (24) father: Joannes, mother: Apollonia
Marianna Golka (19) father: Jacobus, mother: Elisabeth

Laurel Keough (penn) posted 2 comments: Joseph Kolpinski b. 19 Feb. 1851 in Kalisz, Wielkopolski d. 11 Jan. 1920 (mother: Apollonia Plaskiewicz) married 28 Aug. 1875 to Marianna Golka b. 20 Mar. 1855 in Nowe Miasto d. 17 May 1922 (mother: Elisabeth Jastrzebska)
Five children of this marriage immigrated to Buffalo, New York; three children remained in Poland. Joseph and Marianna are my great-grand parents. (2008-04-01 01:35)

Back to Search

<http://bindweed.man.poznan.pl/posen/comment.php>

3/31/2008

PGSNYS
Polonia Diary

ACADEMY AWARD NOMINEE
"KATYŃ" DEPICTS WAR CRIME

Warsaw (PMN)—
The film "Katyń," nominated for an Academy Award as Best Foreign Film, opens in 1939, after Germany has invaded Poland from the West and the Red Army has moved in from the East. Director Andrzej Wajda depicts Poland's agony on a bridge, where Poles fleeing the Nazis collide with their countrymen fleeing the Soviets. It is symbolic, but based on actual events. So is another metaphorically charged scene that shows a Soviet soldier remove a Polish flag from a building, rip it apart, and use the white portion to wrap around his foot as a sock. The half that was red (the communist color) is put back on the building. The message is clear: Poland is obliterated and the communists are in charge.

Wajda states, "Those who know my films know that I make such symbolic scenes, that this is my specialty." Wajda received an honorary Academy Award in 2000 in recognition of his works that maneuvered between a repressive communist government and an audience yearning for freedom.

The movie depicts not only the crimes carried out in the Katyń forest and elsewhere and the devastation of

the families, but also what Wajda called the "Katyń lie." His film traces the fate of the wives and a sister of fictional officers who struggle to learn the truth about their loved ones from the Soviets who controlled Poland during and after the war. The crimes are blamed on the Nazis. Another thread of the film details a young woman who erects a gravestone for her brother killed at Katyń; it is quickly destroyed by the Communist government. Wajda, who was 13 when the war began, whose father allegedly died in the Katyń Massacre, did not feature him among the characters. His mother lived out her life holding out a vain hope that her husband, Lieutenant Jakub Wajda, may have survived, as his name never appeared on any official list of Polish soldiers killed in World War II.

Katyń is one of the most tragic war crimes in history and a topic Wajda could not have tackled before communism collapsed in 1989, because Moscow refused to acknowledge it.

The movie was released in Poland this fall and sold 3 million tickets in a country of 38 million people. It is scheduled to make its international premiere at the an-

nual Berlin film festival in February, and Wajda is hopeful it may be picked up for distribution in the United States and elsewhere.

"Katyń" is the eighth Academy Award nomination for Poland. Previous nominations were: "Man of Iron" (1981), "The Maids of Wilko" (1979), Nights and Days (1976), Land of Promise (1975), The Deluge (1974), Pharaoh (1966), and "Knife in the Water" (1963).

Dear All,

Because of our big snowstorm last Friday and Saturday, we had to miss two showings of the film, "Katyń", at the 32nd Cleveland International Film Festival. In viewing the Festival's website, I found out that because of the snowstorm there was going to be an additional viewing on Saturday at 9:30 a.m. I can't say that I have ever been in a movie theater at 9:30 a.m., but we couldn't miss this opportunity. The movie is in Polish, German, and Russian, with English subtitles. Warning: if you get the opportunity to see "Katyń", bring plenty of tissues. It is an emotionally draining movie.

Submitted By

Armela Hammes

I



Polish Genealogical Officers for 2008
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