



# SEARCHERS



Number 48

POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK STATE

Issue 2, 2008

Preserving Our Past Since 1988

## PGSNYS Library Dedication



The Michael Drabik Memorial Library Dedication was conducted on Saturday August 9th, 2008 at the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library located in Downtown Buffalo, New York

## 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 to your postal or e-mail address to the above address or to [cpyrak@roadrunner.com](mailto: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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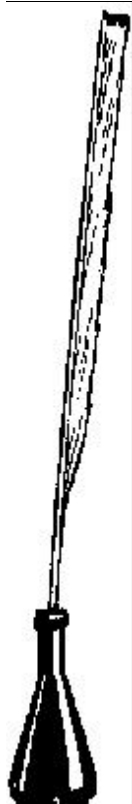
Founder Michael A. Drabik 1950-2001

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Frank Martin



## Presidents' Message

Our Searchers editor Grace Smokowski will be getting married this fall. Congratulations and best wishes to Grace! For the next couple of issues I'll take on editing duties with assistance from Laurel Keough, Monica Rzepka, Denise Oliansky and Dan Domino.

### Library Dedication

The dedication of the Michael Drabik Memorial Library commenced on August 9th at 3PM at the Central Branch of the Buffalo & Erie Co Public Library. For those who couldn't attend, the first three articles of this issue provide you with details of the dedication followed by two of the presented speeches.

### Library Future

Now that the Dedication of our library has occurred, we have an obligation to maintain the collection. At the August 14th meeting, I announced the formation of a Library Committee headed by our librarian Denise Oliansky to develop a plan for maintaining the library. The plan will include recommendations for a budget which will not only pay for maintaining the library but also a budget for acquiring new books. I believe we need to ensure our library grows on an annual basis. I'll provide more details about

the plan in future messages. I encourage everyone to make suggestions for books and other genealogical reference material to acquire for our library. Please see **Potpourri Section** on Page 12: "*Suggestions for Library*" for how to make suggestions.

### Website Future

From 1999 to present, our website at [www.pgsnys.org](http://www.pgsnys.org) was primarily designed by myself. Chuck Pyrak helped with maintaining our home page. We now have a new webmaster. Susan Malyszka has volunteered to take on the responsibility. Before handing over the position to Susan, we needed to change our web hosting provider. Switching our hosting provider to Aplus.net not only reduced our annual cost from \$225 to \$90 per year, but has also increased the amount of hosting space from 500 Megabytes to 170 Gigabytes. For those who don't understand computers this is a significant amount of space that enables us to provide people who visit our website

much more information and services.

Our website within the next 6 months will be redesigned to offer more information about our society and Polish Genealogy. One of the plans is to make our library holdings searchable. The public and society members can then learn about what resources are available in our collection.

The website will not change overnight. It will be accomplished in phases. We are asking for suggestions of what features and information you would like to see on our website. We will prioritize all suggestions that are feasible and schedule them to be added in a future website release. Please see **Potpourri Section** on Page 12: "*Suggestions for Our Web Site*" for how to make suggestions.

Sincerely,

David Newman, president



## Michael Drabik Memorial Library Dedication

By Keith Kaszubik

On Saturday, August 9th at 3 p.m. it was standing room only in the West Room at the downtown central library for the dedication of the Michael Drabik Memorial Library of the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State (PGSNYS) at the Grosvenor Room. Over seventy people were in attendance to honor a man who was truly dedicated to Polonia. Michael passed away in 2001.

Michael's dream of a genealogical society became a reality in 1988 when he founded and became first president of the Polish Genealogical Society of Western New York. Under the leadership of former president Philip Best (Beszczyński) the society was expanded to include all of New York State. Current president David Newman (Niewczyk) has remained most true to the original vision and has catapulted the society to its greatest heights.

The dedication was conducted by the renowned Daniel Kij and began with an invocation by Rev. Fr. David Białkowski, Pastor of St. John Gualbert's Parish in Cheektowaga. David Newman followed by welcoming everyone and giving special thanks to those behind the scenes who unselfishly contributed their limited time and hard work to the project.

The Michael Drabik Memorial Library is comprised of the PGSNYS collection of books and

Michael's vast personal collection, both on loan for the benefit of the public. The material was catalogued by U.B. School of Information and Library Science intern Agnieszka Kurzeja-Chen. Peggy Skotnicki, Administrator of the Buffalo & Erie County Central Library, informed the audience that, due to Agnieszka's outstanding accomplishment, she is now employed by the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library.

The program continued with heartfelt reminiscences from those who were near and dear to Michael. His daughter Kasia Drabik spoke of her father's passion for Polonia and a trip to Poland she accompanied him on when she was very young. Michael's close friend, local author Sophie Hodorowicz Knab, referred to the dedication as a momentous day for Polonia, adding that "who we are is who we were" in relation to our culture and heritage.

Some in the audience were literally reduced to tears when Michael's mother Mrs. Alice Drabik and sister Kathy DiBona continued with further adoration and the unveiling of a small plaque which the family purchased to be mounted at the Michael Drabik Memorial Library. Everyone in the audience listened attentively as David Newman read the inscription aloud.

*"The Polish Genealogical Society of New York State, on the occasion of our 20th Anniversary, dedicates its library in loving memory of Michael Drabik our founder, fellow researcher and friend, who lead the way so that*

*many could discover and take great pride in finding their Polish roots.*

*May his vision for our society guide many more down the path of honoring those who came before us, never forgetting our rich Polish culture and heritage, to which it is our responsibility to pass on to future generations."*

Nothing but words of praise for someone so worthy of praise as their beloved Michael. A fitting tribute indeed to one of our greatest sons of Buffalo's Polonia.



PGSNYS President David Newman reads the dedication plaque aloud with Mike Drabik's sister Kathy DiBona in the background.



Daniel Kij, Dedication MC



## In Memory of My Father

My name is Kasia Drabik and I am Michael's oldest daughter of three. Growing up in the Drabik household with a mother straight from Poland and a father, who immersed us into more Polish culture than we could handle at ages 4, 5, and 6 was the foundation of the pride we hold for him today.

Since I can remember, we've had Mikołaj every Christmas, celebrated Świeconka every Easter, listened to polkas on the radio every Sunday, took lessons with the Polish Saturday School, and gymnastics with the Polish Falcons Club. My dad made every effort in raising us to be proud of our Polish heritage.

He even took me to Poland when I was in second grade, allowing me to meet cousins, aunts, and uncles for the first time. As well as sightsee throughout the old country. Our house wasn't the only place my dad made a memorable impact. He was notorious for helping others in the community get in touch with their Polish roots. His kind heart and helpful deeds are remembered by many.

My family and I would like to sincerely thank Lynn, Dave, and the entire Polish Genealogical Society for making this day possible.

Michael A. Drabik, was not only a devoted father and husband, he was a researcher, collector, author, and founder with a passion for Polish heri-

tage. This memorial collection here at the downtown public library can now be shared with others and was made possible by the numerous thoughtful individuals who share in his same enjoyment that took over as more than just a hobby.

Thank you all for celebrating this day with us and honoring a man who is so dearly missed.



Mike Drabik's eldest daughter  
Kasia Drabik reading her speech



## Remembering a Friend and Fellow Researcher

By Sophie Hodorowicz Knab

Mrs. Michael Drabik and daughters  
Kasia, Johanna

Mrs. Alice Drabik, Michael's mother

Mrs. Kathy DiBona, Michael's sister

Members of The Polish Genealogical  
Society of New York State

The Staff of the Buffalo and Erie  
County Library

Welcomed guests and friends.

I am honored to have been asked to speak today at this, the celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Polish Genealogical Society of New York State and the dedication of the Michael Drabik Memorial Library Collection. It is a momentous day for Michael's family, the Genealogical Society, and for Polish Americans of Buffalo and Erie County.

Quite a few years ago I saw a very powerful movie which has stayed with me to this day. The good movies are like that – they have a universal message and touch something deep inside you that stays with you forever. I think it has relevance here today.

The movie I saw is a Steven Spielberg film called *Amistad*. It came out in 1997 just around the same time as the big, romantic blockbuster, the *Titanic* so this movie was, unfortunately, quite overshadowed and forgotten by the media and did not receive the attention it deserved.

**(Continued on Page 6)**

**(Continued from Page 5)**

Based on a real historical situation that occurred in this country in 1839, *Amistad* is a movie about fifty-three Africans who were captured in Cuba (which belonged to Spain), put aboard the slave ship named *Amistad* and were being shipped to a Caribbean plantation as slaves. In a fight for their freedom, the Africans seized the ship, killed the captain and ordered the remaining crew on board to set sail for Africa. The ship was seized off Long Island, NY, by the U.S. Navy and the Africans were imprisoned in New Haven, CT, on charges of murder. There was a trial.

I'm sure you're wondering what this long ago event has to do with today's event but it really does connect.

The long and short of it is that the case went to trial in the Federal District Court in Connecticut and then went to the Supreme Court in January 1841. And in that landmark case, the retired former President of the US, John Quincy Adams (magnificently portrayed by Anthony Hopkins), was the defense lawyer for the slaves, fighting for their rights to be free men. The case was unprecedented in the history of the United States. The Civil War was still something to be fought. The ship belonged to Spain. The defendants had been free men in their country. Nothing like this had ever been brought before the Supreme Court. It was unknown as to how to proceed, what was the correct thing to do? There was no previous precedent on

which to make a decision. In his closing arguments during the trial, John Quincy Adams asks the slave "What do your people do when they encounter a situation that they cannot find a solution for? And the leader of the slave revolt on the ship (I'm paraphrasing here) simply replies "We invoke our ancestors. It is our belief that the wisdom and strength they inspired will come to our aid."

That is the scene and one of the lines that has stayed with me over the years. "We invoke our ancestors. It is our belief that the wisdom and strength they inspired will come to our aid."

Our Polish ancestors did not come to this country as slaves but they did come in the hull of ships, in steerage. They did not come bound in chains, but as free men and women who had to carve out a place for themselves in a new land that could be hostile and prejudiced. Their history did not involve landmark decisions involving the Supreme Court of the land, but we can look to them as people who were true pioneers – people who came to this country alone, without family or friends, without money, without skills, without the ability to speak the language. They struggled, survived, and they thrived, and they carved out their rightful place in the greater society. We, and the generations after us, can take lessons and inspiration from that. Their wisdom and strength can come to our aid.

The other powerful line from that movie which I wrote down in my notebook because it struck

such a responsive cord in me was this: "We must embrace the understanding that who we are is who we were."

When the forensic psychologists and sociologists dissect the crimes and problematic behavior and actions of people, one of the major issues they identify is a feeling of alienation, the lack of identity, of knowing who you are, of being connected and belonging to someone or something.

Michael Drabik was my friend. We shared a love of our culture, in the rich history of Polish Americans in this region. We talked a lot, we helped each other in our projects and in our writing. Michael had something special though. Michael was visionary. In founding the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State he knew that there were individuals out there who wanted to research their ancestors and their Polish roots. He understood that people need to know who they are. He understood that to know one's history is to know oneself.

The Michael Drabik Memorial Library Collection honors Michael, the Genealogical Society and the members who keep his vision alive. It also honors our Polish ancestors. The Michael Drabik Memorial Library Collection will help individuals in this county, throughout the state and perhaps even beyond, to discover their Polish ancestors and hopefully to find inspiration, strength, and wisdom in their discoveries as well as fully understanding that "Who we are is who we were."

Thank you very much.

**DEDICATION PICTURE PAGE**



Michael's Mother Alice Drabik and Sister Kathy DiBona with Dedication Plaque by the library collection



Left to Right: Michael's daughters Kasia and Krystyna, wife Bogusia and daughter JoAnna Drabik



Rev, David Białkowski from St Gualbert's parish gives a dedication payer.

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## Witamy !

*A warm and very belated welcome to the following members who have joined the PGSNYS during the last few years.*

James Kasper, Mill Valley, CA  
 Susan Malyszka, Lancaster, NY  
 Cathy Gasper, Williamson, NY  
 Martin Biniasz, Buffalo, NY  
 John Klapp, Philadelphia, PA  
 Susan Sullivan, East Amherst, NY  
 Denise Oliansky, West Seneca, NY  
 Jacqueline Gray, Angola, NY  
 Gregory L. Witul, Niagara Falls, NY  
 David Nowak, Angola, NY  
 John Cyna, West Seneca, NY  
 Casimer Galeza, Grand Island, NY  
 Camille Suszek, Cheektowaga, NY  
 John Sikora, Batavia, NY  
 Josephine R. Oddo, Buffalo, NY  
 Judith Roycroft, Strykersville, NY  
 Judith Andruczyk, Buffalo, NY  
 John Boncek, Montgomery, AL

Thaddeus Zielinski, Cheektowaga, NY  
 Jim Wysocki, Clifton Park, NY  
 Judith Marks, Princeton, NJ  
 Nona Yakes, Greenwood Village, CO  
 Bekky Tatar-Kinsey, Houston, TX  
 Frank Klementowski, Saratoga Springs, NY  
 Andy Golebiowski, Cheektowaga, NY  
 Dr. Julie Wieczkowski, Buffalo, NY  
 Elmer Wienclawski, Tonawanda, NY  
 Angel Zurek, Buffalo, NY  
 Edward Juskowski, Jacksonville, FL  
 Dennis Szymanski, Somers, NY  
 Natalie Andrzejewski, Lancaster, NY  
 Bernadine Eberle, Plano, TX  
 Paul Karaszewski, Cheektowaga, NY  
 Joseph J. Jarosz, Lancaster, NY  
 Keith Kaszubik, North Boston, NY

### **Our newest member John Boncek of Montgomery, Alabama writes:**

“Although my family is from the Binghamton area, over the years we have had many contacts with Buffalo’s Polish community. For example, I attended SUNY/Buffalo, earning my B.A. in Mathematics in February 1978. (Yes, I lived on the Amherst campus during the big blizzard of the late ‘70s!) Most recently, my niece, Kecia Boncek, was married on July 12<sup>th</sup> at University Presbyterian Church. Many members of our family were there for the service – and of course, for the big reception which followed in Hamburg.

I have followed with great interest the closing of a great number of Catholic churches in the Niagara region. Although I am a mathematician by training, I have always appreciated great architecture.

Thanks for adding me to the mailing list.”

John Boncek

### **HAPPY 60TH TO LONG-TIME MEMBERS**

Mr. and Mrs. Bronislaus Prabucki of Ocala, Florida and West Seneca, New York celebrated their 60th Anniversary with a renewal of their marriage vows at a Mass in Our Lady of Springs Catholic Church, Ocala, Florida, followed by a gathering. Mr. Prabucki and Alice Marcinkowski were married May 1, 1948, in St. Luke Catholic Church, Buffalo. He is a retired supervisor of the Dewey Station for Niagara Mohawk Power Corp.; she is a retired manager for Hess-Bement Dairy, Cheektowaga. The couple has two children and five grandchildren.





## The Joy of that “EUREKA!” Moment

by Denise M. Oliansky

You know that feeling you get when you finally set eyes on a family name you thought you might never be able to track down? It is a very special feeling indeed. For me it was when I finally found the names of my great-great-grandparents.

I have been searching for information about my mother's paternal side of the family (Koralewski) on and off for five or six years. Early on, I located a wonderful entry on [www.rootsweb.com](http://www.rootsweb.com) that listed the family of my grandfather, Marcelli, including his parents (my great-grandparents Marcelli and Antonina) and his nine siblings, and the information that they came to the United States from Poznań, Poland through the port of Baltimore in 1888. I looked up the source of that entry and by email connected with a first cousin-once removed whom I never would have met otherwise, even though we both grew up in the Buffalo, NY area. That find in itself was great, and she and I have shared information ever since. However, neither of us had any information about our great-great-grandparents in Poland, or whether our family came from the city of Poznań or from somewhere in Poznań Province.

One day I came across some information online posted by a Łukasz Bielecki, in which he mentioned a family link to the Koralewski name. I emailed him, and although it turned out he is

unlikely to be related, he told me about the Poznań Project, which he had founded, and gave me the Web site URL (<http://bindweed.man.poznan.pl/posen/search.php>). It is a database of marriages which took place between 1835 and 1884 throughout the Poznań Province. Currently there are over 281,000 marriages listed, all transcribed from parish records by volunteers from around the world. New records from parishes are continually being added. I visited the database periodically during the next year or so to search for Marcelli and Antonina's marriage record, but without success.

Then, on February 28, 2007, Łukasz sent out an email newsletter updating the progress of the Poznań Project, and it reminded me to check the database once again. Finally, there were their names, Marcellus (age 28) and Antonina Polczyńska (age 20), along with the year of their marriage (1872) and the parish (Brudnia) in which they were married! I immediately emailed Łukasz with the happy news, and he told me that I was very lucky indeed since he had just loaded the information from Brudnia into the database about two hours before he sent out the newsletter! At last I knew our great-grandmother's maiden name and what parish they were from in Poland!

Another wonderful service that Łukasz offers is to locate and get copies of whatever records he

can find at the relevant archdiocese where a family's parish records are archived. Arrangements were made for him to try to find the marriage record of Marcellus and Antonina and, if possible, their birth records and any other family information he might be able to locate as well, the next time he went to the Archdiocese in Gniezno. At the time (March 2007) the fee for searches was only \$15/hour, 5 hour minimum credit.

Łukasz was finally able to make the trip to Gniezno in April, and he emailed me a treasure trove of information on April 26, 2007. THAT was the day I felt that very special feeling I mentioned earlier. The marriage record copy that he retrieved for me showed that Marcellus and Antonina were from Stanomin in the Brudnia parish and listed Marcellus's father, Tomasz Koralewski, and Antonina's father, Grzegorz Polczyński. Both mothers were listed as deceased; however, Łukasz also found Antonina's birth record (April 28, 1852), and from that I learned her mother was Ewa Ogrodowska. Ewa's death record was also retrieved, which showed she died in November 1855 at the age of 30. Just like that, I knew the names of three of my great-great grandparents! Who would have ever thought! Still unknown is the name of my paternal great-great-grandmother. There was no birth record for Marcellus in

**(EUREKA: continued on Page 10)**

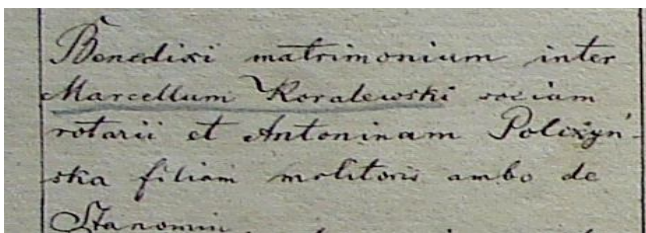
(EUREKA: continued from Page 10)

Gniezno, so I await the day that the marriage record of my great-great-grandfather, Tomasz, and his bride shows up on the Poznań Project along with the parish in which they were married. That will give me a starting point for another record search.

The Poznań Project database is a wonderful free service for those whose families came from the Poznań Province and, as I can verify, is certainly worth a visit. Check it out when you get a chance...you never know what family members you may find. If you are interested in the services provided by Łukasz Bielecki, such as record searches or as a tour guide to your family's parish in the Poznań Province, visit "Discovering Roots" at <http://www.discovering-roots.pl/> for more information.

Catholic parish in **Brudnia**, entry # 4 in 1872  
 Marcellus **Koralewski** (28)  
 Antonina **Polczynska** (20)

#### Poznań Project search results



#### Section of Koralewski Marriage Record

The picture on the right is long time member Ed Prabucki by his family tree display at the 2008 Hamburg, New York Polish Heritage Festival which was on display earlier this year between May 30 - June 1. His display is used to show and explain to anyone interested the different documents and type of information that can be obtained in searching one's family. His display has been used to teach thousands of Polish-American's in the Western New York area throughout the years.

## Researching Your Ancestors in Poland Using LDS Microfilms

By Monica Rzepka

The best way to research your ancestors' lives in Poland is to order microfilmed church records from the LDS and view them at your local Family History Center (FHC). Genealogists who live in the Buffalo area are blessed with two FHCs: the **Orchard Park** branch (4005 Baker Rd.) and the **Amherst** branch (1424 Maple Rd.). Over the years, the Orchard Park FHC has accumulated approximately 600 Poland microfilms and the Maple Rd. FHC, about 30. In March of this year, member Monica Rzepka began the process of entering these microfilms into a searchable database, so that in the future, everyone intending to order microfilms for their ancestral parishes in Poland can see if their intended films are already present at either of these two FHCs. Monica has completed about one-third of the indexing and hopes to have the searchable database finished by the end of the year for everyone to use (possibly on our Website). In the meantime, those planning to order Poland microfilms from either the Orchard Park or Maple Rd. FHCs can contact Monica to find out if the film they want is already in WNY by e-mailing her at: [BuffaloGenealogist@hotmail.com](mailto:BuffaloGenealogist@hotmail.com). Please allow 2 weeks for her thorough response. Hopefully this project will save everyone a lot of money and limit the duplicate ordering of films at these FHCs which are experiencing space constraints. \* *Note: At this time, Monica is unable to look up & copy the actual records contained on these microfilms.*



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*Editors Note: The following two articles describe databases that were compiled by Keith Kaszubik and donated to the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State this year.*

### **Black Rock Voters Registration: Buffalo, New York**

**Black Rock Voters Registration 1929** is a complete extraction transcription database (in Microsoft Access format) of all the registered voters of Polish descent in the Black Rock section of Buffalo, New York for the year 1929. Occasionally non-Polish surnames have been included for those individuals residing at an address where at least one Polish person was residing.

It is a finite database numbering 1,787 registered voters. This database includes all those found in what was then Buffalo's 21st Ward and includes a voter's surname, given name, house number, street address and the district in which they resided. The spelling of given names and surnames on the database is exactly as it appears in the original source material.

The information was extracted from a bound hardcover printed book of all registered voters in wards 21-27 of the City of Buffalo for 1929. The book was purchased at a local flea market in Orchard Park for a nominal amount of money. Although identical voter registration books covering innumerable years are available at the downtown Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, a sortable digital database of this type is much more valuable.

Numerous surnames are listed which are well known to many of us including: Banaś, Bieda, Biernat, Charłap, Cichocki, Cichoń, Fronczak, Gicewicz, Juchnowski, Klementowski, Konieczko, Kroczyński, Mancewicz (later *Manz*), Mycek, Niemiec, Niemierowicz (later *Niemer*), Peszko, Pietruszka, Płatek, Puchalski, Schunke, Zachowicz and Zastempowski.

This database gives us a unique view of Black Rock's Polonia in the year in which the Great Depression began. Too often the focus of our Buffalo Polonia is almost exclusively limited to the East Side settlement. Hopefully genealogists will find this information of use in their family tree research.

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### **Western New York Graduates Database**

On Thursday, August 14<sup>th</sup>, at 7p.m. the monthly meeting of the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State (PGSNYS) took place at the cafeteria of Villa Maria College in Cheektowaga. In attendance were both young and old ranging from their twenties to their nineties.

Member Keith Kaszubik, who is also a columnist for the Am-Pol Eagle, donated his Graduates databases to the society. It numbers 2,541 Polish graduates from parochial schools in Western New York. The database spans the years 1916 to 1970 and includes an individual's surname, given name, school attended and year of graduation from the eighth grade.

The Graduates database has been primarily compiled from lists published in parish anniversary books and includes the following classes: Our Mother of Good Counsel, Blasdell (1946); Queen of Peace, Buffalo (1970); St. Adalbert's, Buffalo (1936-1961); St. Barbara's, Lackawanna (1916); St. Casimir's, Buffalo (1938); St. Luke's, Buffalo (1966); St. Mary's, East Eden (1941, 1944, 1946, 1955, 1965 & 1969); SS. Peter & Paul, Hamburg (1944 & 1969); St. Stanislaus, Buffalo (1924-1933) and Transfiguration, Buffalo (1943 & 1968).

During the meeting treasurer Chuck Pyrak combined a digital copy of the Graduates database with existing society databases thus enabling researchers to simultaneously search and retrieve even more family tree information in an instant. Kaszubik also donated a printed hard copy of the database to be placed in the Michael Drabik Memorial Library at the downtown public library.

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## Potpourri



### ST GABRIEL'S GENEALOGY DAY

The Holy Name Society of St. Gabriel's Church is sponsoring a Genealogy Workshop, 5271 Clinton Street, Elma, NY 14059, just east of Transit Road on Clinton Street. The PGSNYS will be a part of this event as a cosponsor and part of our 20th anniversary celebration. It will be held in the Church hall, Saturday, September 13, 2008, from noon to 3 PM.

Our plan is to have several tables showcasing different aspects of genealogy. One table will display PGSNYS members personal genealogical work. Other tables will display getting started in genealogy and Census Information. The idea is to allow visitors the opportunity to learn about the different facets of genealogy.

If you are interested in helping out by bringing your genealogy for display or in any other way please send an e-mail to Pierre LaJoie at [lajoie802@msn.com](mailto:lajoie802@msn.com).

### SUGGESTIONS FOR OUR WEBSITE

I'd like to inform you that Susan Malyszka is now our new webmaster.

Our website located at [www.pgsnys.org](http://www.pgsnys.org) will be getting a new look within the next 6 months. We are asking for your ideas on what you would like to see on the website. Your suggestions will be collected, prioritized and implemented based on their feasibility and the time needed to complete your suggestion. Not all suggestions will be implemented at one time. They will be added in phases. We look forward to hearing your ideas. All ideas are welcome and invited. Suggestions may be sent to the following email address [web@pgsnys.org](mailto:web@pgsnys.org)

### SUGGESTIONS FOR LIBRARY

Now that the Dedication of our library has occurred, we have an obligation to maintain the collection. At the August 14th meeting, I announced the formation of a Library Committee headed by our librarian Denise Oliansky to develop a plan for maintaining the library. The plan will include recommendations for a budget which will not only pay for maintaining the library but also a budget for acquiring new books. I believe we need to ensure our library grows on an annual basis. I'll provide more details about the

plan in future. I encourage everyone to make suggestions for books and other genealogical reference material to acquire for our library.

Suggestions maybe sent to the following email address [library@pgsnys.org](mailto:library@pgsnys.org) or you can send a letter Attn: Librarian at the society address found on the inside front cover.



### 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.  
Clarence Center,  
New York 14032

#### 2) E-Mail scanned copies to [pagebura@aol.com](mailto:pagebura@aol.com)

(Put In Subject: PGSNYS  
Funeral Card Project)



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## PGSNYS ON THE ROAD

*(Our society was represented during the past year at the following events. As always, our databases were at the center of each show.)*

**2007 Cheektowaga Polish Festival (July 21 & 22).** During the weeks leading up to the festival, the possible closing of St. Adalbert's Basilica was one of the "hot topics" discussed around town. At the festival *St. Adalbert's Founders 1886* was unveiled as a new database and also passed out as a handout by our society, with the hope of generating more public interest in the Basilica. Both were put together by member, Monica Rzepka, in honor of her great-great-grandparents, who helped to found that parish. David Newman headed-up our table. Other volunteers who put time in over the weekend included Monica, Denise Oliansky, Daniel Kij, Ed Prabucki, Ted Smardz and Maureen Gleason.

**2007 Corpus Christi Church Dożyńki (August 25 & 26).** Our society submitted a nice advertisement for the Program Book. Volunteers included David Newman, Lynn Mycek, Daniel Kij, Ted Smardz and Monica Rzepka.

**2007 Holy Mother of the Rosary Cathedral, PNCC Dożyńki (September 8 & 9).** Again volunteers included the familiar names of Daniel Kij, Lynn Mycek, Monica Rzepka and Maureen Gleason. Maureen set up a beautiful genealogy display based on her family who were members of this church, including her uncle, who was a longtime organist.

**LDS 5th annual Genealogy Workshop at the Maple Rd. FHC (October 20, 2007).** Member Monica Rzepka presented her research outline, *Researching your Family from Buffalo, NY*.

**LDS Family History Fair (March 1, 2008).** Both David Newman and Monica Rzepka presented at this mid-year genealogical seminar given by the Mormons at their Goodell St. location near Downtown Buffalo. Together, David and Monica presented on "Researching in Poland from Buffalo, NY." The *PGSNYS Database Guide*, compiled by Monica, was distributed as a handout to all who attended.

**Cheektowaga Retiree Association (March 5, 2008).** Monica Rzepka spoke about Getting Started in Genealogy to a group of seniors headed by Judge Henry Gabryszak.

**Western New York Genealogical Society (March 15, 2008).** David Newman presented the *Researching in Poland* outline and *PGSNYS Database Guide*. Many WNYGS members at that meeting expressed difficulties they encountered researching their own Polish genealogies. An article describing the meeting appeared in the Am-Pol Eagle newspaper the following week.

**2008 Polish Heritage Festival in Hamburg (May 30 - June 1).** See page 19 in this issue for photos and description.

**Niagara Co. Genealogical Society (June 25, 2008).** Reschedule of February cancellation. Monica Rzepka had the opportunity to appear before the NCGS in Lockport, New York. She spoke on the Polish connections of Niagara County and the special challenges encountered when doing Polish genealogy. One Polish-Niagara Co. connection that the crowd enjoyed was the fact that the first person to survive a trip over Niagara Falls in a barrel was Annie Edson Taylor and her barrel was built by a Pole.

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## What does the *-czyk*, *-czak*, etc. mean in Polish surnames?

By Keith Kaszubik

The title of this article is an onomatological question which I am often asked in Polonia. The answer requires a little explaining and is far more complex than most people realize. Rather than reply to numerous people on an individual basis, it is better to utilize the medium of a newsletter reaching hundreds of people simultaneously.

I am not aware of any article or portion of any book written in English which adequately explains the suffixes *-czak*, *-czek*, *-czik*, *-czok*, *-czuk*, *-czyk* and how they are or have been formed. The general explanation given is that these suffixes are patronymic in origin and therefor denote "son of." Although the latter is one way in which these suffixes have developed, my own research into the matter has revealed that there are at least three additional. In the following paragraphs I will

explain in detail, as best as I am able to, all four instances known to me.

For the first instance I will use a common root for Polish surnames which is familiar to the majority of us. I begin with the masculine name *Paweł* which is cognate with English *Paul*. The addition of the patronymic suffix *-icz* (originally *-ic*) creates the surname *Pawelicz* or the abbreviated form *Pawlicz* both meaning "Paul's son." If we then add the suffix *-ak* this creates the known surnames *Pawelczak*, *Pawelczak* and *Pawliczak*. Adding the diminutive suffix *-ek* (denoting "little/small or junior") creates *Pawliczek*, the suffix *-uk* (generally known in eastern Poland and the Ukraine and cognate with *-ak*) creates *Pawelczuk*, *Pawelczuk* and *Pawliczuk*.

The suffix *-ok* is usually indicative of origins in the traditional region of Śląsk (Eng. Sile-

sia) in southwest Poland (cf. *Bednorz* versus *Bednarz* [from *bednarz*, "cooper"]). The suffix *-yk* is actually *-ik*, but since modern Polish orthography does not generally permit the vowel *i* to follow the digraph *cz*, the compound suffix is rendered as *-czyk*. Naturally archaic spellings with *-czik* have survived to this day and are preserved in some instances. Certainly examples are found documented in records of a genealogical nature (cf. *Kasprzik* vs. *Kasprzyk* [from *Kasper* + *ik*]).

For the second instance I will again begin with the masculine name *Paweł* + the diminutive suffix *-ek* which creates the known surname *Pawełek* or *Pawelek*. If we then add the suffix *-ak* it creates the surname *Pawelczak* or *Pawelczak*, and so on with the addition of *-ik* (*-yk*) or *-uk*.

**(Polish Surnames: continued on Page 15)**

**(Polish Surnames: continued from Page 14)**

For the third instance I begin with surnames such as *Dajcz* or *Dojcz* (probably from Polish transliterations of *Deutsch*, "German") + the suffix *-ak* thus creating the known surnames *Dajczak* and *Dojczak*. There also is *Głowacz* (from *głowacz*, "a clever person" or "someone with a big head"), *Tracz* (from *tracz*, "sawyer") and *Nowak* (from *nowak*, "newcomer") + the suffix *-ik* (*-yk*) thus creating the known surnames *Głowaczyk*, *Traczyk* and *Nowaczyk*.

For the fourth instance I begin with place names and then add the suffix *-czyk* to them in order to indicate a place of residence in masculine form (e.g., *Berlińczyk*, "a Berliner;" *Duńczyk*, "a Dane;" *Norwegczyk*, "a Norwegian;" etc.).

The Polish King Władysław III, in a crusade against the Turks, was killed in battle at Varna on the Black Sea on November 10, 1444.

Afterwards he was documented in historical sources with the additional name of *Warneńczyk*.

The absence of certain suffixes added to the root of a particular surname, such as *-uk* which is well known in the Ukraine, sometimes helps to determine where a surname originally developed, or rather perhaps where it did not develop. Take for example the very solid Polish surname of *Ratajczak* or *Ratajczyk*. But there are very few people surnamed *Ratajczuk*.

The original suffix or suffixes also may be obscured with the further addition of suffixes. It is hard, if not impossible, to determine whether the surname *Pawelkiewicz* is derived from *Pawelek*, *Pawelczak*, *Pawelczuk* or *Pawelczyk* since the suffixes all may have been abbreviated to the consonant *k* upon the addition of the compound suffix *-owicz* (or *-ewicz*) denoting "son of."

It is not always possible to determine the de-

velopment of suffixes in Polish surnames. The linguistic route of a surname is not always self evident. It is a very fortunate genealogist who is able to determine the precise origin and meaning of their surname. This is precisely why onomatology is not an exact science.

*Would you like to know what your Polish surname means? For a detailed analysis please send a check for \$25.00 per surname to Keith Kaszubik, P. O. Box 332, North Boston, NY 14110-0332.*



## YESTERDAY'S NEWS

### Amateur Historian Recalls Life in "Kaisertown" Section Served as Center for German Settlers Here in Early 1900s

*This is a replication of a news article that appeared in the Buffalo Courier Express on April 20, 1970 by reporter Anne McIlhenney Matthews. Article researched by Laurel Myszker Keough*

#### "Welcome to Kaisertown!"

It was this greeting at a meeting of a Cheektowaga police club in Ray's Grill at 2070 Clinton St. on Tuesday, March 10, that sparked interest in a community located east of Bailey Ave. and extending to the West Seneca and Cheektowaga city lines and from Buffalo Creek to the south side of Dingens St.

I showed my ignorance freely and immediately. I had never heard of Kaisertown and wanted to know where it was and why it was called that. A team of two indoctrinated me – Ray J. Wasielewski of Ray's Grill and Edwin P. Nowicki of 1873 Clinton St. which is in the heart of Kaisertown and where he has resided for 63 years.

**Nowicki** is sort of an amateur historian of the area and he is of the belief that it was so named because it was the center area for the many Germans who emigrated to Buffalo just before the turn of the century.

They had left their native land for many reasons – some to evade army service, because of economic problems, to become landowners, etc., but the predominant characteristic was their almost fanatical love of their homeland and reverence of its invincibility.

"I remember a conversation my father had with a German shopkeeper of the community

when World War I broke out," says Nowicki. "Why Mr. N., he said, "We will all soon be able to go to Germany for a nickel!" "How's that possible?," my father asked.

"**The Reply Was,**" "When der Kaiser licks England and takes Canada, we can go across at Ft. Erie for a nickel!"

Nowicki routs the suggestion made through the years that "Kaisertown" was a slang version of the Polish pronunciation of St. Kazmierza, patron saint of the early church that is now St. Casmir's Parish.

"It was never a derisive word," says Nowicki. "It was simply a recognition of the great number of people of German origin concentrated here. They were strong in praise of Kaiser Wilhelm. The Polish element was just beginning to grow here. Most of the names on the stores and taverns were German. There was John Krueger at Clinton and Weimar, a huge man with a great temper. In conversation with his suppliers, he would almost explode and threaten to tear the phone from the wall.

There were two choices of telephone service then, Frontier or Bell. Lensenhuber (I can't remember his first name) was an important grocer. Christian Heiss, our neighbor, was a building contractor, and Scherer, who looked like Santa

Claus, was the confectioner.

"Not only the trades people but the area farmers were mostly Germans. Some were big landholders like the Galleys, the Lehdes, and Schoenut families. They would drive their wagons through Center St. to the markets for hay at Clinton near Cedar, and on to the vegetable stalls of the Broadway market where they would sell their produce. On the way back they usually stopped to rest their horses at the tavern of Mr. Krzyzkowski. There was a watering trough and stalls for the horses and most enjoyed a very good luncheon prepared by Mrs. Krzyzkowski."

**Nowicki Moved** with his family to Clinton St. in 1906 when he was three years old. It was at 1865 that his mother started a notions store downstairs with the living quarters upstairs. His father was a brass finisher for the once-glorious luxury Pullman cars. The notions business grew, so Papa Nowicki quit his job and expanded the store to a larger store next store, adding dry goods and shoes. Today, (while waiting for a purchaser so that he can retire), Nowicki still operates a store "that sells most everything" at that address.

The Nowicki store was part of

**(Continued on Page 17)**



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a large frame building which featured the tavern of Krzyzykowski. It was the day of huge casks of bonded whiskey and wine and wooden kegs of beer. "The tavern keeper would draw the whiskey and wine into clear quart or pint bottles," recalled Nowicki. "Workmen, after a hard day at the Snow Steam Pump Works (now the Worthington Co.) or at Dichtler's Brick Yards would stop in for a "pinochle" or a "double pinochle." That was an ounce of whiskey and a beer chaser for five cents apiece, or a double for ten cents. Beer was five cents the pail and the kids all rushed the growler for their fathers and would steadily deny they took a sip on the way home even with the suds drying around their mouths."

**"Free Lunch"** was a feature at every drinking establishment and Nowicki and Wasielewski compared notes on the great arrays of cold cuts, cheeses, pretzels, breads, scallions and radishes, and pickled dainties that were spread out for the quaffers. Taverns started the fad for Sunday picnics, putting out huge lunches for the whole families. These were the fore-runners of the many social clubs that grew in the area as well as of the development of the many singing societies.

"Everybody knew everybody and was neighborly." Nowicki continued. "Everybody went to church on Sunday morning and then they would assemble in various homes and play cards, or sing, or toss horseshoes.

Young Ed didn't mind helping "tend the store" except when it came to selling the farmers their favorite boots that held a knee-high felt boot inside.

**"Inevitably** these farmers, after selling their vegetables, would stop at Dold's Packing House on William and Fillmore and pick up a load of manure. So when they removed their boots it was the sweet smell of the barnyard!

"Nobody went hungry because of the packing houses. At Dold's and at Kamman's Slaughterhouse at Seneca and Bailey, they gave away things they couldn't sell - like liver, pigs feet, hearts, and soup bones with plenty of meat on them!"

**He Was An** authority on Indian lore and discovered that the whole area was located on an original Indian village in the big bend of Buffalo Creek (since straightened by the WPA). He recovered many Indian artifacts which were then turned over to the Buffalo Historical Society. Cheektowaga, you know, is an Indian word meaning "Land of the Crabapples." It is well named because the whole area was filled with orchards of crabapples. Many of the deeds to our homes corroborated this, stating that they were Indian grants to the Holland Land Company.

Churches played a great part in this community, he related. The German Catholic Church was St. Bernard's at Clinton and Willet. Protestants went to

St. John's Lutheran at Baitz and Clinton.

The early Polish settlement attended a wooden structure of St. Casimir's on Weimar St. The new St. Casimir's is acclaimed the most perfect example of Byzantine architecture in America. Now the Polish invasion has largely taken over St. Bernard's as well as the large parish of Our Lady of Czestochowa.

**Other Early** churches were the Fitch Baptist Church at Fenton and Clinton, and the Hungarian Reformed Church at Pulaski and Clinton.

"The old days" are great days in the memories of the two men who exchanged quips about their first cars --- a Maxwell and a Pope-Hartford ---all with lots of brass and continually needing polishing. But their comradeship has a stronger tie than memories of Kaisertown. This is the recreated (1960) East Clinton Professional and Businessmen's Assn. of 140 men that does remarkable things for this community.

They have the biggest day of any city area at Crystal Beach -- the first Wednesday in August. Together with the Civic Sportsmen's Club they stage a great Halloween party and an Easter egg hunt. But most of all they stand out in the city in their loyalty and pride in the American flag.

Every Member joining the ECPBA receives a big and beautiful American flag on a

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pole. They had an ordinance passed so they could put a special socket in the sidewalk in front of the new member's establishment.

The flag costs us \$30," says Wasielewski." And we patrol to see that the flag is flown on every holiday and memorable occasion, and at half mast when a prominent person dies. We're flag-happy and proud to be that way."

The ECPBA also is active in having a representative at all City Council meetings and vocal in all worthwhile activities involving the community. He has sponsored all kinds of sports activities, like hockey and ice rinks in the parks and is currently obtaining new lights for night baseball and football.

**When Basil's Strand Theatre** was put up for auction several years ago, the ECPBA had a busy night of telephoning

and days of meetings. The members bought it for \$20,000 selling shares amongst themselves and have put the total cost at \$75,000 with extensive remodeling that now makes it a favorite place for big weddings, large meetings, dances and the like.

Nowicki, the treasurer, says that it is doing well and already has paid the 65 stockholders from the club, a second dividend.

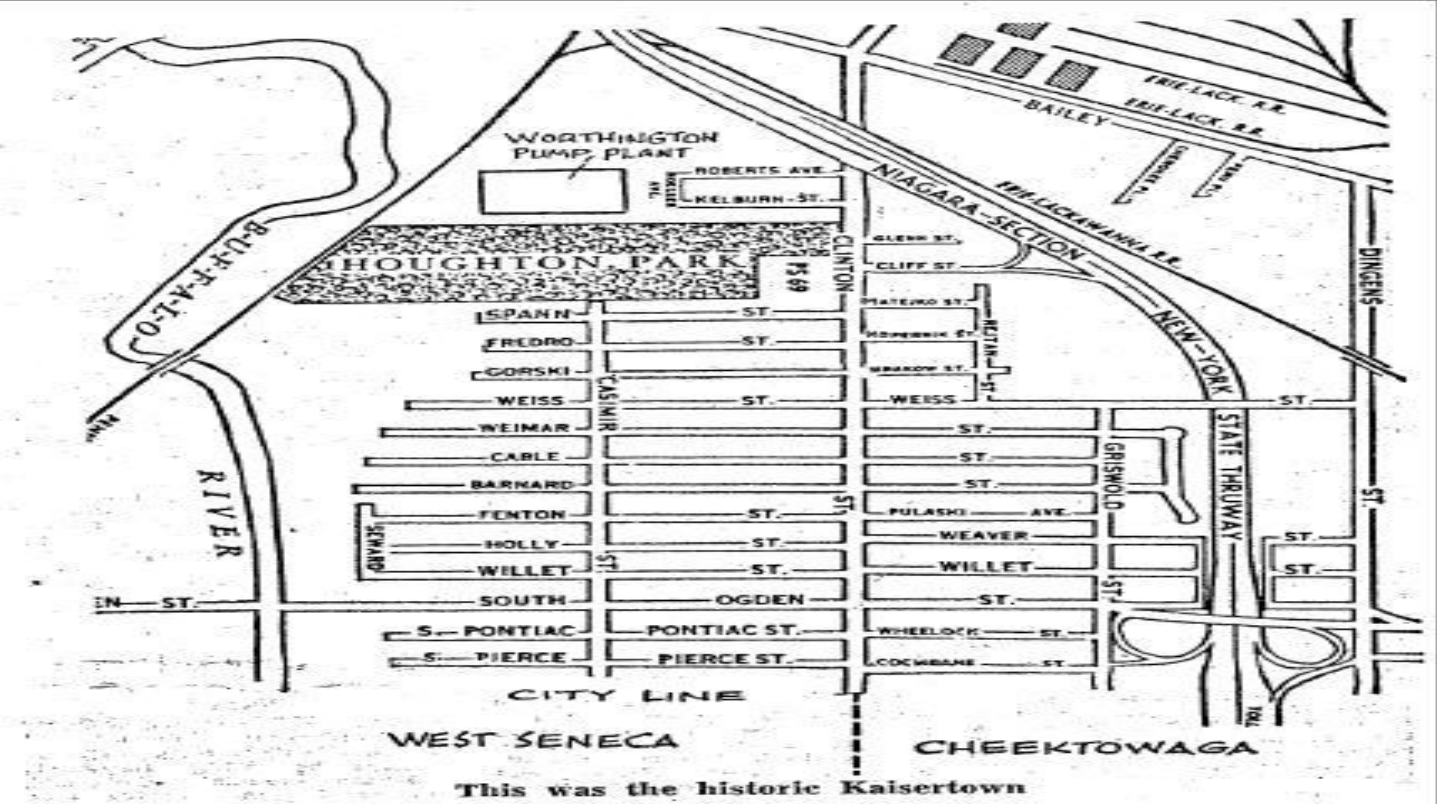
Typically, the Strand was a project for ECPBA. The members and their wives worked tirelessly at the dismantling, painting, cleaning, scrubbing, etc. And it was typical of the early era of the camaraderie of Kaisertown. Wives made sandwiches, the tavern owners supplied beer, and everybody pitched in to help.

Young Nowicki attended School 7 annex at Clinton and Weiss, up to fourth grade. It was a half mile walk to school,

back home for lunch, making it a total of two miles each day for a small boy, winter and summer. Small boys also, were usually late if the trains would be switching tracks at Bailey and Clinton because this was always a fascination for small boys.

**When Nowicki** graduated to "Main No. 7" at Clinton and Bailey, he was grateful that the farmers in winter often stopped to give rides to the school.

"It was great with the clapping of the hooves on the well frozen streets and the bells on their collars jingling. But the sleds also carted manure and when we sat down at our desks the teachers usually had some caustic remarks about "straight from the barnyard?" We had a wonderful principal, considerate but firm. He was Frederick Houghton and the area's fine park is named for him.



This was the historic Kaisertown

## PAST PGSNYS MEETINGS

*(Only special meetings are listed)*

### **August 2007**

Tour of the Maple Rd. Family History Center given by LDS staff member, Sharon Umiker. This special event was arranged by Vice President, Ted Smardz. The conference room in which we began our tour was packed- over 40 people were in attendance. "Long lost" members attended this event.

### **December 2007**

Our annual Christmas Party. Instead of having the party catered as usual, members brought their own specialty Polish dish in Potluck fashion.

### **February 2008**

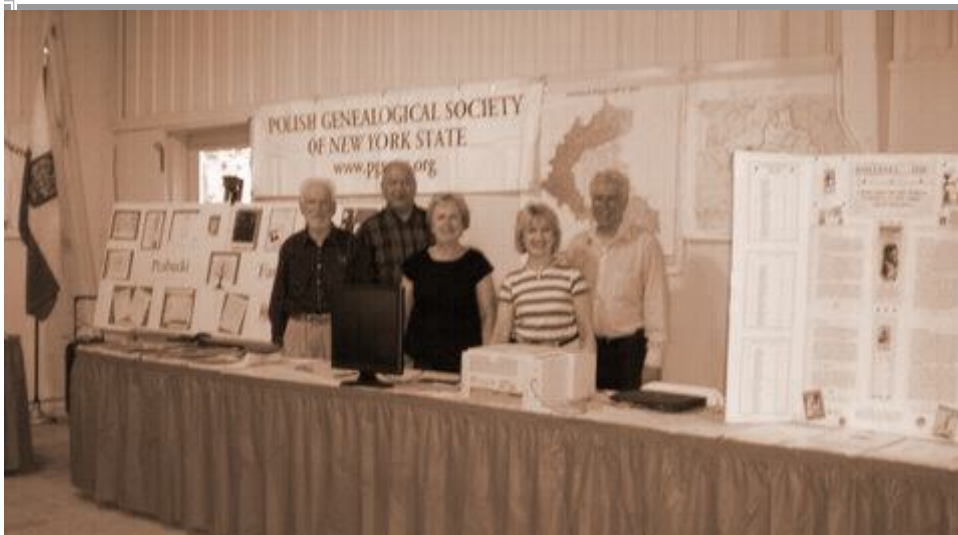
PGSNYS secretary, Dan Domino, gave a short presentation about Buffalo's Pan-American Exposition of 1901.

### **March 2008**

Gregory Witul gave a visual presentation on the art and life of local artist, Józef Mazur (1897-1970). Greg's life ambition is to research all of Buffalo Polonia's artists, especially Mazur. Last fall, Greg serendipitously orchestrated the return of the Marie Curie Medallion crafted by Mazur to the Polish Room at the University at Buffalo. For this he was awarded the 2007 Am-Pol Eagle Citizen of the Year Award in Heritage. Greg's grandmother, the late Florence Witul, was a longtime beloved member of our society and even served as secretary for many years.

### **June 2008**

Daniel Kij's interactive workshop featuring Nick Lewczyk, of Interport Travel Service, and Keith Kaszubik, Am-Pol Eagle newspaper columnist. Nick spoke about the upcoming trip to Poland. Keith spoke about Polish surnames, answered questions on general genealogy and helped locate ancestral villages. This meeting was organized as an orientation for newcomers and an opportunity to provide genealogical assistance to those planning on attending the 2008 trip to Poland.



### **2008 Hamburg Polish Heritage Festival May 30 - Jun 1**

This year's efforts were coordinated by Monica Rzepka. In photo on left are members who volunteered their time at our table. From left to right: Walter Kloc, Casey Galeza, Laurel Keough, Ruth Madar and Ed Madar. Other volunteers were Daniel Kij, Lynn Mycek, Denise Oliansky, Sherry Sojka, Joh Cyna Pierre LaJoie, Maureen Gleason and Ed Prabucki.



PGSNYS Annual July Picnic on Saturday July 12, 2008  
Facing camera from left to right:  
Joe and Pat Neuland, Ruth Madar, Laurel Keough and Cindy Kloss

**SEARCHERS NEWSLETTER**  
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