



SEARCHERS



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POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK STATE

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Preserving Our Past Since 1988

DR. FRANCIS E. FRONCZAK



“Dr. Fronczak as Remembered by My Father”

By Ed Prabucki

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
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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

Also if you are a member not receiving e-mail from the PGSNYS Mailing list, send an e-mail to cpyrak@roadrunner.com

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editor@pgsnys.org or niewczyk@verizon.net

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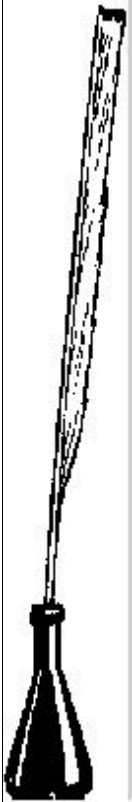
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President's Message

As 2008 comes to a close and I reflect upon our accomplishments for the past 20 years as the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State, I believe we have succeeded in making a difference in the world by helping the many who are in search of their Polish Ancestors.

It is without the support of our membership and community that make this success possible.

I thank everyone for their selfless contributions and hope that you will continue on with our journey in providing genealogical assistance and resources to others. Only working together can we be successful.

We also thank member Sherry Sojka for her recent donation of \$20 to the PGSNYS.

Sincerely, Dave Newman

Witamy

A warm welcome to the following members who have recently joined the PGSNYS

Margaret Kolas, West Falls, NY
 Phillis Rheinstein, Depew, NY
 Loraine Proctor, Old Lyme, CT
 Susan Wronty, Lancaster, NY
 Chet Koszelak, Clarence, NY
 Mark Saunders, Tonawanda, NY
 James D. Coughlin, Dunkirk, NY
 Denise Pisanczyn, West Seneca, NY
 Tess Sniatecki, Orchard Park, NY
 William Robins, Bryn Maur, PA
 Carol D. Burchou, Largo, FL

Signs You've Been Spending Way Too Much Time Researching Your Polish Genealogy

Found on the Poznan Project Website at
<http://bindweed.man.poznan.pl/posen/search.php>

- You would really, Really, REALLY like to explain to the old record keeping priests how important it is to keep neat and accurate records. Preferably over some sort of cliff.
- You're seriously considering naming your next child 'Bonaventuras Severinus Florianus'.
- Suddenly you're not so worried about the six year age difference between your collegiate daughter and her new boyfriend.
- You live in Southern California, and your Russian is better than your Spanish.
- You started to write your last three grocery lists in Latin.
- You're beginning to wish your ancestors were all raging alcoholics, rather than drinking so frequently from the town water supply.
- Your list of stuff to take with you if you ever get to go back in time and meet your ancestors now includes your family history notebook, your new digital camera, water purification tablets, and a crate of medicated shampoo.
- You've found 22 different spellings for your eight letter surname so far – and this is only your third film.
- Your kids are sick of pierogi. And so is your dog.
- You feel like wringing the neck of that British researcher at your local Family History Center every time he boasts to someone 'How much harder' it was for him to do his research 'all those years ago', because instead of computers and microfiche, he had to use microfilm and look through 'Every Single Name.'!
- Not to mention he can trace his illiterate peasant farmer ancestors back to the Magna Carta...
- You can describe your ancestors in three different foreign languages, but can't hold a conversation in one.
- Going back over your notes, you and your partner suddenly realise that you're the first unmarried parents in seven generations of each of your direct lines. Oops....
- Although you've now got 250 years' worth of records for your great-grandmother's maiden name, you still can't pronounce it.
- Your screensaver is a photo of a used car lot in downtown Bydgoszcz, because 180 years ago, that's where your ancestors lived.

Dr. Fronczak as Remembered by My Father

by Ed Prabucki

My father periodically proudly discussed Dr. Frances Fronczak as a man of proud and prodigious energy determined to foresee a Poland free from the yoke of Russia and Germany in his lectures during the initial days of World War I.

As the violent War continued in 1915 and 1916, the Russians retreated to their pre-1770 borders against the Austrian and German Army's endless offensives on the Eastern Front. Soon after, Dr. Fronczak came on the scene at the many emotional lectures at Dom Polski in Buffalo, N.Y. There, he made an immediate impact with clarity and force to the male audience that Poland was in need of a volunteer Army. This Army needed to physically force out the remnants of the Russian Czar and Kaiser ministers that affected every facet of Polish Culture and created an atmosphere of animosity towards them for approximately 120 years.

Dr. Fronczak also came on the scene at lectures at the Polish Falcons and in his infallible oratory continued to convince the young males to volunteer for Poland. These volunteers later were known as the Polish Blue Army headed by General Jozef Haller. It was to give Poland the hope and inspiration that Poland's secretive Army so desperately needed.

Dr. Fronczak's lectures, needless

to say, were very effective as my father and his cousins in the audience were convinced to volunteer. Father failed his physical but his cousins, Franciszek Prabucki and A. Borkowski, passed it and plans were made to have the new volunteers train in Niagara-on-the-Lake in Ontario, Canada. It is believed, I quote my father, that in turn, Franciszek Prabucki convinced his cousin Wladyslaw to be in the original group of volunteers.

Prior to their training they attended a Latin Mass at Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Church with Dr. Fronczak present at the Mass. Afterwards many blessings were offered by the Franciscan Fathers.

Father added subtly in later conversations that Franciszek, fought valiantly and was promoted to

Corporal – so I felt that whatever or wherever the assignments he received, he did it as a proud soldier as his love for Poland was profound and infinite. When Franciszek's brief life ultimately ended in the Polish-Russian War of 1920, it left my father extremely saddened as their contacts and correspondence ended at that time.

Franciszek's brief life, I am sure was the envy of many among our family's young, as my brothers, my sons, my daughter, my cousins, and now my grandson, Peter, have enlisted in the Military to serve their Country.

Franciszek, to the present day is our role model; thus my Family Line is standing proud.



St. Gabrielle's Church Genealogy Day

[Walter Kloc helps someone find where their ancestral family village is located on the present day Polish Map during the Saint Gabrielle's Church Genealogy Day on September 13, 2008]



DR. FRANCIS E. FRONCZAK

1874 – 1955

Dr. Francis Fronczak was a respected and beloved community leader in Buffalo, New York. This son of Polish immigrants was born on Buffalo's eastside in the heart of her Polonia. A graduate of Canisius College, he became a lawyer and later, the first Polish medical doctor that graduated from the University of Buffalo Medical School.

As a young man in his mid-twenties, his leadership was evident as he encouraged Buffalo's Poles to financially support the Pan-American Exposition by purchasing shares of its stock and also chaired the national convention of the Alliance of Polish Singers held in Buffalo in 1901.

As a result of their work related to the restoration of Poland as a free and independent country, he became a friend of Ignacy Jan Paderewski. Paderewski, putting his musical career on hold, crusaded in America encouraging volunteers for General Haller's "Blue Army". In June of 1917 the Rev. Cezary Krzyzan along with Dr. Fronczak formed the Polish-American Citizens Committee in Buffalo. This committee supported by many local Polish organizations provided housing, clothing, food, and transportation to the hundreds of volunteers traveling through Buffalo to the military training camp at Niagara-on-the-Lake in Canada.

During World War I, Dr. Fronczak together with Paderewski guided the Polish American Organization for the relief of Polish victims of the war.

In addition to his private medical practice, he held the position of Commissioner of Public Health for the City of Buffalo from 1917 to 1946. His devotion and service to the citizens of Buffalo's Polonia was beyond measure.

PGSNYS ON THE ROAD

Cheektowaga Polish Festival (July 19 & 20, 2008)

Every year since the festival began the PGSNYS has had a booth at this event. This years contributors: Ed Prabucki, Ted Smardz, Walter Kloc and Maureen Gleason.

Corpus Christi Dożynki Harvest Festival (August 23rd 2008)

Thanks to Dan Kij for representing us at this event.

Polish National Catholic Church Dożynki Harvest Festival (September 21, 2008)

The PGSNYS was represented at this event by David Newman, Lynn Mycek, Maureen Gleason and Dan Kij.

St Gabrielle's Church Genealogy Day (September 13, 2008)

Organized by Pierre La Joie, this event was sponsored by the Holy Name Society of St. Gabrielle's Church in Elma, New York. The following members made this event a success: Maureen Gleason, Pat Neuland, Ed Prabucki, Pierre La Joie, David Newman, Dan Kij, Ted Smardz, Walter Kloc, Rita Hider and Laurel Keough, Denise Oliansky and Cindy Kloss. At this event, wireless Internet access was made possible thanks to Chuck Pyrak.

Family History Center Seminar (October 2008)

Monica Rzepka gave a presentation at the Annual October Genealogical Seminar at the Family History Center.

St Hyacinth's Youth Group Genealogy Day (November 1st, 2008)

Members Denise Oliansky, David Newman, Ted Smardz and Maureen Gleason took a small trip to St Hyacinths Church in Dunkirk to give a presentation to the parish youth group. Future plans are to revisit the Church next year in Spring 2009 to present in front of the congregation.

Newspaper Obituaries are disappearing!

by Melanie Walters

Anyone involved in genealogy research or anyone who reads obituaries has surely noticed that the newspaper obituaries sections are getting smaller and smaller every year. It's been going on for at least a decade and it is only getting worse.

Why should you care about disappearing obituaries?

People rely on the Obituaries section of the newspaper to find out about the people in their communities, to learn about their ancestry and to keep up to date with the passing of friends and family. Obituaries are a valuable resource for professional and amateur genealogists because they give so many clues about the deceased. Obituaries contain information about births, deaths, and associations, surviving family, educations and accomplishments of the deceased.

Newspapers are publishing fewer and fewer obituaries.

Public figures, celebrities and other people that the newspaper deems newsworthy get a free obituary in a prominent location in the newspaper, but people without that status must pay dearly. The reason for this is simply greed. Many of the larger newspapers are charging huge fees to publish even a short obituary. The families of the deceased are paying \$100.00 or more for an obituary that only contains the person's date of death and the funeral date, time and location. This cost makes people less inclined to publish their families' obituaries and if they do publish them, they publish only the minimum amount of information. Many people are opting out of submitting an obituary to larger newspapers.

What can you do about disappearing obituaries?

So many people are lost and don't know where to find obituaries without paying a fee or where to publish obituaries without paying. But rest assured that many small towns and larger cities with privately owned newspapers, still have reasonable rates or free obituaries submissions.

If you've recently lost someone and want to submit an obituary call your local or community paper first and see what their obituary policies are. You'll find a list of newspapers where you can publish free obituaries online at ObituariesHelp.org.

If your interests are in reading the obituaries rather than

submitting one, visit the Newspaper Obituaries section at ObituariesHelp.org. Here you'll find a list of every newspaper that does not charge you to read the obituaries and many of them have archived obituaries you can access for free too.

Questionable journalistic integrity

Charging for obituaries is essentially charging to report an event in the community. These newspapers have questionable journalistic integrity if they continue to charge an exorbitant fee for news, the news of someone's death. Often, the handling of obituaries is left to the classified ads department of the newspaper, as if there is something for sale.

A person's passing is not a commodity for sale like some classified ad. A person's passing is an important event in the community and in the lives of those who were friends, family or had any contact with the deceased. Newspapers have been responsibly reporting the deaths of community members for centuries longer than any of us have been alive. But the charges that apply to obituaries now make it very difficult for anyone to publish anything more than a line or two about loved ones. The amount of information is reduced and in some cases it eliminates a public record of the death.

It saddens me to think that future generations will not be able to locate information about their ancestors simply because it was too expensive. Future generations of historians, genealogists and family researchers will have an even harder time piecing together clues to form the big picture of a family's ancestral story.

About the Author:

Melanie Walters is a writer and editor for <http://www.obituarieshelp.org/> the complete online resource for obituaries, genealogy, sympathy and funeral help. Find newspaper obituaries listings; research your ancestry, genealogy and family tree. Plan funerals and write sympathy and condolence messages using free samples and guides.

[Editor's Note: Permission was granted by the author Melanie Walters to reprint her article in the Searchers so long as the article was reprinted without modification. Her article and other genealogical articles can be found on <http://www.goarticles.com>]

POINT and CLICK!

Laurel Keough presents ideas and links for web research

While browsing other Polish Genealogical Society web sites, I noticed that the Polish Genealogical Society of Connecticut and the Northeast has recently posted a database of selected births, marriages, and deaths from Detroit, Michigan. Since the Detroit area was one of the oldest Polish settlements in the United States, it is reasonable to conclude that many of our PGSNYS members have family connections to the Detroit area. Here are a few links that may lead you to your Detroit relatives.

Polish Research in Michigan

PGSCTNE-Detroit Area Vital Records Index

<http://www.pgsctne.org>

From the PGSCTNE main page click on *Databases* and then on *Detroit Area Vital Records Indexes*. The data in this collection is taken from various secondary sources including newspapers, parish bulletins, and parish histories. The web site gives a detailed explanation of how the index was compiled and stresses that the data is not complete.

At the bottom of the main page you may link into the birth, marriage, or death index. Each year will have a series of letters and you can click on the letter of your chosen surname. The approximate years covered in the three indexes are 1910 to 1924. This is a work in progress with a promise that the 1908-1909 and 1925-1940 data is coming soon.

Family Search Record Search – Pilot Site

<http://www.familysearch.org>

As part of the ongoing indexing project the LDS Church has undertaken; this pilot site is still under development. On the home page under *What's New* click on *See new prototype . . .* Next screen, click on map of North America – this will take you to the U.S. Collections: scroll down to **Michigan Births** 1867 – 1902, **Michigan Deaths** 1867 – 1897, and **Michigan Marriages** 1868 – 1925. As with many very early records, these records are not complete. The death records for these years are thought to be 50% complete. In 1897, a new state law finally required a death certificate be issued. The good news is if you find your family in these records, you can view and print the actual document. However, even with a fast Internet connection, it still takes several minutes to download and the image returned is very small. You can then use the zoom feature to magnify the size and use the thumbnail view window at the lower right of the screen to navigate around the document.

Polish Genealogical Society of America – Jubilee Book Index

<http://www.familysearch.org><http://www.pgsa.org/kostka.php>

The site includes many parish Jubilee Books for Detroit and also parish Jubilee Books for Buffalo and the surrounding area. You may search the entire database by inputting the surname of your choice.

Now go and see if you can find some of your Detroit cousins!

An Interesting Weather Resource

by Denise M. Oliansky

For those researchers who, like me, are truly obsessive about finding any sort of detail about their ancestors, including specifics about immigration to the USA, I came across an interesting resource while Googling the name of the ship (S.S. Hapsburg) which brought my paternal great-grandmother from Bremen, Germany to the port of New York in 1884. It seems the S.S. Hapsburg was one of the ships which served as a reporter to the American Meteorological Society (AMS), publisher of the *Monthly Weather Review* which documents various meteorological phenomena, including the occurrence of North Atlantic storms. Publication began in 1873 and continues today. For each month, there is a daily report from various ships of the weather conditions on the Atlantic. As it turns out, the S.S. Hapsburg reported heavy gales on December 1st and 4th, 1884, and since my great-grandmother arrived at the port of New York on December 8th, I know that she had to endure some harsh weather on her voyage.

My curiosity piqued, I looked up the *Monthly Weather Review* for August, 1888, to find out if there were reports from the S.S. Hermann, which brought my maternal great-grandmother and her six children, including my grandfather, from Bremen to Baltimore. While the S.S. Hermann was not one of the reporting ships, I was still able to ascertain from the report that during August, 1888 "...the general character of the weather over the north Atlantic was seasonable, and while the almost continued presence of cyclonic areas over the ocean north of the fiftieth parallel contributed to frequent barometric fluctuations and shifts of mind along the trans-Atlantic routes, the depressions seldom occasioned disturbances of marked energy." In other words, their voyage was on much smoother seas.

There is a caveat to the usefulness of the online version of the *Monthly Weather Review*. The information provided consists of only snippets of each report. For example, the report about North Atlantic storms in August 1888 only lists information for the dates of August 1st through the 8th. However, complete issues of the *Monthly Weather Review* from 1872 to 2002 are available at the Buffalo and Erie County Central Library for onsite use. The *Review* also covers the weather phenomenon throughout the USA each year, useful to anyone interested in how their ancestors fared weather-wise after they settled in the US. You can click on the annual volumes of the *Monthly Weather Review* at:

<http://ams.allenpress.com/perlserv/?request=get-archive&issn=1520-0493>

The following descriptions refer to the depressions charted:
1.—At the close of November a depression occupied the ocean north of the fiftieth parallel and west of the fortieth meridian, causing moderate sw. gales over the Banks. It moved slowly eastward during December 1st and 2d, the barometer falling to 29.2 (741.7) on the fiftieth parallel during those dates. On the 1st the s. s. "Habsburg," F. Pfeiffer, commanding, had a heavy ssw. to w. gale in N. 48° 42', W. 40° 06', and the s. s. "Saint Laurent," M. de Joussein, commanding, came under the influence of the disturbance on the 2d. The last-mentioned

Example from the *Monthly Weather Review* of the North Atlantic conditions reported by the S.S. Hapsburg on December 1, 1884.

Where is Dad?

by Rita Hider

After living in Colorado for 10 years my husband, Art, and I decided to come back to Buffalo to be near family. In the moving process, pulling up roots, we discussed where we would be preferred to be buried. Art did not have life insurance and wanted cremation for himself. He hated all the fuss and high costs involved in the more traditional funerals. On the other hand I preferred the traditional things like a wake because it provides a last chance to see a loved one and say "Good-bye". I also did not like the idea of scattering his ashes and preferred having a place to 'visit' him in a peaceful cemetery. We compromised on this by agreeing to a traditional wake and funeral followed by cremation. Also, our remains would be buried rather than scattered in the wind! A burial spot would be needed. We asked my Mom if, when the time came, our ashes could be buried in the same plot with her and my father. She said that would be great!

Two years later my mom passed away. My husband followed two years after her. As he wished we had his body cremated. We were afraid that the cemetery would not allow us to bury his urn in the same plot with my parents so we hatched a plan. On Father's Day my children and I went together to do some 'planting' around my parents' headstone and happened to plant the urn there too, about a foot under the grass. With a few

winks, smiles and tears intermingled, we left feeling good about this arrangement. There was one sticking point though: we could not put Art's name on the headstone. You see, if the cemetery did not know he was 'buried' there they certainly wouldn't understand having his name added to the headstone! That had not bothered Art when these arrangements were decided on but it did bother our children.

Nineteen years later this still bothered them. They would say, "Mom, you do genealogy and know how important it is to have a marker." They were right, of course, but no solution would come to my mind. Then about two weeks ago at 2 in the morning something woke me up and said, "Why not get Art his own grave or crematory niche." I have no idea why I did not think of this before! I got so excited I could not sleep the rest of the night. First I had to be sure I could find the urn and dig it up!

The next day I was taking my ten year old granddaughter for her birthday gift and we would be near the cemetery. So I asked her if she would like to go to the cemetery and get grandpa. I told her it was pretty there, like a park, with lots of trees. She looked kind of hesitant and finally let on that she thought we were going to dig up a whole body. After chuckling I explained it was his ashes in a small tin box and then she agreed to go. Armed with a small shovel

we started to dig. I thought I had a good idea just where we had buried him but we dug and dug and I was getting nervous that we would not find him. Finally after going down at least a foot and half we saw some metal and dug harder. After about 45 minutes we had the urn! It did not look too bad for 19 years underground! Now I could approach the cemetery office.

At the office the clerk told us that we could choose either a crematory niche or there were still three plots available. One plot was just 13 rows from where my parents and grandmother were buried. I liked that idea of being near them and wanted that plot. I told the clerk that I would think it over, discuss it with my children and come back next week. "What if someone comes in and wants this plot?" I asked. She replied, "First come. First serve. But we have not sold a plot in this cemetery in over a year." "Oh! Good!" I thought.

You can imagine how surprised my children were to learn about what I had been up to that week. We discussed the options and they liked this plan to give dad his own plot and grave-stone. My daughter and I went back to the cemetery the following Thursday and, you guessed it, the plot had been sold. Not just that plot but the other 2 plots as

(Dad: continued on Page 10)

(Dad: continued from Page 9)

well! I could not believe it!

I was crushed and even said, "You told me you hadn't sold a plot in over a year. How did this happen?" With a bewildered shake of her head she replied, "I went on vacation and when I came back the plots had been sold." My mind was whirling with thoughts and emotions but I finally thought to ask if there was any other plot we could buy instead. Imagine our further surprise when the clerk checked and found one other plot that she had overlooked previously. This plot turned out to be exactly behind where my parents Agnes and Vincent Mazurczyk were buried. We were stunned! This would be even more perfect! After all this time, nineteen years, the only plot in the cemetery was a spot right there behind my parents! Who'd have imagined it? I asked why she didn't tell me about this before. She stated there was a blank in her book as to the type of monument allowed on the plot so she ignored it. Needless to say we bought the plot immediately then proceeded to order a nice gravestone. A few weeks later with my children all around and my parish priest we had Art's remains buried in his own place. It was a lovely little ceremony and a great way and place to remember him.

This was quite a journey for our family and we feel that a higher power was guiding us to do this at this moment in time and just in the nick of time, in a way. Now we all know WHERE DAD IS and any future generations will be able to find him too!



[Old Saint Adalberts Cemetery: Agnes and Vincent Mazurczyk, to the right and one row back is where Aurthur Hider ashes are now interred]



After 20 year, the final resting place of Arthur Hider ashes.

SEARCHERS INFORMATION QUERIES

Delphine (Tatko) Burgio
40 Hickory Hill Road
Williamsville, Erie County, New York 14221
E-Mail: jondel40@aol.com

Seeking Information on: Stanley Dorezewski

Born on: 6 May 1886

Place: Rumunki Borec—Gestypial Poland

Resided (where): 30 LaForce Place, Buffalo, NY

Died on: 29 June 1965 in Buffalo, NY

Marriage: 29 Sept 1904 **Place:** Badkowa, Poland

Spouse: Maryanna Cholewinska

Other information known: Would have arrived in the US either 1905 or 1906. His wife and 15 month old daughter arrived on 13 Nov 1906 Ellis Island going to husband and father in Portland, Maine.

Information Desired: His arrival in the US. Name of Ship and Date.

Don & Barbara Golibersuch
118 Sunnyside Dr.
W. Seneca, N. Y. 14224
GOLIBERS3159@roadrunner.com

Seeking Information On: John Kostorowski

Born: about 1884

Place: Michumpol ? Russia

Resided: Buffalo, Rochester, Lyndon, Franklinville, & Cherry Creek

Died: Unknown date or place

Marriage: Sept. 30, 1916

Place: Perry, N.Y.

Spouse: Aniela Post Piontkowska

Other Information Known: He was a charcoal maker and moved around all of New York State. He lived in Cherry Creek in the early 1930's and then left his family.

Information Desired: Any additional information, particularly date and place of death.

THE ORGANIST and the OPLATEK

by Maureen E. Gleason

In early Polonia (before the arrival of the religious sisters) the parish organist functioned not only as a musician, but also that of teacher in the parish school. Being in charge of all liturgical music in the parish, the organist was required to know both Latin, Polish, and later, English. Under his direction the parish choir (or choirs) trained and performed. The members of the choir usually sang in four voice sections at the "Suma" or High Mass. The organist attended funerals with the priest, played for marriages and, on occasion, baptismal ceremonies. He played at all church functions and services such as 40 Hour Devotions, Nieszpory, Lenten Górzkie Zale, and May Devotions and led the choir for Corpus Christi processions. The parish choir was usually responsible for the distribution of the Christmas wafer or opłatek, for which donations were accepted. These were used for purchasing musical scores and hymnals.

Before the age of radio and television, plays and other dramatic works were often staged by parish groups, usually directed by the organist. The many singing societies in Polonia calling upon them to serve as musical directors helped to supplement the organist's

income. Some were orchestra leaders whose bands played for weddings, dances and other social affairs. In the 1920's, the Western New York Polish organists had organized their society with John Nadolny serving as president for several years. They also had an all organists' choir, but not much is known about this activity.

A listing of over 140 organists who worked in the parishes of Western New York was compiled by PGSNYS founder Michael Drabik from parish anniversary albums, as well as from Christmas and Easter schedules that were published in the Buffalo, N.Y. Dziennik dla Wszystkich [Polish Everybody's Daily] newspaper. For the most part, the position of organist was a male dominated job, but we do see some females listed in this database, especially in smaller and rural parishes. The religious sisters also filled this position in some cases on a part-time or temporary basis. This listing is available to read at the Michael Drabik Memorial Library of the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State (PGSNYS) at the Grosvenor Room. Two selected notable organists are discussed below:

**Professor Francis J.
Angierski**

To the ranks of those who brought honor to our Polonia, and whose artistic talents attracted not only the parishioners' attention, but also that of others outside of Polonia at one time, belonged to Professor Francis J. Angierski, a long-term organist and director of several choirs at the Holy Mother of the Rosary Cathedral parish.

Francis was born September 23, 1887 in Wagrowiec in the Poznań area. His parents, Martin and Marianna née Beyrn resided in the village of Połajewo in the district of Oborniki. The then young Francis Angierski's ambition, after completing elementary school, was to become an organist. At the age of 16 he began studies of organ playing with organist Mr. M. Marcinkowski. Later, he took lessons with organist Mr. Gregory Sauer in Bydgoszcz and Trzemeszno. After two years of study, he pursued a course at the Gniezno Cathedral with Mr. W. Grzegorzewski, where he studied music theory for six months. After passing an examination in Gniezno, he took a position in Połajewo, however, since this was in the Poznań Diocese, Mr. Angierski had to pass a second examination in Poznań. There he met Rev. Zawadzki, who was from Niewieścina near Chełmno

on the Wisła, who deeply desired that Mr. Angierski take a different job. However, this was in East Prussia, in the Pelplin Diocese, and since Mr. Angierski felt attracted to this opportunity to play a larger organ, he didn't waste his energies and abilities, and devoted himself with great love for his profession, so that when he took the third examination at the Pelplin Cathedral, he attained the highest mark, with distinction.

At the invitation of his maternal uncle who lived in America, he left for the United States of America and came to Buffalo at the age of 23. He emigrated from Bremen, Germany aboard the Kronprinzessin (Crown Princess) Cecillie and arrived in New York City via Ellis Island on July 18, 1911. He took his first position as an organist at St. Hyacinth's parish in Lackawanna. Soon after, at the recommendation of Rev. Constantine Śliżewski, vicar of St. Hyacinth's, he took a position at the oldest Polish parish in Buffalo, at St. Stanislaus B.M. Church, and from there he transferred to St. Valentine's parish, where he fulfilled the position of organist for a short period of time.

On October 15, 1911 he took the position as organist at Holy Mother of the Rosary Polish National Cathedral. Here at this parish, he engaged his full energies in his work owing to many influences, connections, and his esteem amongst the parishioners. His dili-

gence in fulfilling obligations, indefatigable work, and thoughtfulness in many instances, accomplished the rest. Professor Angierski devoted every free moment and great talent to matters of the theater and was not indifferent to offering other communities his services. As an energetic and active individual, he did not know how to be selfish and because of his love of matters concerning his native land, that kindled in his family home.

Francis, at the age of 26, married 19 year-old Miss Stanisława (Estelle) Dziarnowska, on August 24, 1914, the ceremony being performed by Fr. Radziszewski in the bride's parish at St. Adalbert's Church, witnessed by Casimir Przybylski and Marianna Brozi. Estelle, was born at her parents' 161 Rother Avenue home in east Buffalo, N.Y., was one of nine children of Jacob and Michalina née Woźniak who lived in the villages of Ściborze and Węgierce, respectively, in the Inowrocław district of Poland. Her parents, along with a maternal Uncle Bartholomew Woźniak and his family, emigrated from Bremen, Germany (Poland) on January 11, 1891. During their voyage on the steamship Stuttgart, Michalina gave birth to her son Joseph on January 14th. Disembarking from Castle Garden on January 24th, the family immediately traveled by railroad to Buffalo, New York. Their baby Joseph, was baptized the very next day,

January 25th, at St. Adalbert's Church. Another of Estelle's maternal uncles, Lawrence and his family, immigrated shortly after in May 1891. (Family ancestral research records show Estelle's maternal grandparents, Jacob Woźniak & Barbara née Łuczak lived in the village of Barcin and her paternal grandparents, Andrew Dziarnowski & Frances née Czyzniak lived in the village of Jaksice.)

As newlyweds, Francis & Estelle (Stella) resided as renters at her eastside Rother Ave. home, then moving to 240 Woltz Ave. Francis became naturalized as an American citizen on September 7, 1921. Later, they purchased a home and lived at 47 Sprenger Avenue and raised two daughters, Eugena and Irene. Eugena (Jean) married Henry Dombrowski and relocated to Reseda California, having one child, Sandi. Irene married Joseph Walkowiak ("Jimmy Walker") and he owned and operated Jimmies Service Station at the corner of Genesee St. & Sprenger Ave. for many years. They raised three children, Ronald, Diane and Beverly. Their father, Joseph, was a high-ranking Mason and very involved in scouting with his son, both belonging to Boy Scout Troop #36 chartered by HMRC. Francis and Estelle's family grew to 7 great and 3 great-great grandchildren.

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The inter-related members of the Dziarnowski, Walkowiak, Gliszczynski, Wozniak, Majewski, Zakowski and Pech families enjoyed visiting the Angierski's home near Schiller Park and listening to Francis playing his piano in the parlor, while smoking a cigar and always humming a tune.

In 1936, Professor Angierski celebrated the 25th anniversary of his work as organist at Holy Mother of the Rosary parish, and at the time the parish and parish choir paid tribute to the Honoree with a magnificent banquet, which garnered great legions of parishioners and friends. He was honored as a person of impeccable character about the church, who rehearsed four choirs, and in addition he instructed children at the school, serving as teacher of the Polish language in the elementary grades. He also commuted between the parishes of the Polish National Catholic Church (PNC) and prepared choirs for a joint concert. In a word, there was no important matter for the good of the parish and community, in which Professor Angierski would not engage in. He was a composer of a great number of songs and cantatas. He translated several Latin Masses into the Polish language, and he, himself, wrote out the orchestral musical notations. He composed many hymns that are in the new English Hymnal of the PNC. He prepared the youth and adults for numerous stage presentations and also contributed efforts and time in interests of the PUA. The usual "other job" of all organists was, of course, the baking of the opłatek - the traditional ceremonial wafer - used for the Polish Christmas Eve dinner. Francis would bake the wafers using a very large and heavy press in the sun porch of his home. Professor Angierski's wafer press/iron is now in the possession of Bishop Matthew Kubik at Holy Trinity PNC in Lackawanna and it is still being used today. It should be added that for the Golden Jubilee celebration in 1945 of the founding of the parish, Francis' Mass was sung, as well as his own compositions, at the Jubilee concert on Sunday, November 18th.

On October 14th, 1961, close to 700

persons crowded into the school auditorium of the Holy Mother of the Rosary Cathedral to honor Francis Angierski's 50 years as organist and choirmaster, then the age of 74. The lengthy Buffalo Evening News article along with a photo of the "Golden Jubilee of Professor Angierski" described the anniversary testimonial dinner, reception, and dance in full detail. The varied celebration program presented a narration by Mr. Stephen A. Kuberka revealing the five stages in the Professor's work, augmented with a tape recording of choir voices and chimes played by Bishop Thaddeus Peplowski. A tribute was then paid by Bishop Zielinski. Greetings and presentations were offered by Frank Machinski. A scroll of honor was presented by Joseph Borczynski. Special guests were the 45 members of the famous "Polish Bard" United Choirs of Pittsburgh District, PNC, directed by Preprocessor Donald Mushalko who sang after the dinner. The combined choirs of the church sponsored the joyous affair. The following day, the Bard Choir sang three Sunday masses, with Mr. Thomas Caruso at the organ.

Jubilarian Professor Angierski likewise gained for himself the reputation of an upright citizen, and the respect that he enjoyed, which he so rightfully deserved. He left a legacy that will be ageless for all organists and singers. (Nelson Koeppel has been the current organist of the parish for over a decade.)

Professor Angierski retired after 52 years of service as the organist and choirmaster of the Cathedral in 1963. He continued his interest in the Cathedral ministry and returned to his place at the organ when the need arose. He never missed a service or an assignment that he was scheduled to play. He distinguished himself as a musician, composer of church music and producer of many theatrical productions. He remained president, since its founding in 1935, of the United Choirs of the Buffalo District, as well as the general director. He was also the founder and a member of the St. Cecelia Singing Society, golden age member of the Young Men's Society of Resurrection and the Cathedral Men's singing society. Moreover, he was a member of Thaddeus Rejtan Society, Group 279 Polish National Alliance and Branch 85 of the Polish Union of America. For many years he was on the Music Commission of the PNC.

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What does the *-owiak* 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 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 compound suffix *-owiak* (*-ewiak*) and how it has developed in Polish surnames. Therefore I will present my hypotheses here.

I am aware of at least four instances in which the compound suffix *-owiak* has developed. This includes only one which is legitimate and three amalgamations of which one is vacillatory. I will discuss them all in detail.

For the first instance we begin with surnames which have developed almost exclusively from masculine names. Generally those surnames with the legitimate compound suffix *-owiak* have their origins here.

Take for example the surname *Rochowiak* which is very likely derived from the masculine name *Roch* (Latin *Rochus*) + the compound suffix *-owiak* which is comprised of the nominative plural (*Rochowie*) + the suffix *-ak* added simultaneously. In other words, if a man named *Stach* was married, *Stachowie* could be indicative of him and his wife, his family collectively, or all the male members of his family. With the addition of the suffix *-ak* the personal name *Stachowiak* could soon become a hereditary surname. As a matter of clarification the name *Stach* is a short form, nickname or diminutive of *Stanisław* and/or a

name element from *Eustachy*. Naturally these types of surnames are polygenetic since they developed in numerous places over an extended period of time.

For the second instance we begin with toponyms such as the cities of *Kraków* (Eng. Cracow) and *Warszawa* (Warsaw), and the region of *Kociewie* in northern Poland + the suffix *-ak* denoting a place of residence for a male inhabitant. This creates the surnames and/or proper names *Krakowiak*, *Warszawiak* and *Kociewiak*. Here the apparent compound suffix is an amalgamation.

For the third instance we begin with surnames such as *Borowy* (from the adjective *borowy*, "of woods, of forest") and *Chlebowy* (from *chlebowy*, "of bread.") + the suffix *-ak* thus creating the surnames *Borowiak*

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and *Chlebowski* which are also amalgamations.

The former has two possible derivations and can also denote a place of habitation in a region named *Borowy* just as the surname *Grochowski* may be derived from the personal name *Groch* (a diminutive or short form of the ancient Slavic masculine dithematic names *Grodzislaw* and/or *Gromislaw*) + *-owski* and/or the personal name *Grochowy* (from the adjective *grochowy*, "of peas, of the pea") + the suffix *-ak*.

For the fourth instance it should be noted that in the past there has been a known vacillation between surnames with *-owski* and *-owski* (cf. *Jankowski* vs. *Jankowski*, *Wojtkowski* vs. *Wojtkowski*, etc.) with one form eventually winning out over the other, usually the latter. This is perhaps due to a more harmonious pronunciation and/or a desire to be known with a surname which was noble in appearance and sound (*i.e.*, a surname indicating a family with property, the proprietors of an estate, which often end with *-ski* denoting "from or of"). Here the compound suffix may not be the original. These superimposed transitions are well documented in records of a genealogical nature both in Poland and the U.S.A.

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.

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Francis died peacefully sitting in his rocking chair in the sun porch of his Sprenger Ave. home on the 13th of July, 1973 at the age 85. His funeral mass was held at the Cathedral and he is buried alongside his wife Estelle in the PNC cemetery. Leon Zaganiacyk, Funeral Director of Forman Funeral Home, provided his services. Francis is still remembered fondly today by my relatives



and Cathedral parishioners who knew him, as well as by others in our Polish community. I so much enjoy listening to the memories and stories told about my maternal granduncle's life. As a genealogist, I am proud of the fact that Professor Francis J. Angierski is an ancestor documented in my maternal family history and lineage tree.

ZYGMUNT J. KROCZYŃSKI

In a newspaper article printed in 1954 in the Buffalo Evening News titled "Organists in Polish Churches Once Had 2nd Christmas Job", the organist Zygmunt J. Kroczyński born in 1880, began his position in 1905 and lasting 49 years at the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in the Black Rock section of Buffalo. On sick leave at the time of this article being written, he recalled a days during the old-time Christmas season when the parish organist in the Polish Roman Catholic Churches, along with their

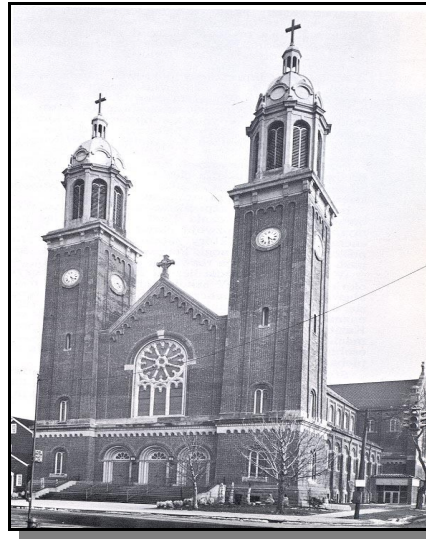
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housewife, began looking to his oven. Mr. Kroczyński said that the organist in the Polish church baked just one commodity "the opłatek" a ceremonial wafer used in the traditional Christmas Eve dinner. He would begin baking these wafers, one at a time, in early November and would continue long into December. In some years he would have to make up to 4,000 wafers. These wafers, made of pure flour and water were made in a press, which had to be held by hand over an open wood flame. The wafer press was an unwieldy, cast-iron affair weighing about 75 pounds. "It was tiring work handling that press.", Mr. Kroczyński said. But the organist's job did not end when the last wafer was turned out, he said. It was also the organist's job to deliver them to each family in the parish. But he noted that today's (1954) organists in Polish churches no longer are required to make the wafers.

The wafer or opłatek, is an important part of the Polish Christmas Eve dinner. It is broken with each guest and best wishes for the future ex-

changed. The meatless meal may consist of seven, nine or thirteen courses. After the meal, guests usually join in going to church for the "Pasterka" (Shepherd's Mass). Mr. Kroczyński died the next year in 1955, and his obituary written in the Dziennik dla Wszystkich [Everybody's Daily] newspaper is very impressive. He was the granduncle of Steven Kroczyński, currently a photographer and salesman for the Am-Pol Eagle newspaper.



[Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Roman Catholic Church where Zygmunt Kroczyński first played.]

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