



# SEARCHERS



Number 52

POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK

Issue 3, 2009

Preserving Our Past Since 1988

## CHRISTMAS AT ELLIS ISLAND 1908



## 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)

Also if you are a member not receiving e-mail from the PGSNYS Mailing list, send an e-mail 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](mailto:editor@pgsnys.org) or [niewczyk@verizon.net](mailto:niewczyk@verizon.net)**

Searchers is a publication of The Polish Genealogical Society of New York State, ISSN #1528-672X Copyright © 2009, Polish Genealogical Society of New York State, All rights reserved.

### *Inside This Issue*

Potpourri and President's Message	pg. 3
An Immigrant's Christmas at Castle Garden and Ellis Island	pg. 4
A Day Spent with the Saints in Poland	pg. 5
PGSNYS Tours Biel's Information Technology Systems	pg. 6
Let's Learn the Lingo	pg. 7
Influenza ... 1918	pg. 8
My Journey from Buffalo, NY to Rozdazew (Formerly Rodrazewo), Poland	pg. 11
Who Are These People??? Identifying Photos	pg. 13
Now for Future Generations	

### PGSNYS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: David E. Newman  
Vice President: Ted Smardz  
Secretary: Susan Malyszka  
Treasurer: Chuck Pyrak

### PGSNYS TRUSTEES

Walter Kloc, Pierre LaJoie,  
Patricia Neuland, Ed Prabucki,  
Frank Martin

Founder: Michael A. Drabik 1950-2001  
Librarian: Denise Oliansky

*Please visit the Polish Genealogical Society Of New York State's Web Site:*

**[www.pgsnys.org](http://www.pgsnys.org)**

# Potpourri

## PREVIOUS SPEAKERS

### OCTOBER 2009

"The New Generation of Genealogy: DNA"

Lee Chamberlin shared his experiences using DNA in his genealogical research. Lee presented his information in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. If you missed this meeting and would like a digital copy of the PowerPoint slides, please e-mail David Newman at: [niewczyk@verizon.net](mailto:niewczyk@verizon.net)

### NOVEMBER 2009

Peter Jablonski gave an excellent presentation on Privy Holes. He brought several examples of items he found in privy hole digs.

## WITAMY!

A warm welcome to the following members who have joined us since August 2009.

RICHARD G. BALBUZOSKI Cheektowaga, NY	JOAN PECK West Seneca, NY
DENNIS CHAPMAN Hamburg, NY	ALICE T. RECZEK West Seneca, NY
BERNADINE ESCHNER Irving, NY	RUTH ANN RUSIN West Seneca, NY
DAVID LODYGA Williamsville, NY	DONNA SCHULTZ Lakeview, NY
THEODORE LYSIAK Wimauma, FL	KIM SCHULTZ Depew, NY
KASIA PAWLUSKIEWICZ Buffalo, NY	AUDREY SCOTT Cheektowaga, NY

## President's Message

First of all, I apologize this 3rd issue of 2009 *Searchers* is late. We had some unforeseen circumstances occur. You will still receive the three regular issues of *Searchers* in 2010.

I would like to welcome our new members and thank everyone for a wonderful and prosperous year of genealogy.

Your support made possible all the various area events at which we had an information table. I'd like to thank all our guest speakers and everyone who attended.

I would like to especially thank Laurel Keough and Denise Oliansky for the dedicated efforts they put forth in proof-reading and developing articles for each *Searchers* edition.

During our elections this past November, all officers and trustees were unopposed. I thank and congratulate all for their continued service.

I look forward to a new year of genealogical adventures and the continued sharing of information about our Society with the general public.

## JANUARY 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Sincerely,

David Newman  
President

# An Immigrant's Christmas at Castle Garden and Ellis Island

by Laurel Myszker Keough

The immigrants' first Christmas in America came with a tremendous burden if it was celebrated at Castle Garden or, in later years, at the immigration station on Ellis Island. Many of these immigrants would soon be deported because of illness, mental incompetence, or lack of money or sponsorship.

On Christmas morning in 1890, nearly one hundred frightened and homesick immigrants were left in quarantine at the Barge Office in New York's Castle Garden immigration depot. Because of the holiday, the immigration inspectors were away spending the day with their families. To the rescue came General James O'Beirne, a Commissioner of Immigration, who invited all of the detainees to enjoy a bountiful Christmas dinner with him.

Their fears forgotten for the moment, the group strolled down State Street to the German Mission House. Waiting for them was a feast that included turkey and plum pudding. Later, on the way back to the Barge Office, the joyful crowd could be heard shouting and singing in various languages. When they returned to the detention area, the General played Santa by distributing cigars and candy to all.

Within a few years, the Castle Garden immigration facility had been replaced by Ellis Island. Now our government, along with various missionary groups, planned a memorable Christmas celebration for all who were detained. The rules and restrictions had also increased, and so, December 23, 1892 found twelve hundred newcomers to America celebrating the holiday on the snow-covered island.

The celebration took place in the great hall where hanging high up under the roof were two large American flags and two strings of smaller flags representing all of the immigrants' countries. When the crowd entered the vast dining hall, they were amazed to see two enormous Christmas trees decorated and lit by twinkling candles.

Three orchestras simultaneously played the Star Spangled Banner. The words were printed in many languages and these slips of paper were handed out to the crowd. Applause erupted at the end of the anthem followed by many tears as the families remembered Christmas in the old country.

Next were the gifts: dolls for the girls, wind-up toys for the boys, and rattles for the babies. The women were pleased to receive small pieces of jewelry and brushes and combs, and the men got pipes and a card of new collar buttons. Everyone, from the tiniest baby to the oldest man, received a small gift to show that America was friendly.

The Christmas lunch included chicken sandwiches, fruits, jellies, chocolate, coffee, tea, and milk. Most curious were stalks of celery that the immigrants had never seen before. They seemed to think they were boutonnieres, and several men stuck the stalks in their buttonholes.

Clergymen who protected the interests of the immigrants spoke to them in different languages. While most of it was not understood by the visiting guests, people all over the room would suddenly rise when the words of their mother tongue were heard. The celebration ended by the joyous singing of Christmas carols from many nations.

As the years passed, the celebration continued to grow both in number of Christmas trees and number of persons detained. In 1910, the *New York Times* reported that 2000 aliens were present at the Christmas celebration. Of that number, 440 men and 283 woman and children had been ordered deported, 68 men and 115 women and children were being held pending investigation, 253 persons were temporarily detained, and about 1000 other persons were awaiting a hearing.

As was the custom, there were several beautifully decorated Christmas trees, presents for all, and

addresses made in Polish, Swedish, German, Italian, and English, with the listeners united in shouting their approval.

To quote directly from the *New York Times* article, "The gifts were heaped on long tables, the women's in white bags and the men's in brown bags. Each man received a pair of socks, a handkerchief, fruit, candy, and cigars. The women received the same, except that stockings were given in place of socks and cigars. Each child was given a piece of cake and a toy. Everyone received a small cake of soap wrapped up in decorated paper. Many of the recipients started to eat the soap, thinking it was candy."

The *New York Times* reported that the programme began with the singing of *America*, Rev. Paul Land made an address of greeting in German, and the Rev. S. Cynalewski did the same in Polish. When the Rev. J. Moretto began to speak in Italian there were cheers and shouts of approval in response to the sentiments expressed by the priest. Many of the immigrants stood on chairs and tables. "I have spoken on Ellis Island before," said the priest, "but never was there a time when I felt so bad as now. There are so many detained here. You have crossed the ocean, endured hardships and danger to come to the country discovered by your countryman. You have found the doors closed. You have had your hope in the land of liberty shattered. To those who will finally get in I would say, you must live to be a credit to your country and the land of your adoption."

Listening to the singing of *America* was 59 year old Claus Timmermann, who had arrived a few days before on the steamship *Amerika*. He had lived in Chicago for forty-two years, and six weeks earlier he had returned to his home in Germany, never suspecting that his right to return to America would be questioned. He was careless about taking proof of his citizenship and had in fact, lost his papers. Now he was being held for investigation and needed to show proof of his citizenship. He was waiting for the Judge who issued his papers to vouch for him.

The happiest family appeared to be Mrs. Louise Luescher and her three daughters. While the others were singing, an Official informed Mrs. Luescher that an order had come from Washington revoking

her deportation, and she and her girls were free to leave the island. In their excitement and haste to depart, they forgot their presents.

If only for the day, the excitement of the holiday festivities helped distract the immigrants from the fear of their possible deportation. Fortunately, the majority of those detained were allowed to enter the United States, and they held joyful memories of their first Christmas in America.

*The sources for this article were the book, "December 25<sup>th</sup>" by Phillip Snyder, an article published in the New York Times on December 24, 1910, and an article by Miss M. L. Woodberry published in "The Home Missionary" in April, 1907.*

## A Day Spent with the Saints in Poland

by Kirsten Rafinski

All Saints Day, Dzień Wszystkich Świętych, here in Poland is a very special holiday celebrated on Nov. 1 of each year. This holiday is not like any other I've ever experienced in my life. It was a remarkable, extraordinary and an unforgettable experience.

When I first heard about All Saints Day from my host sister, she basically described what exactly was to be seen. She said all of the graves are covered and filled with flowers and lanterns as far as the eye could see. She then referred to this day as the day of the dead, and immediately I thought about my Spanish lessons back in Johnstown, and what I learned about The Day of The Dead in Mexico.

My Spanish teacher, Señor DiBernardo, showed us videos of people in Mexico having celebrations, parties and parades with bright decorations and colors everywhere for their loved ones who have passed away. But, of course different countries celebrate holidays in different ways and that image of Mexico's celebration was soon replaced with my own experience of the Polish holiday.

**(Saints:** continued on page 15)

# PGSNYS Tours Biel's Information Technology Systems

by Rita Hider

On September 8, 2009, seven members of the PGSNYS toured Biel's Information Technology Systems. As avid genealogists, having spent countless hours pouring over microfilmed records, we were excited to have the opportunity to tour the local business that produces micro-filmed records.

The tour was given by the Production Manager, Sara McCann. She stated that 90% of their business was scanning data and transferring to digital



Front Row L to R: Rita Hider, Pat Neuland, Maureen Gleason, Dolores Konopa, Laurel Keough  
Back Row L to R: Ed Kornowski, Ed Prabucki

media, and the other 10% was microfilming documents. In addition, they sell software, process data entry, and maintain the products that they sell.

We were shown a camera machine that copies books, such as church records. About 25 years ago their engineers developed a special book binder that enables them to have the books lay

so the spine is completely open. This is accomplished using a table that has three moveable plates on which the book rests. When the glass cover is snapped in place these moveable plates enable the book to be completely flat. The camera can be operated at many levels to produce precise copying that provides extremely clear copies.

The many rolls of film are then spliced onto a "pancake" device (that really looks just like a very large metal pancake), taken into a dark room, and developed. Quality control then takes over and checks for errors, contrast, and clarity. The film is then broken down into separate rolls and tested for proper dark and white density.

Companies can store their records at Biel's indefinitely. The records are placed into a government-certified, fire-proofed room where temperature and humidity are controlled. The fire sprinklers are zone controlled, and the walls and ceiling are solid concrete. If by chance there is a fire and the sprinklers cause the film to get wet, it can still be saved. It is important for the film not to dry out, so it is immediately sent to Kodak immersed in fluid. Kodak is then able to reprocess and save the film.

Records waiting to be microfilmed or scanned are kept in a different fire-proofed room. The difference is this room does not have temperature or humidity control since the records are kept there for a short time.

While original church or other genealogical records are returned to the owners after microfilming is completed, other customers may wish to have their original paper records destroyed. They have 60 days to check for errors and sign off on the destruction of the original records.

When approval for destruction is received, the records are loaded into a truck, and Biel's personnel affix a seal to the door. The truck takes the records to Hanna Paper Recycling where their employees break the seal and the

## Biel's - Continued

documents are shredded and recycled. During this process no one except authorized personnel has access to these records.

Our group was able to watch as Biel's employees scanned documents. Some of their scanning machines can scan 6000 pages an hour.

Documents can be duplicated on two kinds of film, a silver duplicate or a Diazo duplicate. The silver duplicate has a higher quality, it's more expensive, and will last 500 plus years. A Diazo duplicate is less expensive and more scratch resistant, but will start to fade after 50 years.

After the thoroughly enjoyable and enlightening tour, we enjoyed lunch and the chance to visit and talk about our "favorite" subject. A morning well-spent and enjoyed by all.

*Editor's note: We would like to thank Rita Hider for organizing the tour and compliment her grand daughter, Sara McCann, for sharing her professional knowledge and making us feel very welcome.*



*We are always happy to receive genealogical articles from our members. These can be about personal experiences, tips for researching, or previously published articles about Polish genealogy. Contact David Newman with your ideas and to receive submission information: [niewczyk@verizon.net](mailto:niewczyk@verizon.net)*

## Let's Learn the Lingo!

by Denise Oliansky

This will now be a regular feature of the *Searchers* newsletter. In each issue this column will list Polish words and/or phrases that may be useful for genealogical research and/or help us learn a bit of our ancestral language (for those like me who know *no* Polish...except pączki of course),

Let's start with some very basic basics.

### The Polish Alphabet: 32 letters

a ą b c ć d e ę f g h i j k l ł m  
n ó o ó p r s ś t u w y z ź ż

Polish Letter	English Sound	English Example
ą	om, on (nasal sound)	<i>dome</i>
c	ts	<i>fits</i>
ch, h	kh (raspy sound)	<i>hall</i>
ć, cz, ci	ch (ć, soft ch; cz, hard ch)	<i>cheek</i>
dz	j	<i>jeans</i>
ę	em, en (nasal sound)	<i>sense</i>
j	y	<i>you, boy</i>
ł	w	<i>wag, bow</i>
ó	u	<i>toot</i>
ś, sz, si	sh (ś, soft sh; sz, hard sh)	<i>sheep</i>
w	v	<i>vat</i>
ź, rz, zizh		<i>azure</i>

We can practice these sounds by learning the days of the week in Polish:

English	Polish	Phonetic Pronunciation
Sunday	niedziela	nee-jell-a
Monday	poniedziałek	paw-nee-jow-wek
Tuesday	wtorek	ft-or-ek
Wednesday	środa	shr-od-a
Thursday	czwartek	chi-vart-ek
Friday	piątek	p-eeo(n)t-ek
Saturday	sobota	saw-baw-ta

# Influenza...1918

## Crisis Around the World, In Buffalo, NY, and in Polonia

by Laurel Myszker Keough

### World War I

In 1918, as the guns of World War I thundered over Europe, Americans rallied in support of the war. On "Main Street, USA," as well as in Shelton Square in Buffalo, New York, crowds watched as the doughboys marched off to war. Newspapers reported the success of Liberty bond drives that raised millions of dollars for the war effort.

### A New Enemy

But a more treacherous and silent enemy would soon appear to threaten the lives of millions of people and create a crisis that would kill over 21 million people world-wide. It would be known as the Great Influenza Pandemic of 1918–1919. It was the war environment that included over-crowded training camps, transport ships, and barracks, that became a catalyst in rapidly spreading the most deadly influenza virus in world history. This pandemic would rank third, only after the Black Death and Bubonic Plague, in numbers of lives lost.

The statistics are grim and probably greatly underestimated. Reporting and record-keeping were distorted by the magnitude of the pandemic. For every 100 American soldiers killed in battle, 102 soldiers died from influenza. From September 1918 to June 1919, the best estimate is that 675,000 Americans died of flu and pneumonia. In Buffalo and Erie County in the same time frame, 2806 deaths were counted, of which 2338 were residents of Buffalo.

### The First Wave

The first wave of flu spread through the world in four short months. It was now officially classified a pandemic. However, in August 1918, a second wave of the disease proved to be much more severe, with complications of pneumonia causing a very high rate of fatality.

With Buffalo's Health Commissioner, Dr. Frances E. Fronczak, serving at the war front in Europe, the Buffalo epidemic was handled by Dr. Franklin Gram with a timely, well-organized, and aggressive response. Quarantines were immediate for infected patients

and a special advisory group met each day at the height of the flu outbreak. With hospitals overflowing, the third floor of the Central High School Building became a make-shift influenza ward.

### Churches and Schools Close

On October 10, 1918, Mayor George S. Buck issued an order restricting any gathering of more than ten individuals at churches, Sunday schools, public and private schools, theaters, saloons, and dance halls. Soon all soda fountains, pool rooms, bowling alleys, and swimming pools were added to the list. Outdoor church services were permitted, and masses were said in the rear church yards of many parishes.

### Immigrants at Risk

Studies were to show that the influenza's incidence and patterns of mortality were not as expected. Instead, the flu was cutting down people in their prime of life, and half that died were between the ages of 20 and 40. It is believed that immigration patterns of the time may have resulted in the high death rate in younger people. Large numbers of Polish immigrants came to Buffalo after the outbreak of influenza in the 1890's, and they had not built up any immunity to the disease. The majority had moved from tiny hamlets and rural villages in the old country where they had not been exposed to this type influenza. And so it was that the Poles in Buffalo, who made up approximately 30 per cent of the population, were to feel the deadly effects of the so called "Spanish Influenza."

Buffalo's Polish newspaper, *Dziennik Dla Wszystkich*, reported that Poles were experiencing a very high death rate. With church-gathering for funerals prohibited, the parish priests merely blessed a never-ending line of caskets passing in front of their parish churches. St. Stanislaus Cemetery was over-whelmed with the number of bodies awaiting burial. Father Alexander Pitass reported that the cemetery hired 35 additional grave diggers, and they were paid \$5 a day for the work, the highest



## Influenza - Continued

wages paid by any cemetery in Buffalo. Arrangements were made to get burial help from the penitentiary. In the month of October alone, over 500 burials took place at St. Stanislaus Cemetery.

### Desperate Measures

The cause and cure of the disease remained a mystery in a time when oxygen therapy and penicillin were unknown. Many patients attempted remedies based on old wives' tales and superstition. The unsuccessful cures included eating massive amounts of onions, tying slices of cucumbers to your ankles, and carrying a potato in each pocket. Take Castor oil, don't take Castor oil, eat ice cream, don't eat sugar, don't inhale cooked hot red peppers. Mothers everywhere tried to protect their loved ones by tying a bag of camphor, an insect repellent, around their necks to ward off the flu. These were just a few of the desperate practices frightened people were willing to try to ward off the disease.

### Armistice Day

Finally in November, the flu appeared to ease up on its own. On November 11, 1918, the German surrender was announced and Buffalo, along with the rest of the country, celebrated! Church bells rang, factory whistles blew, and fire bells clanged. Folks rushed to the streets, laughing, shouting, joining in parades, and creating a clamor with rattles, buzzers, and tin horns. Special Church services were held in thanksgiving for peace and the end of the war. Overjoyed citizens believed they were liberated, not only from the war, but also the ravages of influenza. Believing the crisis was over, most chose to ignore the public health rules by hugging, kissing, dancing, and partying. Soon a third wave of the flu, less deadly than the second round, would continue its death toll.

By the summer of 1919, with the Paris Peace Conference concluded and the Treaty of Versailles signed, most people who had lived through the horror of the influenza pandemic chose to forget the disaster. The "Spanish Lady" had disappeared never to return . . . at least not in the foreseeable future.

Here is a list of some of the 1918 influenza pandemic victims from Buffalo, New York:

## St. Stanislaus Cemetery - October 1918 Selected Burials

Oct.	Age	Name	Age
2	31	Andrew Niemiec	31
4	13	Anna Zygaj	13
5	1	Alfreda Stefanski	1
7	1	Henry Nouruski	1
7	3	Helen Nouruski	3
7	3	Rose Zak	3
7	-	Baby Koczmorski	-
8	36	Stanislaw Jankowski	36
9	1	Antoni Lukasik	1
10	10	Heromin Karcinski	10
10	11 mos	Edward Mitka	11 mos
10	34	Helen Sokolonski	34
10	20	Rose Waltz	20
10	2 mos	Jan Drapik	2 mos
10	29	Kazimir Galownik	29
11	34	Frank Cyman	34
11	36	Mary Janiszewska	36
11	29	John Uroda	29
11	34	Antoni Baj	34
11	1	Henry Kucharski	1
11	33	Wladyslaw Tyczka	33
11	36	Stella Jankowska	36
12	9	Henry Seibert	9
12	36	Michail Golownik	36
12	1	Anna Kaminska	1
12	9 mos	Edward Mazur	9 mos
13	15	Jan Samulski	15
13	35	Jan Tyczka	35
13	30	Frances Pawlowski	30
13	32	Jan Pawlak	32
13	1	Antonina Klein	1
13	32	Helen Cyman	32
13	42	Franciszka Mazurowska	42
14	20	Jadwiga Belker	20
14	32	Mary Pitkowska	32
14	2	Edward Konarski	2
14	3 mos	Peter Zawadzki	3 mos
14	35	Theofil Wroblewski	35
15	18	Florence Zientek	18
15	4	Rose Kaminski	4
15	30	Stanislaus Grabowski	30
15	21	Michael Kuzek	21
16	16	Hattie Kozlowski	16
16	22	Bronislawa Nowicka	22
16	10 mos	Adam Krabek	10 mos

## Influenza - Continued

Oct.16	Emilia Drajem	Age 2 mos
16	Edward Ratajczak	18
16	Stanislawa Balmas	22
16	Frank Smyczynski	31
16	Sophia Groblewski	37
16	Carolina Bucki	43
17	Antoni Wilke	34
17	Ferdinand Toczek	36
17	Maryanna Wojdan	31
17	August Kot	21
17	Sophia Wiktor	22
17	Anna Wasielewska	43
17	Antoni Ochocki	2
18	Franciszek Chudy	1 mos
18	Bronislawa Tabak	1
18	Antonina Bryda	2
18	Tomaz Peplinski	21
18	Aga Slisz	1
18	Stephan Pawelezynski	40
18	Stanislaw Taleyda	15
18	Anthony Mozdziak	32
19	Julian Zaleski	43
19	Eva Olszewska	28
19	Mary Butkowska	36
19	Clara Platek	1
19	Blazcj Czapecki	28
19	Franciszka Czech	66
20	Josepha Grzdak	47
20	Katarzyna Zynczak	29
20	Bronislawa Kaminska	8 mos
20	Victoria Zamiszlak	22
20	Ignacy Glowny	32
20	Theofil Jazgara	33
21	Victoria Kaminska	40
21	Boleslaw Jarmusz	34
21	Louis Dalka	3
21	Katherine Komicki	58
21	Felix Dembski	4
21	Leokadya Guzek	1
21	Anton Garda	39
22	Victoria Dmuchalska	53
22	Boleslaw Figiel	4
22	Veronika Schultz	54

Oct.22	Sebestyan Koladziej	Age 32
22	Mathew Wilkowski	56
23	Anna Lesniewska	32
23	Frank Wilc	24
23	Jacob Suchacki	28
23	Martin Giza	28
24	Stanislaw Paprocki	30
24	Raymond Grabowski	10 mos
24	Julianna Nowicki	37
24	Szymon Smentek	44
24	John Bryda	46
25	Rosalia Doerr	27
25	John Stefaniak	22
25	Anna Kowalska	29
25	Katarzyna Giza	31
25	Valara Dlugosz	28
25	Magdalena Suskoska	33
25	Eva Chmielewska	17
26	Emelia Janusz	14
26	Joseph Nowogorski	34
27	Joseph Olszaawy	26
27	Frank Posluszny	7 mos
27	Janina Nowacka	19

The epidemic and its devastation became so commonplace that even the children in the playground could be heard singing a jump-rope chant. . . .

*I had a little bird,*

*Its name was Enza.*

*I opened the window,*

*And in-flew-Enza.*



## **My Journey from Buffalo, New York to Rozdrzew (Formerly Rodrazewo), Poland**

by Armela Hammes

When I was a child living in Chicago, my parents would tell me stories about their families. Since I never knew any of my grandparents, I enjoyed hearing information about them. I was envious of my friends who did have living grandparents. One bit of information I remember about my mother's mother, Josephine Paluszek Galezewski, was that she had been born in Buffalo, New York. Her parents, Peter and Anna Domagalski Paluszek, had moved to Chicago when Josephine was a baby.

In the 1970's, when I was living in New York State with my husband and three children, I decided to pursue this bit of information. I looked in a Buffalo phone directory and was overwhelmed by all the Catholic churches. To which church should I write for a Baptismal Certificate? I enlisted the aid of our parish pastor, and he suggested I write the Chancery Office asking for a Baptismal Certificate for Josephine Paluszek, born in Buffalo on August 24, 1876. I followed his instructions, and within a week I had a Certificate of Baptism from St. Stanislaus Roman Catholic Church, 123 Townsend Street, Buffalo, New York 14212, for Josephine Paluszek, child of Peter and Anna Domagalski, baptized on August 27, 1876 by the Rev. A. Pitass. Her godparents were Josephine Domgalska and Albert Ciechna.

It wasn't until we were living in Ohio in the 1980's that I took the next step. A friend, who was doing genealogy on her family, suggested I visit the nearby Family History Library. I reasoned that if Josephine had been born in Buffalo in 1876, perhaps her parents had been married in the same church the previous year. I ordered a microfilm for St. Stanislaus and much to my delight found the marriage of Piotr Paluszek, son of Martin and Jozefa, from Trzemeszno, to Anna, daughter of Adalbert Domagalski and Anna Gadacz from Zagainych Gorkach, on May 4, 1875. The witnesses were Franciszek Cichocki and Jozefa Domagalska.

Since Buffalo had a city census in 1875, I tried locating my great-grandparents. I found the young newlyweds, Peter, age 21 and Anna, age 18, living in the Fourth District, Fifth Ward of Buffalo on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of June, 1875.

Because I couldn't locate any more children of Peter and Anna baptized in Buffalo, I tried the oldest Polish parish in Chicago, St. Stanislaus Kostka. There I found the second child, John, born in May 1878. The young couple was now living in Chicago. When I tried locating Peter and his family on the 1880 Chicago census, I hit a brick wall. However, a fellow family researcher was able to locate Peter, Annie, Josephine, John, and young Peter living under the name of Fingler. On the 1880 census Peter and Anna reported they were from Prussia. It wasn't until March 2008, that I discovered why the name may have been changed. In an Ancestry.com Newsletter, a family researcher said that her Polish immigrant great-grandfather had trouble finding work because Poles were suffering discrimination. Since the Germans were getting all the good jobs, and since her great-grandfather could speak fluent German, he simply changed his name and was quickly hired. This may explain why Paluszek became Fingler.

Looking through the microfilms for St. Stanislaus Kostka, I had some luck. I came across the death notice for Jadwiga, Peter's older sister. Her death notice in the church records showed that she was from Rozdrzewo. Now I was confused. I had already looked through church records for the Paluszeks in Trzemeszno, with no luck. My next research indicated that there was a Trzemeszno near Rozdrzewo. I had been looking at the wrong Trzemeszno.

When I viewed the microfilm for Rozdrzewo, I located my great-great grandparents, Marcin Paluszek and Jozefa Nowak, and the baptismal records of their six children: Jadwiga, Marianna, Franciszek, Katarzyna, Piotr, and Franciszka. My husband and I made another trip to Poland in September with the thought of trying to find any remaining Galezewski family members in Gniezno.

Unfortunately, we were not able to locate any living descendants of my grandfather's siblings. However, on the last day of our stay in Poland, our Polish guide took us to Rozdrzew. While walking through the cemetery, we came across the headstone for Maria Konczak, born 14 January, 1846. Through research of a Family History Library microfilm, I knew this to be the sister of my great-



*Armella Hammes (center), David Hammes (far right) and newly found Rozdrzew family*

grandfather. What luck! We finally found family. We also found a monument commemorating the Uprising of Greater Poland 1918-1919. Among the names listed on the monument was Paluszek, Fr. This might have been my great-grandfather's brother, Franciszek.

After finding these gravestones, our Polish guide started going to homes asking if anyone knew of any Paluszek families. One house we stopped at had a wonderful woman who took us to the parish office and had the priest let us look at church records. From there we went to a wedding reception, and our guide had a third cousin of mine come out and meet me. Photos were taken. Next stop was a visit to another third cousin's home. More photos.

The visits were cut short because this all happened on our last afternoon in Poland, and we were due to get on a plane at 8 a.m. the next morning. I've been able to keep in contact via email with the 18-year old son of one of the cousins. He helped me write a grammatically correct Polish note to send along with some photos to my newly-found cousins.

Further research in the Family History Library microfilms for Rozdrzew is next on my to-do list. What happened to the four children who did not come to America? Is the Franciszek on the monument my great-grandfather's brother? I found my great-great grandfather and my great-grandfather in Rozdrzew. Could I possibly find my great-great-great grandfather there also? The search goes on.



*Armella Hammes (right) and Katarzyna Grycza*



*Grave of Maria Konczak, sister of Armella's great-grandfather.*

# Who Are These People???

## Identifying Photos *Now* for Future Generations

by Denise Oliansky

We have all heard the scenario from friends or relatives, or perhaps even experienced it ourselves – a big box of photographs is found when cleaning out grandma's house or old albums surface from that big trunk that has been in the attic for years. After the initial excitement of the find, you realize you have no clue who most of those people were and, of course, either no one labeled the pictures at all, or the pencil inscriptions they made fifty years ago are no longer legible. Too often, and the worst of it is, there may be no one still alive who can fill in the identification gaps for you. That leaves you with a poignant paradox – a treasure trove of basically worthless photographs (except for their esthetic value, of course).

Genealogists of the world unite! Today, with the ready availability of a myriad of media formats, there is no excuse for leaving those photos which document our own lives and families to the same sad fate. Begin (and/or continue) the process of preserving your photo collections and, even more importantly, clearly *identify* the individuals found therein. And do it now...while there are still people around who can help you figure out who's who. Here are some suggestions that may help facilitate the process.

### ***Where to Start***

Since this may seem a very daunting task if you have a large collection of photos, a good place to start is with those photos you have displayed in your home. Once you have completed the entire process with those, you can move on confidently to your stacks of photo albums...and *then* on to those boxes and drawers stuffed with a gazillion photos still in the envelopes from the drugstores where you had your photos processed over the years. Don't look at me like that...you know you have them.

### ***Clear the Decks***

As you go through your photos, sort them into those you still want and those that no longer mean any-

thing to you. These latter photos may include photos of people with whom you have lost contact, childhood friends, neighbors from five moves ago, and so on. It's time to dump the junk, but don't just throw them away! Consider contributing the unwanted photos to an online site like Dead Fred.com ([www.deadfred.com](http://www.deadfred.com)) or Ancestry Genealogy Photo Archive (<http://ancestorarchive.com>). When submitting your photos, the more people you can identify in the photos the better, but even if you can't identify everyone, provide as much information as you can, such as the event or situation, in what city/state the photo was taken and approximately when. If you are dealing with Grandma's unidentifiable photos, provide at least who owned them, city and state in which they were found, and possible relatives. These cast-off photos may mean a great deal to someone who finds them on these sites.

### ***The Basic Process of Organizing Your Photo Collection***

#### *Developed/Printed Photos*

Let's start with old-fashioned, developed photos first, as opposed to digital photos which are much easier to organize. Even if you are putting your photos in albums and adding captions, always label the back of the photo as well, just in case it gets separated from the album. Always, always, always use an archival pen to label the back. No regular pens, pencils, self-adhesive labels, scotch tape, or masking tape. Pencil marks won't last, and everything else will eventually damage the photos. Provide as much information as you can, including when (the year at least) and where the photo was taken, as well as the names and perhaps even the ages of people in the photo. Photo albums are a wonderful thing. They can be very basic or great works of art. Modern photo albums make our task much easier than it used to be, when photos basically had to be glued onto

blank pages or each page had the filmy, sticky sheets that went over the photos, but never did a very good job of keeping them in place. Now there are albums with pre-made slots to insert pictures, as well as room to write identifying information either beside or below the photos. Still put identifying information on the back of the photos as well. It is always a good idea to use archival quality papers in your album. These are non-acidic and will not damage your photos over time. There are various ways you can organize your albums, including the following:

- **Chronologically:** Most people just insert photos as they get them and add new albums to the shelf as needed. Be sure to date them by putting a date inside your brand new album when you add your first pictures, and then add a final date when you load in the last photographs into the album. You can put a label on the binder's spine to easily reference the time span the album covers.
- **By Subject:** You could organize your albums by subject: baby album, toddler album, travel album, family get-togethers, landscapes, cityscapes, candid shots, pet album, holiday album, wedding album, grandkids album, retirement album, etc...be creative! And don't forget to label these albums on the spine as well.
- **Scrapbooking:** Along with a fun selection of photographs, you can add ticket stubs, bar napkins with phone numbers or doodles on them - whatever you have around from a certain time period that strikes a memory, and design a fantastic memory album. Scrapbooking is huge right now, and you can use all sorts of papers, stamps, ribbons, stickers, glitter, gold ink pens, and a huge array of other craft items to make your photo books unique. Keep in mind, use archival-quality papers and supplies so as to not damage the photos, and always label 'who, what, when, and where' on the back of the photos.

Where you store your completed photo albums is up to you. Some folks place them on bookshelves, some display them proudly on their coffee tables. It's probably best not to store the albums upright, as that may warp the pictures. Albums in attics can get heat damage...albums in basements are subject to water damage. The best place for your albums is where you spend your time. After all, their entire reason for

being is to be looked at and enjoyed.

### Digital Photos

The most important tip about digital photos is to always organize and identify your photos at the time you download them onto your computer. Following are the basic steps involved in organizing your digital photos.

### **Photo Management Program**

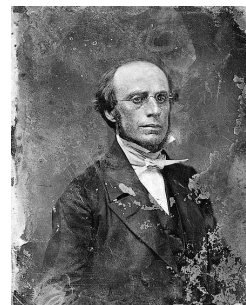
If your computer did not come with one, download or buy a good photo management program. These are better than just using a Windows "My Pictures" feature, because they are more user-friendly, and they have a host of extra features, such as the ability to catalog and backup your photos. However, Windows is adequate for storing your digital pictures should you choose that option.

### **Download Your Pictures**

If your pictures are living in your camera, download them into the photo management program on your computer. Immediately delete any duplicates or photos that did not turn out as intended. Printed photos can be digitized by scanning them into the program.

### **Move Your Photos Into Appropriate Folders**

Most programs allow you to have separate folders which you can label appropriately depending on how you want to organize your photos, such as by date, by subject, etc. For each individual photo, apply a file name which identifies the main event or primary person of interest for easy searching later. Many programs allow you to add identifying descriptions (the who, what, when, and where) to each photo.



### **Edit Your Photos As Necessary**

You can readily perform basic image edits like rotation, cropping, and red-eye removal in any photo program.

### **Backup All Your Photos Regularly**

Regularly backup your entire photo catalog. You will want to have a CD burner, DVD burner, or even an external hard drive for this purpose.

### **Make Print Copies as Desired**

You may prefer to view your pictures only on your computer, however printing them is always an option. All office supply and many department stores sell photo printing paper. Printed photos should be organized in the same manner as discussed previously.

### **Migrate as Technology Changes**

At some point CDs and even flash drives will be obsolete, just as 5 1/4 and 3 1/2 inch disks are now. As new technology emerges, be sure to use them to backup your digital photo collection while your computer system still has the ability to do so. Although you do have to be concerned about photo degradation and damage, this is one advantage of photo albums... they don't become obsolete.

It's a new year and a great time to get your photo organizing project started! Hopefully these basic instructions will assist you in setting up an efficient photo collection system that will keep your photos safe and intact, and help future generations accurately identify you and your loved ones.



### **(Saints: continued from page 5)**

On Oct. 13, my sister, mother and I went to the Koszalin cemetery to clean and decorate my host family's father's grave. When I got off of the bus all I could see were flowers and lanterns for sale. We met up with Babcia (my host dad's mother) and bought some white and red flowers to plant in pots and set on his grave.

Unlike most of the tombs in the United States that have just a headstone, tombs here have a headstone and a marble or stone slab covering the place where the person was buried. This slab is usually where people place pots of flowers and lanterns.

Unfortunately, while we were there preparing my host dad's grave for Nov. 1st, there was a funeral being held not too far away from us. Many people were gathered around the resting place and a few firemen were in their uniforms. A ceremony was being held in Polish, so I really didn't understand most of the priest's speech, but I did hear the wonderful music being played for this ceremony. It did not sound sad at all. The tone gave off a very peaceful vibe.

My mother, sister, and I headed to the cemetery to place lanterns and say a prayer for all of the loved ones and people they knew who had passed away. This trip back to the cemetery on this day was totally different. Chaos prevailed. This was the actual celebration of Dzień Wszystkich Świętych, and people were everywhere! There were so many people that it was actually very hard to get through the crowds.

Once we found our way out of the crowd all you could see were even more flowers and lanterns for sale lining the gate of the cemetery. Tables with different homemade pastries were present for people to buy cakes and pies for gatherings held at family homes following the celebrations.

Even though we were at the cemetery just two days prior to this event, the cemetery had totally changed. There were flowers and lanterns

everywhere. As my sister noted, they were as far as the eye could see.

While we were going from grave to grave my sister pointed out very interesting engravings for me to see. She showed me the smaller grave in the ground where cremated people were buried and the marble little huts where other cremated bodies are placed. Nearby was an area dedicated to important people, such as the doctors, professors and government officials of Koszalin. There also was a grave she pointed out to me of a man who passed away on his 100th birthday. Every grave was unique.

After placing the lanterns on my family's loved ones' graves we went home to get some rest so we could return by nightfall. Nighttime on this very special day has its own wonders.

In the daytime you could see were the beautiful flowers, but at night, that's when the vibrant lanterns showed their magic! Millions of candles lit up the cemetery and this place of sorrow turned into a place of awe. A huge monument in the cemetery was dedicated to the Russian soldiers who helped Koszalin so many years ago. It had hundreds of lanterns surrounding it that twinkled in the night. That night was a chilly one indeed, but when you approached the groups of lanterns you could feel the warmth of the flames. There is almost no way to describe my feelings that night while walking through the cemetery. I saw people young and old still setting out

lanterns to add more light to this wonderful evening. In the youth section of the cemetery, I saw a very young boy placing a lantern on another child's grave. A couple not too far from him were seated on a bench, cuddling each other on this cold autumn night while remembering their loved one.

At that moment, I realized that this day was to bring loved ones together, to respectfully celebrate and pray for the passing of someone close and dear and to show that they will never be forgotten.

*Kirsten Rafinski, a Westmont Hilltop junior, is spending this school year in Poland through the Rotary Youth Exchange. You can follow her experiences in The Tribune-Democrat and online at: [www.kirsten-2011.wordpress.com](http://www.kirsten-2011.wordpress.com)*



*All Souls Day in Polish Cemetery*

## SEARCHERS NEWSLETTER

POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK STATE  
12645 Route 78  
East Aurora, New York 14052

RETURN REQUESTED

PLEASE CHECK YOUR EXPIRATION DATE

NOTIFY US OF ANY CHANGE OF ADDRESS