

PRESERVING
OUR PAST
SINCE 1988

SEARCHERS

NO. 56

SPRING

2011, ISSUE 1

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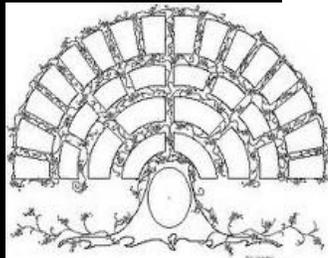
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Happy Easter! Wesołego Alleluja!



Butter lamb for the
traditional Świącone feast

FOR YOUR INFORMATION



Please visit the Polish
Genealogical Society
of New York State's
Web site:

www.pgsnys.org

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Wycinanki

Polish
paper cut



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), and membership entitles you to three issues 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 of the *Searchers*.

Please remit your membership dues by check or money order to:

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

Please send any changes to your postal or e-mail address to PGSNYS at the above address or to cpyrak@roadrunner.com

If you are a member, but not receiving e-mail from the PGSNYS mailing list, please send an e-mail to cpyrak@roadrunner.com

For submissions to the Searchers newsletter, deadlines are as follows:

- 1st issue (Spring) - due February 15th for April mailing
- 2nd issue (Summer) - due June 15th for August mailing
- 3rd issue (Winter) - due October 15th for December mailing

Submissions to the *Searchers* can be sent by postal mail (c/o *Searchers* Editor, 12645 Route 78, East Aurora, NY 14052) or via e-mail to: editor@pgsnys.org or denise.oliansky@gmail.com

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



David
Newman

Welcome to 2011! This year our website (www.pgsnys.org) will be getting a facelift. Many of our databases will become searchable, and other enhancements and updates will be made. We encourage everyone to send us your comments and suggestions, and please let us know what you think of the changes. If you have suggestions for guest speakers this year, please forward them to me. And as always, we encourage our members to submit articles about your family history, research experiences, or interesting resources you have found to our Searchers newsletter. Your articles really make the newsletter something special, so please don't hesitate to contribute.

Sincerely,
Dave Newman

POTPOURRI

WITAMY! TO NEW PGSNYS MEMBERS

Kirt Wilkes
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-
- ◆ A big thank-you to **Patricia Lukaszewski** and **Michael Szafranski** for their book donations to the PGSNYS genealogy collection. Donations of books and other resources on Polish genealogy are very welcome. Please contact the collection librarian: denise.oliensky@gmail.com.
 - ◆ The PGSNYS *Membership Directory* is available to members. If you would like a PDF copy of the Directory, please contact Chuck Pyrak at cpyrak@roadrunner.com.
 - ◆ *Errata*: In the Winter, 2010 issue, it was mistakenly stated that Dolores and Dennis Konopa were in separate classrooms at Transfiguration school. There were two classrooms, but Dolores and Dennis were both in Classroom A all eight years of grade school.
-



Szczepan
CIESIELSKI

The Przewodnik Handlowy contains biographies of noted citizens of the Buffalo, New York Polonia community. In this issue we present two more biographies translated verbatim from the original Polish articles.

PRZEWODNIK HANDLOWY

Articles translated by Agnieszka and David Newman with help by Daniel Kij

SZCZEPAN CIESIELSKI

Szczepan CIESIELSKI was born on November 21, 1866 in Gniezno. His parents were Antoni CIESIELSKI and Franciszka KUJAW. He attended elementary school in Gniezno. On May 31, 1881 he came to Buffalo, New York in the United States. Szczepan CIESIELSKI found his first job at the New York Central (NYC) Railroad.

He married Elzbieta KORKORWICZ, daughter of Wojciech KORKORWICZ and Julianna MALINSKI. They have the following children:

Anna born July 26, 1897

Helena born September 5, 1899

Agata born November 26, 1901

Zofia born December 18, 1905

On May 15, 1902 he moved to Niagara Falls with the family and purchased a home on 1319 Falls Street near 14th Street. They maintain the areas first high quality Polish grocery store from part of their home.

Szczepan CIESIELSKI is one of the founders of Holy Trinity Church in Niagara Falls and continues to strive and build a small church building and school.



Ob. Szczepan Ciesielski z rodziną.

Ciesielski home and grocery store

He is a founding member of the Holy Trinity Society and is also a member of the Lute Society and president of the St. Frances Polish Union No 97.



TOMASZ SZCZĘŚĆ

Among the esteemed citizens of Niagara Falls is the industrialist Mr. Tomasz SZCZĘŚĆ who, by means of his and his wife's labor, was able to accumulate a somewhat tidy fortune of which he can be proud; judicious and diligent and, above all, our thrifty compatriot.

Mr. T. SZCZĘŚĆ was born December 29, 1877 in Monowice, Oświęcim county in Galicya of parents Joach(im) and mother Katarzyna.

In 1899, he left his native land coming to America -- to Chicago -- where, like many others, he went to difficult labor in an iron foundry. There, for six years he labored, saving his hard-earned pennies so that, some day, he might open his own business.

After six years, he left Chicago, coming to Buffalo. On May 14, 1901, he married Wiktorya *née* CIESIELSKI. Subsequently, with his brother-in-law, Jakob PASEK (see Winter, 2010 issue of the *Searchers*), he settled permanently in Niagara Falls, where PASEK opened a saloon, and Mr. SZCZEŚĆ a grocery at 1222 Falls Street; his own home is located at 3005 30th Street. Mr. Tomasz SZCZEŚĆ raised a family: Stefania born August 20, 1903, and Jadwiga, born October 4, 1904.

Mr. Tomasz SZCZEŚĆ is a member of Holy Trinity parish and Holy Trinity Society, of which he is the founder, and he is also one of the founders of the parish in Niagara Falls.

The esteem which Mr. SZCZEŚĆ receives among his own and the regard that has been placed by the citizens of Niagara Falls is testimony to the great work he has done for religious and nationalistic affairs.

"...for six years he labored, saving his hard-earned pennies so that, some day, he might open his own business."



Editor's note: Below is the 1920 Federal census showing Thomas 'Sczczes' with his family. Since the time of the original article, he and his wife, Victoria, had six more children. Their address also changed to 3064 East Falls Rd. in Niagara Falls.

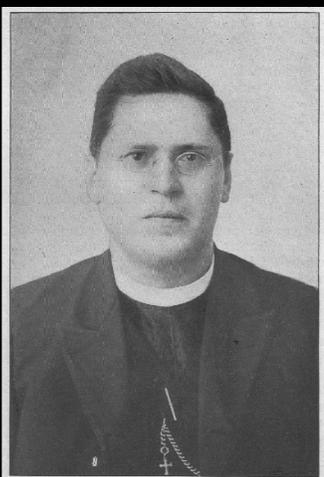
3064	132	136	Sczczes	Thomas	Head	M	W	42	M	1895	Wa	1903
				Victoria	Wife	F	W	36	M			
				Stephania	Daughter	F	W	16	S			
				Eda	Daughter	F	W	14	S			
				Frances	Daughter	F	W	11	S			
				Stella	Daughter	F	W	8	S			
				John	Son	M	W	7	S			
				Stanley	Son	M	W	4 ¹ / ₂	S			
				Sophie	Daughter	F	W	2 ¹ / ₂	S			
				Genevieve	Daughter	F	W	1 ¹ / ₂	S			
			Bernady	Urban	Boarder	M	W	62	S	1892	Wa	1903
			St Leonard	Jon	Boarder	M	W	25	S	1910	Al	

1920 Census Niagara Falls, NY
 'Thomas Sczczes' and Family

A Brief History of St. Casimir's Church in Elmira, New York

by Gregory L. Witul

"The main economic drivers of the region were manufacturing and railroad-related industries."



Father Swinko

The Southern Tier of New York State is dotted with a number of Polish colonies. Salamanca and Olean are in the west; Binghamton and Endicott are in the east; and the city of Elmira sits in the center like a crown jewel. This city of 30,000 people is the major metropolitan area and county seat of Chemung County, NY. Settlement began in the area just before the American Revolution, and Elmira was legally incorporated in 1864. The main economic drivers of the region were manufacturing and railroad-related industries.

Poles began arriving in Elmira *en mass* during the 1870s. Many of these settlers were from Pennsylvania, particularly the mining towns of Antrim, Arnot, Blossburg, and Morris Run. These people found that the working conditions of the Elmira factories were safer than those of the coal mines of Northern Pennsylvania. To fulfill their spiritual needs, the Poles attended Mass at the German, St. John the Baptist Catholic Church. By 1889, a number of Poles at St. John's determined that it was necessary for them to have their own church.

They applied to Bishop

Ryan in Buffalo for permission to establish a parish under the patronage of St. Casimir. To help establish the church and raise funds, Bishop Ryan sent Dean Jan Pitass from St. Stanislaus Church in Buffalo, NY. Dean Pitass brought with him an assistant from St. Stanislaus, Rev. Bartholomew Swinko, who would become the first rector of St. Casimir's Church.

St. Casimir's Church was dedicated on September 1, 1890 by Monsignor Gleason, the Vicar-General of the Diocese of Buffalo. A number of Polish priests traveled to Elmira to take part in the celebration. Father Klinowski from St. Mary's in Blossburg, PA brought with him two church societies and a band. Dean Pitass was present with an entourage of Catholic priests from around Elmira. The first building served the dual function of a church and a school. Father Swinko ended up only staying a year at St. Casimir's before being charged with establishing St. Mary's in Albion, NY.

After Father Swinko left, a number of priests were in and out of St. Casimir's. A permanent replacement was found in Rev. Ignatius Klejna, who was appointed in 1896. It was during his pastorate that the capacity of the school and church

reached its zenith. Father Klejna had plans drawn up for a new red brick church to meet the needs of his growing flock, but before construction could be started he was transferred to Rochester, NY. His replacement, Father Stanislaus Rodzaj finalized the blueprints and soon construction was underway.



St. Casimir's Church

In 1911, the cornerstone was placed for the current church at the corner of Davis and Roe Street, and by September of 1912, the church was dedicated and opened. The opening of the church brought Poles from across the region to Elmira. A newspaper account records that "400 of the Polish residents along the Tioga Pennsylvania division of the Erie Railroad... came to the city on a special train for the day."

The red brick exterior was influenced by the Romanesque revival movement. The interior is Neo-Gothic and is highlighted by the carved wooden altar that was shipped from Wisconsin.

The outbreak of the WWI gave many of the parishioners the hope that Poland would become a free nation again. The joy from the ending of the war was offset by the sudden loss of Father Rodzaj, who died in a car acci-

dent.

Rev. Joseph A. Balcerak was the next pastor of St. Casimir's Church. One of the first issues Father Balcerak noticed after arriving in Elmira was the parish school was very near capacity. By 1915, the school had reached 150 pupils, who were taught by the Sisters of St. Joseph.

In July of 1921, a convent for the teaching sisters was built next to the school and planning began for a new school. In April of 1930, the school was dedicated and the first year's enrollment was 325 pupils. St. Casimir's School was the crowning achievement of Father Balcerak's tenure. In 1933, Father Balcerak was transferred and his assistant, Rev. Ladislaus J. Szczepanski was named pastor.

With the appointment of Father Szczepanski, the period of growth and expansion of the church campus slowed. For the next 40 years he would see his flock through the Depression, the Second World War, and the "Americanization" of their Polish parish.

When Rev. Szczepanski took over the parish, the church was saddled with a fair amount of debt. During the 1920s, the church was redecorated and the convent and school were built; this debt now had to be paid off. The church struggled through the 1930s and didn't see relief until the economic boom brought on by WWII.

Many men from St. Casimir's enlisted to serve their nation with one parishioner, Pvt. John J. Wantuck, being awarded the Navy Cross for his service. As many of the older Polish parishioners started to

"The outbreak of the WWI gave many of the parishioners the hope that Poland would become a free nation again."

pass away and their native born children grew up, some of the Polishness of the church began to fade. In 1945, less than a handful of the Sisters could still speak Polish, and by the 1950s, Polish was no longer taught at St. Casimir's School. By 1955, the Polish Mass was dropped; St. Casimir's was now an American parish.

At the end of the 1950s, the parish debt was finally liquidated, and by 1957 the parish had enough money to replace the opaque windows with stained glass. The 1960s brought change to St. Casimir's Church, as with all Catholic churches, in the form of Vatican II. A parish council was elected to aid Father Szczepanski in the running of the church.

In 1970, after spending his entire priestly career at St. Casimir's, Rev. Szczepanski retired. He saw his parish shift from a strong ethnic church to a more suburban and Americanized congregation. Little did the parishioners of St. Casimir's know, their next pastor would not be so culturally complacent.

In June of 1970, Rev. Henry F. Adamski became pastor of St. Casimir's. He was a first generation Polish-American from Rochester, NY who commanded the Polish language like a Krakow native. Within the first five years of his pastorship, Adamski advocated for Polish classes, brought back the Polish Mass, encouraged the establishment of a Polish Choir, and praised the efforts of the newly formed Polish

Arts Club. In the spring of 1980, a monument of Nicolaus Copernicus was placed on the St. Casimir Church Complex. After 17 years of service Rev. Adamski retired.

Father Adamski's replacement was Rev. Eugene R. Weis. For the church's centennial in 1990, Father Weis had the church renovated while preserving the neo-gothic splendor. Rev. Weis also created a Divine Mercy Chapel in the church's basement. The chapel is open 24 hours a day for the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

In 1994, it became necessary to merge churches throughout the Dioceses; St. Casimir's was joined with St. Charles Boromeo. Father Christopher E. Linsler was charged with administering to both churches. While Father Linsler was there, the church expanded its parking lot by tearing down the unused rectory.

In June of 2002, Polish born Rev. Eugene Dobosz was named the new rector of St. Casimir's and St. Charles Boromeo. Father Dobosz held the occasional Polish Mass, which many parishioners had not heard since the retirement of Father Adamski. In 2006, Our Lady of Lourdes was added to St. Casimir's and St. Charles Boromeo parish, and Father Jeremiah Moynihan was named administrator.

By 2010, Rev. Scott Kubinski was charged with the St. Casimir's cluster. The three combined churches are now called Christ the Redeemer parish.



Editor's Note: Due to lack of space, we were unable to include the bibliography for this article. If you are interested in the resources you can email me at: denise.oliansky@gmail.com

A New Database at PGSNYS

Niagara Falls, New York International Institute

The Niagara Falls, NY International Institute was formed in 1919 as a service branch of the YWCA. Originally, there were about 62 International Institutes, and most of them were in large metropolitan areas. They originally provided assistance to woman, but as time went on, they also helped male immigrants. These particular records were rescued from the curb and given to someone who knew their valuable genealogical worth. They contain a wealth of information because the people listed were mostly born in Poland, so they show the family connection to the motherland. These records are a great source of biographical details that genealogists just love.

Editor's Note: PGSNYS will conduct name searches of the Index for members and also at the various events in which the Society participates throughout the year. If a name of interest is found, and kinship can be documented, Dave Newman will contact Peter Ames, who will locate and provide the record for only the cost of copying and postage.

Compiled Information	
Database	Niagara Falls, New York International Institute 1919-1950s
Records	500+
Information will vary depending on the particular file	It will contain some of the following Surname Given name Address at time of record Date of birth Place of birth Names of parents Date of marriage Place of marriage Date of immigration Name of boat Name used in boat manifest listing Date and certificate # of Naturalization Names of children Date and place of children's birth
Source record location	Privately held
Contributing members	Pete Ames

MEMBER MOMENTS

FAMILY ANCESTRY

by Patricia Skura/Skora Filipiak Rooney

I am not sure if my interest for researching my family's history began when I started learning history in school or when my relatives kept putting me off whenever I asked questions about any of the family ancestors.

All I know is that it reached a fever pitch when I turned sixteen. I was convinced that there were secrets to be learned; otherwise, why all the silence?

I started a folder and began writing notes and collecting pictures and documents. Whenever possible I would eavesdrop on conversations that were in English. Since both sets of grandparents were Polish, that didn't come too often. Plus, my mother's parents, the Skora's, kept their past a secret even from their own children.

We lived down a country gravel road from the Skora farm and had chances to visit them, but the language barrier was always there. Their interest was mainly in our school work, but they rarely answered any questions we had about their past lives in Poland. This really got me wondering since I knew my grandmother received letters from her older sister and relatives living in Poland. Much later, we learned that even though Gramma had pictures, she never shared them with her children, not even my mother, her eldest child.

Even though it wasn't easy getting most of the relatives to reveal their thoughts and opinions, I kept at it, often trying to trick them into revealing any tidbit. These gems I gratefully collected. I assumed that over time it would all come together and that, with the help of outside sources, a story would unfold.

When I retired from teaching in 2007, I made the decision to make good on my dream to write the family history stories. So, here is what has developed, but first a few words concerning the “art” of genealogical research.

During the course of my research, I learned to distrust spellings of all names, first and surnames, and to jump to no conclusions until vali-

“...even though Gramma had pictures, she never shared them with her children, not even my mother, their eldest child.”

dating information using several sources. Also, researching local original documents should be done before using an online Internet source. The search is easier to focus and there is often better help available to narrow the search.

This became clear when I went to Brantford, Canada in search of my grandfather, Joseph Skora. The family story was that he immigrated through Canada so as to avoid being sent back to Poland since he had not served his mandatory military service. We knew his grandmother was raising him, and she did not want him to die in the war. Since Joseph had two brothers already in America, she insisted that he join them in 1909 when he turned eighteen.

My mother told me that her father was once hospitalized in Brantford, Canada and that he once gave thought to living there. She did not know why he was hospitalized with pneumonia, nor did she know why he was in Brantford.

Therefore, I began my search in Canada as Joseph's port of entry and hoped to find his manifest. The historians at the Genealogical Society were most helpful! They showed me how to use multiple surname spellings to locate the family. It was Joseph's brother Stanley that opened the door to the truth!

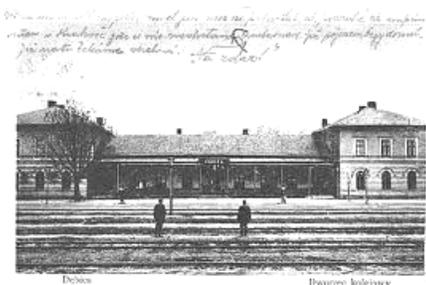
I also realized that I should use Skura as his surname as that was his true surname. I was able to glean lots of family information from Church records concerning Stanley. At advice of the Society, we went to the Brantford library.

That is where I met Wayne Hunter, Brantford's best historian. He is an unassuming man with a keen eye for research and a knowledge of the town that rivals any book written.

“...researching local original documents should be done before using an online Internet source.”

Now back to my story.

I was laboring over some microfilm and getting rather discouraged when Wayne walked into the very quiet room. He asked a few questions about my frustration, and soon we were off and running about family history and doing research. In no time at all he sketched a picture of words of a most probably scenario about my relatives' lives in Brantford in the early 1900's. He even had a possible explanation of my grandfather's pneumonia!



**Dębica train station
1908-1910**

Wayne had me spellbound as he told me that Canada was seeking skilled iron men in the 1900's and that the railroad plant Pratt and Letchworth had its main company in Buffalo, New York in the USA. They recruited their best men from Buffalo to work in the Canadian plant, where they paid its workers well, provided housing, and offered medical benefits.

George and Stanley most likely heard about this plant from a recruiter who must have come to Poland and felt their skills as moulders could be put to good use in Buffalo, New York.

Most poor people traveled German ships because those provided the cheapest passage. It was not a pleasant voyage, with few comforts

“Genealogical research is detective work and it can be slow, but richly rewarding.”



Sophia Kedron

aboard. Passengers brought their own food, and expected to become ill at some point during the crossing.

Wojciech (George) surely traveled abroad first, being the eldest son. Since the three brothers were being raised alone by their grandmother, they wouldn't all leave at the same time.

They would have walked to the Dębica train station either alone or with friends. Dębica was one of the few towns in Poland to have a train station at this time. The West-East train was the Archduke Karol Ludwik Railroad built in 1856. It linked Krakow and Lwów, Poland. Most of the men probably worked to build it since the town was known for its iron workers.

Armed with new insights, and the guidance of Wayne, I was able to find George's manifest. Not to Canada, but America!

It was also curious that George left in the Spring when the ticket fares were higher, rather in the winter when fares were cheapest, as did Stanley the next year. Therefore, it was reasonable to conclude that the railroad company searched them out and paid for George's ticket.

As a single man of about 20 years, George left for America on the German ship Graf Waldersee from Hamburg, Germany on Saturday, May 21, 1904. By historical accounts, it was a grueling ten day trip that he endured in steerage. He arrived in New York City on June 3, 1904, and was processed at Ellis Island. He traveled by train to Buffalo to the Black Rock Station, where Pratt and Letchworth was located on Tonawanda Street near Niagara Street.

Evidently, the pay was good because Stanley, at the age of nineteen, departed from Germany on the S.S. Pennsylvania, sister ship of the Graf Waldersee, on 18 February 1905. He arrived in New York at Ellis Island for processing on 3 March 1905. His contact person was his brother George, living at Amherst Street, Buffalo, New York. This led me to believe that George was at this time employed at Pratt and Letchworth in Buffalo, New York.

Later I was able to find Joseph Skura's manifest. He left on the German ship Patricia, arrived in New York City after a ten day journey, and was processed through Ellis Island on February 14, 1909. Genealogical research is detective work, and it can be slow, but richly rewarding. Not all my questions get answered, and sometimes I am surprised by infor-



George and Joseph Skura sitting on hay bale-- George has his arm around Joseph

mation I wasn't expecting to learn, such as how Canada distrusted immigrants from Austria in 1917, and how they started to gather them into internment camps. This made Stanley move his family to Buffalo, New York. I suspect this is also the reason why my grandfather didn't settle in Canada as well.

Not only did I find family, I also learned details about the 1900's that I never appreciated when studying World History in school. The trials and tribulations of these people were real and often frightening. They had no idea America would become the great nation it is today. It was a big risk they took, and I am the beneficiary of that risk and hard work.

Through Wayne and the Canadian Genealogical Society, I was encouraged to join the Polish Society in Buffalo, New York. With its members' mentoring and guidance, I have learned how to better read certificates and a variety of records and glean information from all sorts of resources, like street directories and cemeteries, to fill my family story with details.

The greatest blessing from all this hard work was that I was able to give my mother her parents' true past. A whole new world opened for her! She learned her mother Anna was born in Stara Wies near Limanowa, Poland. Anna's father was a farmer, not a teacher. Her mother's older sister, the woman who crossed the Atlantic Ocean to Baltimore to Buffalo with her, was Sophia. She wrote often to Anna from France because two wars kept her from returning to Poland, so they had to live in their summer house in Les Mines. My research gave the woman in the pictures a name.

I wasn't able to do the same for my father, since he died before I was able to finish, but his family wasn't as secretive, although there are some interesting stories!

My research continues and the twists and turns keeps me dancing to the genealogical muse.



Genealogy Tools on one CD

The Warsaw Historical Society now offers most of what you need to find a descendant on one CD. If you simply want to learn about Warsaw, New York and its rich history from 1803 to present, this CD will give you the story through rare books and special databases.

The History of the Town of Warsaw (1889), the Illustrated History of Wyoming County, and the History of the Warsaw Centennial (1903) are sometime sold separately for about \$9 each. This CD contains all three rare books along with numerous other unique resources, which will provide immediate and easy access to thousands of names and stories on your computer.

A prepared database of over 6,700 burials in the Warsaw Cemetery is also included on the CD. The cemetery database is the first of its kind and most comprehensive and lists birth-death dates, photos of gravestones and obituaries. It's fully searchable or you can simply read through the entries if you are not sure of the correct spelling of a name. Cemetery maps will also help you find the exact location of a gravesite. Also searchable on the CD is the Society's database listing of artifacts, photos, letters, stories, family histories and thousands of businesses and people's names.

Dozens of vintage photos from the Society's website are also included along with an index of "Historical Wyoming" periodicals about the events, personalities and families that will make you want to read more about Warsaw's distinctive business-manufacturing history. Personalities and chronicles of the Underground Railroad, the Civil War and the Suffrage movement are also highlighted.

The CD also contains a high-resolution image of a rare 1861 map which can be printed and framed. The scanned map may also be zoomed on your computer for close-ups of streets,

Tools - Continued on Page 14

“...a rare 1861 map which can be printed and framed. The scanned map may also be zoomed on your computer for close-ups of streets, house-building designs, and owner’s names.”

house-building designs, and owner’s names. You will also find a link to an 1885 panoramic map of Warsaw which may be enlarged for close-ups.

The CDs are available at the Warsaw Historical Society, Sinclair Pharmacy and the Warsaw Town Offices.

PGSNYS Member Ed Kornowski’s comment: I spoke with Georgia Almeter of the Warsaw Historical Society, and she agreed to accept orders by postal mail for a price of \$10.00 per CD, this will include postage. Send a check payable to the Warsaw Historical Society, 15 Perry St, Warsaw, NY 14569.



Permission to re-print this article has been granted by Warsaw Country Courier editor “Dolly Kowalski”. They can be contacted at 11 South Main St, Warsaw, NY 14569, phone (585) 786-3080.

Warsaw Cemetery Database

Walking tours, History and Archive Database

Civil War Monument Photos

Warsaw Cemetery Maps 1803 to Present

Historical Research Resources From the Warsaw Historical Society

Detailed 1861 Village Map

1885 Panorama Map View of Village

The Warsaw Centennial - 1903

Periodical Listings
Newspaper Indexes 1838-1966
Historical Wyoming 1947-2000
Did You Know... facts regarding Warsaw in Abolitionist era and home of the Republican Party

Young's History of the Town of Warsaw - 1869

Illus. History of the Wyoming County, NY 1841-1880

POINT and CLICK!

Genealogical Research at the New York State Archives by Denise Oliansky

While it is true that the majority of records in the NYS Archives document the functions and activities of the State Government, there are records which contain information about individuals. Start off by going to <http://www.archives.nysed.gov/a/research/index.shtml>, which gets you to the **Research** page. There you will find links to information about the research services that are available, research tips, topics, and tools, web exhibits, and other Statewide resources.

Under **Research Topics** is a section devoted exclusively to **Genealogy**, which provides indexes to records useful for genealogy, and information about how to access information from the Department of Corrections, Military, Naturalization, Probate, and Vital Records. The direct link to the Genealogy page is http://www.archives.nysed.gov/a/research/res_topics_genealogy.shtml.

Each topic (e.g., Vital Records) provides an introduction to the collection, which records are included, the scope of the collection (e.g., what years) and how you can obtain copies of the information you are seeking. These records are not available online, but can be ordered. Instructions regarding cost and the requesting process are given under each topic section.

The online catalog which allows you to personally explore the NYS Archives and the State Library is **Excelsior**, the direct link for which is: <http://nysl.nysed.gov/uhtbin/cgisirsi/TcLFVDkz3v/ARCHIVES/261860108/60/502/X>.

When you open the Excelsior homepage, you enter a search term and identify it as a word or phrase, author, title, subject, series, or periodical

title. Then you can limit (or not) your search to the whole catalog, historical document inventory, manuscripts and special collections, NYS Archives, NYS Library, or the NYS Museum.

For example, in keeping with a previous *Searchers* article about the Albion State Training School, I entered “delinquent women,” selected “subject,” and limited my search to the NYS Archives. The results included three titles all having to do with the Albion State Training School, one of which was the inmate case files for 1921-1931. I clicked on the “**Details**” for that particular selection and received specifics about where the material could be found in the Archives and how many copies were available. I clicked on “**Catalog Record**,” and that brought me to a page which described the actual material – in this case, they are the actual case files (numbers 115-256) of women who were incarcerated at Albion, including some photographs. Information is given about any restrictions to the collection – in this case, the files are restricted for privacy reasons, but access may be permitted under certain conditions with approval by the State Archives.

It’s worth taking some time to browse around the Excelsior catalog and explore the indexes to find out what information is available. It could prove very useful to your family history research. To actually peruse the records in the Archives will require a trip to Albany, NY, but you can also request assistance and copies from the Archive librarians remotely, at a cost.

Spring/Summer 2011 - Goings On Around Town

Thursday, April 14, May 12, June 9, July 14 - Polish Genealogical Society of New York State (PGSNYS) member meeting, 7:00pm at the Villa Maria College cafeteria, 240 Pine Ridge Road, Cheektowaga, NY.

April 6: Pysanky Egg Class @ Explore & More museum in East Aurora. Pysanky egg-making class from 6:30-8:30pm. Cost is \$10/person. Email education@exploreandmore.org for more information.

April 24-30: Dyngus Festival Week Activities in the Buffalo-Niagara region have expanded to one week of events. The 2011 Dyngus Festival begins Easter Sunday, April 24th and continues through Saturday, April 30th. Check out www.dyngusdaybuffalo.com for more information and schedule of events.

April 25: Dyngus Day Parade makes its way through Buffalo's historic Polonia District. See www.dyngusdaybuffalo.com for more information.

April 29: Forgotten Buffalo Tour: Pride of Polonia departs from Sportsmen's Tavern, 326 Amherst St., \$45/person. Visit www.forgottenbuffalo.com for start time and tour stops.

June 10-11: 9th Annual Polish Heritage Festival at the Hamburg Fairgrounds, 5820 South Park Avenue, Hamburg, NY. See www.polfunfest.com for more information about activities. PGSNYS will have an information table during the festival. Come by and see us!

July 9-10: Taste of Buffalo presented by TOPS. Over 50 restaurants, 6 wineries gathering in downtown Buffalo. Visit www.tasteofbuffalo.com for information.

July 17-19: 31st Annual Cheektowaga Polish American Arts Festival at Cheektowaga Town Park. Includes the Pulaski Parade on Sunday (19th). Visit www.tocny.org for information. PGSNYS will have a table at this event.

SEARCHERS NEWSLETTER

**POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK STATE
12645 ROUTE 78
EAST AURORA, NY 14052**

PLEASE CHECK YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION DATE

PLEASE NOTIFY US OF ANY CHANGE OF ADDRESS